TITLE:

Newsletter : Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University No.80

AUTHOR(S):

NEWS LETTER

CSEAS Newsletter 2022

Contents

Front Cover image: At the port of Dili, Timor-Leste (photo by Kisho Tsuchiya)

Editorial Foreword

Since the collapse of the Cold War, Southeast Asian Studies has searched for new aims and identities, drawing a contrast with its origin as a field of Western scholars knowing "the others" in unknown terrains. Western-centric understanding of Southeast Asia has been criticized by various scholars as Orientalism. Yet, the current Anglo-American paradigm of academic research and university education reinforces the notion that scholars and students based in Asia need to catch-up to the academic trends that emanate from traditional "powerhouse" universities and research institutes in the West. Scholars and students in Southeast Asia are pressured to publish in "top" journals (many of which are controlled by leading academic institutions in the Anglo-American world), as doing so has significant bearing on recognition, tenure, and promotion. These realities and pressures undermine efforts to publish research in regional languages.

The Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS) at Kyoto University has forged its own path, often in quiet, low-key defiance of the academic trends as well as Anglo-American academic pressure. Securing such intellectual and institutional autonomy is costly, to be sure, but the Center believes in nurturing and promoting more human and institutional hubs, so that metropolitan scholars—whether in the so-called West, Japan, or Southeast Asia—cannot ignore knowledge produced from the region.

To further accelerate regional networking and produce "autonomous" knowledge for Southeast Asian studies, the CSEAS Newsletter 2022 features several academic dialogues and introduces research by scholars and graduate students based in Asia. Since the easing of Covid-related restrictions, the Center reopened its doors to visiting scholars from across the world. This issue presents interviews with thirteen scholars who have joined the Center for the fiscal year 2022. These "Visitor's Voices" introduce the scholars' research, fieldwork, and Kyoto experience, but also open a conversation about what it is to be a researcher. Lastly, to introduce non-Japanese audiences to Japanese knowledge production in area and Southeast Asian studies, this issue introduces four excellent Japanese-language books written by CSEAS faculty that were published in 2022.

Takamichi Serizawa and Kisho Tsuchiya
The Editors

Message from the Director
Reflections on FY2022

2022 passed amid a slow recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and a search to return to normal activities based on field research. Until last summer, Covid-19 continued to place severe constraints on our activities, limiting overseas travel, domestic and international fellowship programs, and face-to-face seminars. As the newly appointed director, from spring to summer I was busy attempting to get a general feel of my overall responsibilities. However, after the summer break, country border entry restrictions were gradually relaxed and activities within CSEAS have normalized, except for social gatherings that include food and drink. As we entered 2023, our traditional face-to-face meetings resumed as the government relaxed its guidelines for May. We are now faced with the usual problem of many staff going overseas for research and CSEAS becoming deserted due to many faculty. Last summer, I was also able to make three overseas field trips for the first time in a long time.

It is now clear that even if the world recovers from the pandemic, it will be a different place than before: international cooperation and free trade, taken for granted until the 2010s, are being rapidly replaced by divisions and restrictions, while the digitization of society is, without exception, globally accelerating. This is transforming not only the lives of people but also political and economic structures in Asia and beyond. For area studies, these changes are making travel and field research more difficult than ever before and require collaboration with global academic and local communities. And with research approaches, it is now clear that collaboration with knowledge from specialized fields, such as the comprehensive use of data science, will become increasingly important, forcing a transformation in area studies. We are determined to meet the new challenges presented by this new environment.

Over the next five years, CSEAS will be rapidly replacing and replenishing its research personnel. In April 2022, Associate Professor Satoko Kimura, who specializes in underwater bioacoustics, and Assistant Professor Chika Yamada, who specializes in public health, were appointed. The Maritime Asia Heritage Survey (MAHS) project under the direction of Professor R. Michael Feener has continued to receive new research fellows from abroad. On the other hand, Associate Professor Julius Bautista, who was in charge of education at the Kyoto University Institute for Liberal Arts and Sciences (ILAS), moved to the National University of Singapore (NUS) at the end of September 2022. Professor Shoichiro Hara, who has long supported CSEAS in the field of informatics, retired at the end of March 2023. In contrast, two Program-Specific Assistant Professors from the Philippines and Iran and CSEAS' institutional researcher from Japan will be appointed in April 2023, and the recruitment process for an Associate Professor in charge of ILAS, and an Assistant Professor of GYSF is underway for their arrival around this summer. In this process of staff mobility and
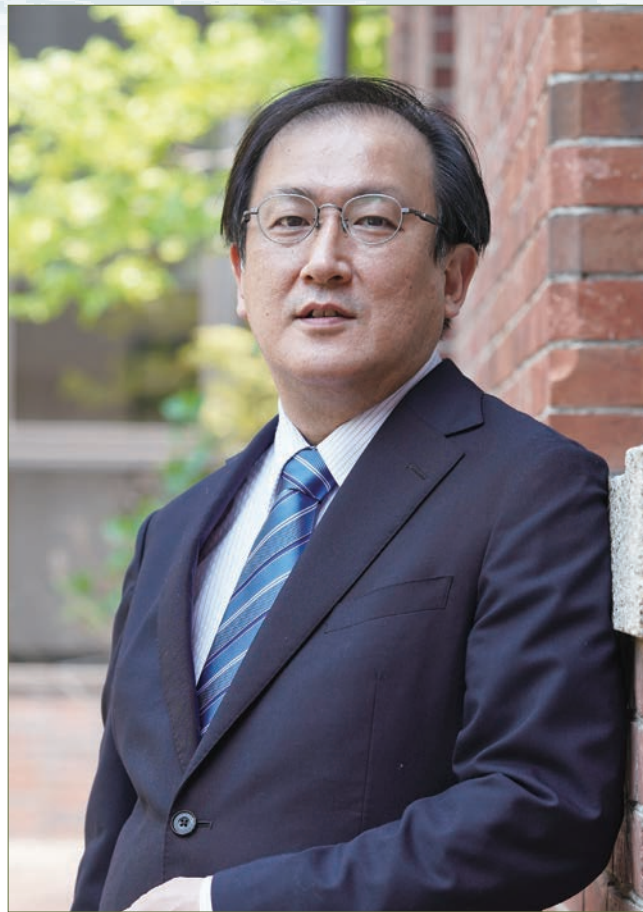
replenishment, we place special emphasis on the diversity of our faculties in terms of their disciplines, gender, age, and countries/regions of origin. Our experience over the past decade has convinced us that a "pluralism of common sense" brought about by diversity is the source of the vitality of research and organization of CSEAS.

2022 also marked the start of a new six-year period of medium-term goals and plans at national universities, and the Joint Usage/Research Center project, which had previously been run in tandem at CSEAS, has been integrated into the Global Collaborative Research (GCR) and re-launched. A five-year joint industry-academia research program with DAIKIN Industries, Ltd. is now in its second year and is making steady progress toward the specification of research themes. Although we held back on holding our long-running Southeast Asia Seminar on-site this year, we were able to hold a face-to-face seminar in Kyoto. Together with the Visual Documentary Project (VDP) and others that took place with Covid-19 in mind, how CSEAS' outreach projects are presented in the post-pandemic world will be a challenge in the coming year.

The environment of national university research institutes has been changing drastically over the past few years. We intend to strengthen our external evaluation activities, undertake reforms including reorganization, and above all, constantly redefine our mission as CSEAS. We hope for your continuous support as we move forward with new developments from next year onward.

Fumiharu Mieno
Director, CSEAS

An Interview with Professor Shoichiro Hara *to Commemorate his Retirement*

Pioneering New Fields with Informatics Knowledge and Methods

The Trajectory of Research, Development, and Practice
—Reflecting on a life in research

Interviewer: Hiroki Baba

Program-Specific Assistant Professor,
Kyoto University Center for Southeast Asian Studies/Hakubi Center for Advanced Research

Leveraging an informatics approach spanning medical informatics, library informatics, humanities computing, and area informatics, Professor Shoichiro Hara has pioneered new academic fields and accumulated numerous achievements during his long career, whether at the National Institute of Informatics (formerly the National Center for Science Information Systems), the National Institute of Japanese Literature, or Kyoto University's Center for Integrated Area Studies and the Center for Southeast Asian Studies. We asked him to review his research and practice and to offer his perspective on the future of humanities–informatics collaboration as well as what is needed to advance collaboration between area studies and informatics.

——Before you became a researcher, what were your interests in high school and college?

My first interest as a high school student was biology. At the time (the early 1980s), there was much discussion around the subject we now call biotechnology.[1] Reading introductory books on genes and DNA that were just being published, an all-night experiment on sea urchin development during high school—these may have been triggers from which my interest in biology gradually grew. My rural high school also had a programmable calculator, literally an electric calculator that was about the size of today's desktop computers, and teachers allowed us to use it freely, which was truly a rare opportunity. In retrospect, I realize now that the calculator used a programming language close to assembly language.[2] It was not at all easy to use, but using it marked the first time I became absorbed in computers, as I was happy to calculate pi

and the Tower of Hanoi.

I also enjoyed tinkering with machines, for example taking clocks apart, and building telescopes and radios. I read scientific articles and other publications about the imminent arrival of a society that would see the fusion of living organisms, computers, and machines. Perhaps because I grew up in such an environment, I became interested in learning about fields that mixed both biology and engineering. I decided to enroll in Natural Sciences II at the College of Arts and Sciences in the Junior Division within the University of Tokyo because of the biology and engineering programs offered there.

——After entering the University of Tokyo, you studied at the School of Health Sciences in the Faculty of Medicine, is that right?

At university, the fields at the "boundary" between biology and engineering available for study were

---

1   J. D. Watson was among those who received the Nobel Prize in 1962 for discovering the double-helix structure of DNA. In 1972, P. Berg et al. conducted the first-ever DNA recombination experiments. In ↗

1976, W. Fiers et al. successfully sequenced the first complete genome.

pharmaceutics, agricultural chemistry, and health sciences. Unfortunately, my score was a bit low for my first choice, so I decided to pursue my second choice, health sciences. My decision turned out to be a good thing. In the School of Health Sciences, I studied the basics of statistics, biology, medicine, and programming. I also conducted a field survey, although it was limited to Japan. This experience proved invaluable when I joined the Center for Southeast Asian Studies (hereafter CSEAS). So, all's well that ends well (laughs).

——When you were a student, I do not think many people enrolled in graduate school to become a researcher. Why did you decide to pursue master's and doctoral degrees?

It was because I was unsure of what to do after four years at university. So, I decided to postpone the decision and go on to graduate school. But I was pretty worried about entering the master's program at the School of Health Sciences. Epidemiology and biochemistry were my favorite subjects, and I got along well with the professors. However, health sciences had a strong sociological flavor, and I did not really fit in. Somehow, I also had poor relations with the professors there (laughs). While I was hesitating to continue with a health sciences major, I received an invitation to join the Institute of Medical Electronic Research Facility of the School of Medicine at the University of Tokyo. That led me to write my graduation thesis on the themes pursued at the Institute.

Still, I was not certain whether I should pursue a master's degree at the Institute of Medical Electronics. It had three divisions: Clinical Medicine, Basic Engineering, and Basic Medicine. The Clinical Medicine Division was researching artificial organs at the time. In 1980, they broke the world record for producing the longest surviving extracorporeal total artificial heart (in an experiment using a goat). The Basic Engineering Division was researching medical devices, such as electrocautery scalpels, and advanced tools such as biological sensors. The Basic Medicine Division, which invited me to join, was conducting medical data analysis and simulations and was researching non-invasive[3] biometric measurement methods. This matched my interests: although the professors in the division were physicians, the research they conducted was engineering oriented. However, I thought that it would be a disservice not to study engineering first, so instead of going to the

University of Tokyo, I entered the Department of Biomedical Engineering of the Institute of Medicine at the University of Tsukuba to complete my master's degree. As the Institute had an engineering laboratory, during my two years at Tsukuba, I studied the basics of circuits, control, and communication, and retook mathematics courses. I then returned to the Institute of Medical Electronics in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Tokyo for my doctoral studies. During the doctoral program, I was asked to make a sensor circuit and a dynamic model of the circulatory system, so my two years at the University of Tsukuba proved to be quite helpful.

■The Beginning of Artificial Intelligence and Information Collaboration Research: Research on Diagnostic Expert Systems

——What kind of research did you do during your doctoral studies?

In those days (the mid-1980s), medical faculty professors strongly influenced research topic selection, and my supervisor assigned me to research an automatic diagnostic system for fluid therapy. My dissertation was on the same topic. Simply put, the purpose was to have a computer determine the optimal infusion volume and intravenous infusion rate to maintain normal levels of water and electrolytes[4] in the body. My research was to develop and write a program with three different algorithms. These were to estimate the degree of a patient's water and electrolyte deficiencies based on their symptoms, to create an infusion plan to compensate for the deficiencies, and to determine the rate at which the infusion would not burden the body.

I was immersing myself in this research during the middle of the second artificial intelligence boom. The first artificial intelligence boom had started in the 1950s. It focused on algorithmic research for inference and search, with the objective to intelligently perform games, such as chess, and to prove mathematical theorems. The second artificial intelligence boom began in the 1980s. It focused on incorporating human knowledge into computers to create intelligent systems that could be more flexible than those produced in the first artificial intelligence boom. Since these systems aimed to achieve the same inferential power as experts, they were called expert systems. The third artificial intelligence boom, ongoing since

---

2   String instructions corresponding to bit strings in machine language.
3   Non-invasive procedures are those that do not involve bleeding; ultrasound examinations, for example, fall into this category.

4   An electrolyte is a substance that ionizes into ions when dissolved in a solvent. Electrolytes in this study included sodium, potassium, and calcium.

2000, has led to the emergence of machine learning, in which machines themselves acquire knowledge by using big data. The third boom has also given rise to deep learning, in which machines themselves acquire the elements that define knowledge.

Returning to the topic, my research was to create an expert fluid therapy system. I began by reading thick books on fluid therapy and extracting the necessary knowledge. The first step was to manually convert the extracted knowledge into forms that computers could use. Next, I developed a database to store the converted knowledge and then wrote programs to execute inferences using the knowledge stored in the database. The mechanism for storing expert knowledge is called a knowledge base, and the mechanism for performing inference is called an inference engine. When combined, these two components form an expert system. During the second artificial intelligence boom, logical inference was the standard.[5] Therefore, the knowledge base comprised sets of logical formulas, and the inference engine was a "theorem prover." I dedicated four years of research to developing a theorem prover that could diagnose and prescribe infusion plans on the same level as an expert. Although the term "artificial intelligence" sounds glamorous, the actual work was an interminable and tedious process that involved reading technical books, rewriting knowledge as logical formulas, and upgrading the knowledge base. Creating the inference engine was also tedious, as it required rewriting and adding code every time a new type of knowledge was added, which rendered coding and version management painstaking.

I also had to verify whether the expert system I had built was usable. I would borrow medical records from specialist hospitals, read them, and extract

symptoms. However, the old medical records were handwritten. Moreover, they were mainly in English, with some German mixed in. Deciphering the difficult-to-read characters to create patient data was akin to when Sugita Genpaku translated *Kaitai Shinsho* (*New Book of Anatomy*) (laughs).

When I fed my expert system with the patient data I had created in this way, the system would proceed to make inferences and output a prescription. I would then compare that output to medical specialist prescriptions as recorded in the medical records. Upon finding a significant difference between a doctor's and the expert system's prescriptions, I would first examine the expert system's inference process and explain the computer's inference process and result to the medical specialist(s). Next, I interviewed specialists about their inference and/or diagnostic processes and asked which part of the computer's inference process they thought was the source of the problem. I would then write the newly acquired knowledge into new logical formulas, which I added to the knowledge base. After the inference engine had been revised accordingly, the test would be repeated. However, the expert knowledge was sometimes vague, and some of their input was difficult to rewrite in a logical formula. Moreover, different specialists often had different knowledge, meaning their inference paths differed in many cases, although they produced the same prescription for the same symptoms. To reconcile differences, I continued to manually modify the knowledge base and adjust the program. When the modified program and knowledge were correctly adjusted, other parts that had worked well would go wrong, and I would have to readjust the system further.

In this way, it became clear that expert systems are flawed. Human beings must describe the knowledge, the high volume of knowledge makes processing difficult, contradictions among experts' knowledge are frequent, and ambiguous knowledge is difficult to convert to logical formulas. Other expert systems developed during my doctoral study days, such as automatic fault diagnosis of nuclear reactors and company complaint consultations, also suffered the same problems. Thus, the second artificial intelligence boom came to an end. Fortunately, just before the boom ended, I completed my doctoral thesis and received my doctorate.

Through my doctoral research, I came up with several ideas. First, since obtaining knowledge from medical specialists and organizing it without contradiction is difficult, the idea is to let the computer learn

5   If A, then B. If B, then C. Therefore, if A, then C.

on its own by using the information in medical records. This idea is the equivalent of today's machine learning using big data. I tried this after finishing my doctorate, but I gave up because medical records had not yet been digitized, which meant that the knowledge could not be automatically extracted. In addition, the learning program was practically unusable given the computing capabilities of the time. The second idea was to measure the amount of water and electrolytes in the body directly rather than inferring them. I abandoned this because I did not have time to develop measurement devices, and although the model was simple, I did not know the algorithms to calculate it. However, both these ideas led to my interest in medical information systems, which, in turn, led me to database and related research, which I have continued to pursue for the past thirty years or so.

As an aside, during my doctoral studies, I did not often use the term "artificial intelligence." This is because the definition or concept of "intelligence" was vague, and there was a lot of media hype about artificial intelligence. Instead, I called it computer decision-making or computer-supported decision-making. This was more in line with the research conducted in our laboratory. Looking back, I think I continued my research on computer decision-making, and even today, I do not use the term "artificial intelligence" often. Although the knowledge base changed from logical formulas to big data, and the composition of the inference engine changed from theorem provers to machine learning algorithms, the framework has remained the same. In recent years, my research focus has shifted from knowledge bases, which I studied for the past twenty-five years, to inference engines.

■Professional Experience at the National Center for Science Information Systems: Constructing a Full-Text Database System

——In 1990, you were assigned to the National Center for Science Information Systems, the predecessor of the present-day National Institute of Informatics. What did you work on there?

At that time, the primary mission of the National Center for Science Information Systems was to create a comprehensive catalog of the materials

held by university libraries throughout Japan—in short, to consolidate the catalogs of university libraries. For those my age and older, it was impossible to know what kind of materials were available in other universities' libraries without actually visiting those libraries and physically perusing their catalog. Then, as university libraries across the country became networked, it became easy to search for materials that were not available at one's own university, in other libraries. Next, interlibrary loans allowed access to materials without visiting the holding university. The National Center for Science Information Systems promoted this initiative.

When I took on the new position, the catalog database primarily used a keyword search and only displayed bibliographic and location information for titles and authors of materials that matched the inputted keywords. Viewing material content was impossible, and the search would fail if the keywords did not match those that had been inputted. For example, materials with "computer" registered as a keyword would not appear in a search done with the word "calculator." But when the text of the materials is searchable, one can search using different words and see material content. This is a so-called full-text database, and I was involved in its development.

Incidentally, on a somewhat technical note, each material is comprised of text, such as its title and the author's name, followed by several chapters. A chapter begins with the title, followed by several sections. In other words, a full-text database needs descriptions of the text structure in addition to the character strings of the material. At that time, SGML[6] was established as an international standard for describing text structures, and I used it for text markup.[7] I did the markup manually.

Development of mass health examination system

---

6   Standard Generalized Markup Language, ISO 8879.

7   The process of adding structural information to the text, also known as tagging.

At the time, relational databases were the mainstream database systems used to store and search data (this is still the case today). Microsoft's ACCESS is a typical example of a relational database; intuitively, it is an image of a table. In such a table, each piece of data is itemized; for example, the field "Author" contains the author's name as its value. More technically, a value of a single item[8] must not have any structure.[9] This is called "first normal form." As I mentioned earlier, texts have structure, so a relational database cannot handle texts. Therefore, my task became to create a container for marked-up SGML texts and a mechanism to search them.

The search mechanism was the problematic part. Search languages such as SQL[10] were invented for relational databases and therefore could not be used for full-text searches. At the time, there was no search language for SGML text. To address this, a professor on my development team invented a search language called DQL.[11] However, he only wrote the specifications and told me, "You do the implementation" (laughs). What I did is too technical to describe here, but I developed a parser for SGML text. This parser analyzed SGML text and retrieved information, such as the text content with a specific tag[12] and the attributes of the tag.[13]

The DQL could write search instructions such as "Display the author of the document that contains the word ABC in the text tagged XX."[14] Therefore, I wrote programs that matched the DQL instructions with the analysis results of the SGML parser and output the strings within locations that satisfied specified conditions. The computer I used was a Unix workstation, which was becoming popular then, and the available language was C. I had studied databases and parsers after my doctorate, so that helped. However, I had no experience using a workstation or the C language, so when I think about it now, I am amazed that I could do that kind of work in two years (laughs). When I completed the system, I moved to the National Institute of Japanese Literature (hereafter NIJL).

■Contributing to the Work Being Done at the NIJL: Updating the Kanji Database System

—**You moved from the National Center for Science Information Systems to the National Institute of Japanese Literature (NIJL) in**

1991. I assume you were involved in similar database-related work, but did the content of your work change?

It changed dramatically. Instead of handling medical and natural science information and numerical data, I was suddenly dealing with classic literature and textual data, working with literary scholars as my colleagues. I have not always been good at Japanese, so when I came to the NIJL, I could barely read the classics, let alone interpret them (laughs). Furthermore, I had spent most of my education in science and mathematics classes and had almost no friends in the humanities throughout high school, university, and graduate school, so I had no idea about the temperament and research orientation of Japanese literature scholars.

—**So, even though the general framework and direction of building a database were the same, the data you inputted and the people with whom you were working were completely different.**

Exactly. It was tough to read classical characters (data), and although I had an interest in classical literary works, I was not interested in research on those works. At the same time, the features and processing of data are quite different in the humanities and in engineering. These were not insignificant problems, but from the standpoint of engineering, computers and databases are the same—this was the only thing that enabled me to work at the Institute of Japanese Literature.

My first task at the NIJL was to update the

---

8 In Microsoft ACCESS, something that is written in a cell.
9 Such as repeating items, concatenating values, nesting, and so on.
10 Structured Query Language, ISO 9075, JIS X 3005.
11 Document Query Language.

12 E.g., content of the author tag is "Shoichiro Hara."
13 E.g., contents of the author tag is written in English.
14 E.g., the author of the document is "Shoichiro Hara."

electronic catalog database. The NIJL was founded in 1972 and is probably the oldest inter-university research institute in Japan. It had maintained an electronic catalog system since its establishment. I believe it was one of the world's most advanced humanities research institutes at the time. When I moved to the NIJL, the system was already nearly two decades old. As expected, the computer system was getting old and the software was no longer in line with the times, so my mission was to rebuild it.

In the early 1990s, servers at universities and research institutes were so-called mainframe computers, but Unix servers were gradually replacing them. Therefore, we had to decide to replace the mainframe computers as platforms.[15] Moreover, the computer network at the time differed for each vendor, whether it was NEC, Hitachi, or others. However, this was also the transition period to the Internet, so we had to replace networks and rewire the NIJL building to accommodate the new network. Webpages were also becoming popular, and we redesigned the user interfaces completely.

The problem was that the original database system was a "network database" older than the relational database. Moreover, although we had the original data specifications, as there were almost no records of subsequent modifications and updates, I had no idea as to the current state of the data structure. So, I began by extracting the data from the database as binary files written only with numbers. I then compared these byte-by-byte with the original specifications to find the areas where they differed from the specifications, or where there were numbers that were not in the specifications but that looked like data. When I found data areas that did not match the

specifications, I manually converted the numbers into characters and asked a senior library staff member to identify the data. I repeated this process to create new data specifications. According to these specifications, I created salvage programs that extracted the correct binary data parts, converted them to text, and finally created SGML text. I used SGML to ensure data portability.[16] If the binary data remained, we would have to repeat the same conversion process in the next update, and I wanted to avoid this tedious job. After converting the data to SGML, I used my experience at the National Center for Science Information Systems to create a full-text database. It was a fairly advanced database for a humanities research institute in Japan.

——**That must have been a daunting task.**

Yes, it took more than a few years to complete. Another thing I struggled with at the time was Kanji. The Kanji code available for computers back then was comprised of approximately 10,000 characters spanning JIS Levels 1 to 4, but for Japanese history and classic texts, we believed that about 50,000 characters would be needed. Many of these were Kanji used for the names of people and places. Users had to define Kanji not included in JIS codes, which were called *gaiji* (external characters). NIJL's old database also used many *gaiji*, and I had difficulty importing them to the new computers. One of the problems stemmed from JIS code transitions. NIJL's old database used JIS78[17], the first Kanji code established in Japan. As this code changed to JIS83[18] and JIS90[19], some codes and symbols were replaced. As a result, if a computer was compatible with JIS 78, but a printer was compatible with JIS 83, characters displayed on a screen and printed on paper were different, even though they were the same Kanji (laughs). Finally, I wrote a program that traced all the changes in the JIS standards to correct these differences; the program contained instructions such as "I changed this JIS78 code to that JIS80 code." Around the year 2000, I changed codes from JIS to Unicode. Unicode includes most of the *gaiji*, so this problem was solved. The cumbersome task of Unicode conversions was determining the appropriate Unicode. As Unicode contains many characters with similar shapes, it is necessary to determine which code in Unicode corresponds to a specific *gaiji*. For this, I sought expert support.

---

15 A fundamental part of computing, such as operating systems and hardware.

16 Being able to easily migrate or move data stored on a specific platform or application to another platform or application

17 JIS C 6226-1978.

18 JIS C 6226-1983.

19 JIS X 0208-1990.

■Resource-Sharing Systems and a Full-Text Japanese Classical Literature Database

——You were affiliated with the NIJL for about fifteen years and involved in the Institute's research activities. What else did you work on?

Another primary task I worked on at the NIJL was resource sharing. Here, we aimed for an integrated search of databases distributed across the network. Standardization of data fields,[20] field names,[21] and data descriptions[22] were necessary to share information among databases. However, standardization is uninteresting for researchers who are taught to do something that has never been done before. Even if the data is just a bibliographic catalog, a researcher creates it with a particular purpose; that is, the structure of a bibliographic catalog differs for each researcher and research project. Therefore, some data omitted in one catalog may be described in detail in another. In extreme cases, there are as many different databases as there are researchers. In such a situation, integrating databases is advantageous for users, who find it difficult to search individual databases that adopt different descriptions and different data items. On the other hand, integrating databases can face a backlash from database creators, who are wedded to their different purposes and sense of ownership in creating the databases. Therefore, to facilitate resource sharing, we created a virtual database independent of each individual database. Data items in each database were mapped to data items in the virtual database. Users could search the individual databases indirectly via searches in the virtual database. This way, database creators did not have to recreate their databases, and users could search for data without knowing each database's location or data structure. I had this idea around 1999.

First, we tried sharing databases within the NIJL. We also tried sharing databases with Osaka City University because Professor Mamoru Shibayama, who was at the university at the time, was interested in the idea. It was around this same time that national

universities and research institutes became corporations. The NIJL was incorporated into the National Institute for the Humanities (NIHU), and resource sharing became a project of the NIHU. The specifications and programs created under the NIJL's resource sharing project became the backbone of the NIHU project, and resource sharing was later developed at Kyoto University.

Another project of the NIJL was creating a full-text database comprised of 566 works in about 100 volumes of Iwanami Shoten's old edition of *Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei* (*The Complete Collection of Japanese Classic Literature*). This project began before I joined the NIJL, and the data was almost completed by the time I arrived. The project still lacked a database and search tool, so my task was to develop these. Since the data were text data, I decided to use SGML. However, because this project started before SGML became popular, and the standard markup for humanities text, TEI,[23] was still being established, we used our own specific markup.[24] Shortly after I arrived at NIJL, TEI-P3 became available. However, as it had some difficulties handling Japanese classics, we decided to mirror the original tags created with KOKIN rules in SGML text, without using TEI.

The trouble with KOKIN rules, though, was their ambiguous definitions (laughs). Technically speaking, KOKIN rules should have been designed as context-free grammar,[25] but they were actually context-sensitive grammar.[26] Most programming languages, SGML and so on, are context-free grammar; standard parsers could not be applied to data written with different grammar, such as KOKIN rules. Even more troubling, the data had many errors, as they were manually created. These troubles meant that the original KOKIN data could not be easily converted to SGML text. To solve this, I wrote an error detection program to identify descriptions that did not conform to the specifications. I then fixed those manually. Next, I wrote a program to add supplement tags to the context-dependent parts of the KOKIN text and applied the program to KOKIN text to generate context-free KOKIN text. Finally, I wrote a parser to convert the context-free KOKIN text to SGML text. From this SGML text, we further created HTML[27] files for web

---

20 Different databases use different data structures, for example, in some, the title and subtitle are both inputs in the "Title" field, while in others, they are separated into "Title" and "Subtitle" fields.

21 E.g., a data item referring to a book title may be written differently, such as "Title" or "書名."

22 E.g., differences in writing dates, for instance, 30th January 2023 or 2023-01-30.

23 The Text Encoding Initiative.

24 Called the KOKIN rules ↗

(https://www.dlib.org/dlib/july97/japan/07hara.html).

25 Written formally, it is V → w. In other words, context-free means that the lexeme V can be replaced by another lexeme, w, without depending on the pre- and post-relationship with the lexeme V.

26 Written formally, αVβ → αγβ, where αVβ means the lexeme α and β before and after the lexeme V. In other words, context-sensitive means that the context before and after V determines whether lexeme V can be replaced by lexeme γ.

27 Hyper Text Markup Language, used to describe webpages on the ↗

display and PDF files for printing. I will not go into detail, but this part of the work required much time and effort. You can access the created data from the NIJL homepage.[28]
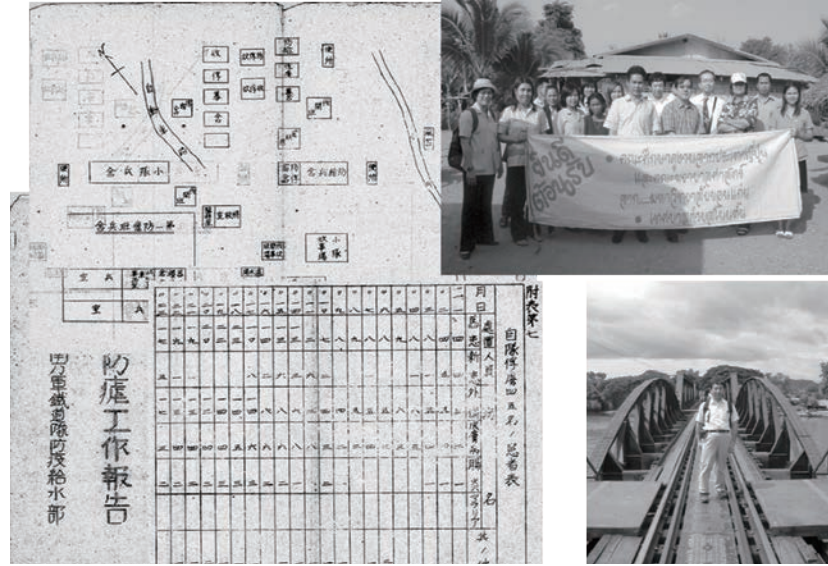
■Joining the Center for Integrated Area Studies (CIAS): Confusion Over Area Studies

——In 2006, you moved from Tokyo to Kyoto to join the newly established Kyoto University Center for Integrated Area Studies (CIAS). What kind of changes did you experience?

There were many changes. In addition to the research, the environment was significantly different. The starkest change was the climate. Fifteen years have passed since I moved to Kyoto, but I still cannot get used to the winter sky. Winter in Tokyo has sunny days with almost no clouds, but it is not so in Kyoto. Even when it does clear up, it often becomes overcast or snows soon after, and the winter landscape can be oppressive. I also found the place names in Kyoto difficult. For example, I do not know how to read "帷子ノ辻," but if I misread it, I may fear my surroundings (laughs). I was also very unfamiliar with the geography of the city. Nowadays, I can orient myself by looking at Mt. Hiei, but back then, I would get lost and confused by all the straight roads laid out in a grid and looking all the same. For a while after I moved here, whenever I came to the street level from the subway, I wasn't sure which direction I was facing (laughs).

My first confusion regarding the research concerned the term "area studies." I did not understand what it meant. Actually, this was also true for Japanese literature. Before I moved to the NIJL, I planned to buy a book on Japanese literature and study it, but I could not find any. I finally found a textbook from the Open University of Japan. However, it only contained articles on individual works, such as *The Tale of Genji*, rather than discussing Japanese literature more broadly. Similarly, I did not quite understand what area studies entailed. Indeed, I still do not understand it very well (laughs).

Perhaps because CIAS had just been established, the introductory phrase "My area studies are..." was often used when presenting research. This was a culture shock for me, as I had never heard anyone in the field of informatics say, "My informatics is..." even though informatics comprised various fields, for example, communications or data systems. I interpreted that they had to say so because researchers from various domains joined and had different methodologies. Then, on one occasion, while at a meeting, I said, "Area studies is not a domain, is it?" A senior professor yelled at me, "Yes, area studies *is* a domain!" I never said that again after that (laughs).

After all, I still do not understand many aspects of area studies. However, I see it as a field in which researchers from various disciplines study areas comprehensively; in other words, it is a container of multiple functions, like an aircraft carrier.

■Collaboration with Researchers from Thailand and Malaysia and with University Researchers

——Since moving to Kyoto, which activity or research project has left the most lasting impression on you? You must have participated in joint research and technical support.

Beside database construction, I had little experience with collaborative research at CIAS or CSEAS. However, I often collaborated with researchers in library and information science, health sciences, nursing, and humanities computing,[29] mainly from Thailand and Malaysia, and from Taiwan and the United States. It was very exciting to work with people who were conducting similar research in their respective regions. For example, in Thailand, I participated in a project to develop a database of health surveys of rural residents conducted in connection with community nursing activities. I helped design the database. This experience gave me pleasant memories of

World Wide Web.

28 https://base1.nijl.ac.jp/~nkbthdb/

29 I do not distinguish between "humanities computing" and "digital ↗ humanities." I prefer to use the term "humanities computing," but because "digital humanities" is now popular, I use "digital humanities" here.

visiting towns and villages in Thailand that I would not have been able to visit by myself (as I cannot speak Thai). The survey was a complete enumeration of each rural administrative unit, or *tambon*, which covered non-urban areas across Thailand. Hence, the data were fascinating from an academic point of view. One problem I experienced several times was that, perhaps due to our poor English skills, although we would reach a mutual agreement about data structure at a local meeting, after I returned to Japan and looked at the data from Thailand, I would be shocked and wonder, "Why did they send me this data?" (laughs).

For me, the research activity of the Unit for Academic Knowledge Integration Studies left a lasting impression. It is one of four units belonging to The Kyoto University Research Coordination Alliance, a coalition of research institutes and centers affiliated with Kyoto University that aims to create new academic fields across research areas and experiment with interdisciplinary research. It was established when I was the director of CIAS. I was in charge of the operations of the unit, which aimed to develop databases to facilitate advanced usage of Kyoto University's research materials as "academic knowledge" and to promote research using these databases.

Working as a leader of the unit gave me valuable experience. In addition, my appointment as director of CIAS gave me more opportunities to converse with professors from other departments of Kyoto University, which was very stimulating and impressive. This interaction has been a valuable asset in developing my research. Usually, I prefer to stay in my room reading books and writing programs. However, because I was required to attend regular meetings with department deans, I had more opportunities to exchange ideas with professors from, for instance, the graduate schools of agriculture, medicine, and energy science. This enabled me to encounter exciting ideas and make new connections. Since I specialize in informatics, my relationships with the professors in the Academic Center for Computing and Media Studies in particular grew more robust, leading to the big data research I am currently conducting.[30]

■The "MyDatabase" System for Area Studies Scholars: Simplifying Database

Creation and Use

——At CIAS, the MyDatabase system was developed and implemented to allow area studies researchers to build and use their own databases. Could you tell us more about it?

As I mentioned when discussing the NIJL database, diversity is essential to research databases. This point is no different in the realm of area studies. Of course, from the perspective of the database system manager, it would be straightforward if, for example, I could create a single catalog database system, and everyone would input their data there. However, since that is impossible, CIAS's database system—called MyDatabase—had to deal with data diversity. This created challenges in both the data creation and data usage functions of MyDatabase.

On the creation side, data creators do not have enough data literacy, so to speak, regarding what requirements the data must meet before a database system can accept it. When we began developing the database system at CIAS, many colleagues provided me with a great deal of data. However, none of these data could be directly converted to a database because the data did not meet the requirements of a database. This may have been because some researchers may think that Excel files are enough for databases, which is not the case. For example, a data table may include other tables (a nested table), or the same item[31] may appear more than once in a table. As mentioned earlier, these data structures violate the "first normal form." These structures may be convenient for humans to read, but database systems cannot handle them. Other examples include non-standardized descriptions of data item names, such as describing a data item name over two lines (to represent an item name with explanations together) or inserting spaces in a data name (to write a data item name as an English sentence).[32] Such descriptions are not allowed in many database systems. There were many other irregular cases, such as the mixing of numbers and characters,[33] or different data types.[34] In the end, I had to manually modify each or write correction programs for each data file. What bothered me was that, even if I solved a problem for one database, another researcher would bring data having

---

30 "Efforts in the New Field of Area Informatics Using AI and Big Data" https://onlinemovie.cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp/en/movie_hara/

31 For example, ten fields called "Author Name" may be prepared in advance.

32 For example, "Title of Authors," where something like "Title_of_Authors" or "TitleofAuthors" would be better.

33 E.g., the integer 1 is not the same as the character 1, and in strings, 01 is different from 1.

34 E.g., the integer 1 is different from the real number 1.0.

similar problems. Therefore, while it is impossible to handle all exceptions, I should have designed the CIAS database system to be flexible to some exceptions. Specifically, the CIAS database system can handle data with repeated item names, spaces in the item name, and has no ID requirement. MyDatabase allows data to be registered into the database if it meets certain criteria, even if it does not entirely meet the strict requirements. I will skip the explanation, but another prominent feature of MyDatabase is that no data definition statement is required.

As for usage function, researchers are very particular about how they use data, or rather, how they use data according to the purpose of their research. Even I would change my approach according to whether I was wearing my information service provider or researcher hat. As a researcher, I change the user interface often. In the past, information systems required a fair amount of programming to create and maintain user interfaces. Fortunately, now that the web homepage is the foundation of the user interface, it has become relatively easy to create user views. Anyone with knowledge of HTML can write this part.

On the other hand, the database system operation remains as complicated as ever. Therefore, I have limited the database system functions available to users and defined procedures necessary to use these functions. These procedures are called an Application Programming Interface, or API. MyDatabase has a dedicated API. Thus, users can receive necessary bibliographic and image data from MyDatabase by composing simple search instructions according to the API and sending them to MyDatabase. All that remains to do is to create a homepage using the received data and complete the desired user interface. Although API is a popular function today, it was a novel feature just a decade ago.

■New Possibilities Due to Informatics' Permeation of the Humanities

——The third artificial intelligence boom is gaining momentum. What are the possibilities for fusion between the humanities and informatics?

I do not know if we should call it "fusion," but I think the synergy effect will give rise to new research fields. For example, when I was in graduate school, the development of CT (computed tomography), high-performance sensors, and medical expert systems during the second artificial intelligence boom led to the establishment of the Japan Association for Medical Informatics. Now, medical informatics is a medical research field. Corresponding to Medical Informatics in the field of medicine, in the humanities, we have digital humanities, the earliest example of which wan can trace back to 1946.[35] Today, entities like the international Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations and related international journals have been formed. In this sense, I think a new "fusion" between the humanities and informatics is possible.

Although not an application of artificial intelligence or machine

Database development in the Community Nursing Project in Thailand

---

35 When Roberto Busa created Index Thomisticus (https://www.corpusthomisticum.org/it/index. age).

learning, there are examples (in the field of Japanese classical literature) of computers making it possible to conduct analyses previously considered too difficult. For example, the technique of *honkadori* in *waka* poetry incorporates a portion of an old poem into a new poem. Introducing *honkadori* is intended to create more complex and richer expressions and identifying a part of *honkadori* seems to be a research subject in Japanese classical literature. One group of researchers describes applying pattern-matching techniques from bioinformatics and other fields to analyze *waka* strings and reveal parts of original poems.[36] In another case study,[37] a computer is used to statistically analyze the characteristics of lexical occurrences to authenticate classical texts. We can certainly expect to see an increase in such cases.

However, I think a little more contemplation about whether we really need computers for humanities research is in order. Even if computers are useful for organizing resources, computers may not be necessary if the research is mainly about interpretation. In fact, I sometimes think that interpretation is at the core of humanities research. If that is true, digital humanities would be superficial humanities research. However, humanities research may radically change if computers can write literary works. This is very interesting. So, I think that the latest information technology, artificial intelligence and so on, will become widespread among those humanities researchers who say, "With the help of computers, I can do things that were previously impossible," or "Without computers, my research will not progress." Personally,

however, I am a bit doubtful about what will become of the humanities as a whole in such circumstances.

——Recently, a smartphone app was developed to analyze and read corrupted Japanese characters. Even if researchers do not adopt this app, it seems it will spread to the general public.

That is possible. I say that because if you look around, from the perspective of information *technology* rather than information *science*, you will find quite a few tools and applications that have permeated the general public, even if they have not been accepted among researchers. A typical example is machine translation. I like science fiction, but it is not easy for me to read original texts. When I just want to follow the plot, I would be happy if a machine could translate a text to Japanese, even though there are many mistranslations. This situation is not limited to machine translation; the use of technology may eventually also affect the study of information "science."

Again, I digress, but that phrase "even if they are not accepted among researchers" reminds me of something. In 1999, I worked as an overseas researcher at the University of California Berkeley. The university IT team developed an e-learning tool for language instruction and asked the language faculty members to enter teaching material data. The person in charge of the project told me that the faculty teaching Hindi, Arabic, and Chinese were willing to provide input, but the Japanese faculty were reluc-

36 https://www.ism.ac.jp/editsec/toukei/pdf/48-2-289.pdf

37 https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/article/sicejl1962/39/3/39_3_216/_pdf

tant. I thought, "Why wouldn't they adopt it?"

I conjectured whether this reflected something peculiar to the Japanese vis-à-vis new information tools. Perhaps they considered e-learning to be somebody else's domain, they wanted to avoid challenges and continue to do things their own way, or they were afraid to use the tool due to low information literacy. Considering how young Japanese today use smartphone applications for everything, it is a bit hard to imagine.

■Information Literacy to Support Informatics-Area Studies Collaboration

——Regarding research, what issues do you foresee in advancing future collaboration between informatics, area studies, and the humanities?

When informatics researchers participate in humanities research institutes like CSEAS, they face difficulties in achieving research results. This is especially true because informatics researchers often end up assisting their colleagues. For example, when building a database, we allocate considerable time and effort to building tools and manually collecting and analyzing data. Unfortunately, despite the considerable time and effort involved, the result has low originality as informatics research, making it difficult to publish papers and in turn, receive promotions. In my case, I was lucky because during my time at NIJL and CIAS, few researchers were engaged in digital humanities and creating databases was valued in its own right—but this is not true today. Young informatics researchers coming to humanities institutes must conduct original informatics "research" while also creating databases and managing information systems. Therefore, I think it will be essential for informatics researchers to try to position informatics as a research area rather than as support for area studies. To do this, area studies researchers need to try to increase their literacy as well.

It is not easy to have a conversation without literacy, making collaboration challenging. For example, during database creation, those on the information "side" must gain a certain level of literacy of the client side before starting the work. In my case, when I was a member of the NIJL, I studied the necessary vocabulary used by the scholars and librarians there and then analyzed the differences in organizing classical and contemporary materials before attending preparatory meetings. However, the scholars and librarians often did not make the same effort. Moreover, they sometimes used information technology terms, but, in many cases, they had not looked up the correct meaning of the terms, opting to interpret them as they saw fit instead, which sometimes became a source of confusion during discussions.

——Younger students have better basic information literacy; for example, they can all use Excel, so in that sense, things may have improved a little.

If we are only discussing databases, people who can work with Excel are, on the contrary, somewhat troublesome. It is like putting an image on a table (laughs). Knowing such techniques may be better than nothing, but it is not information or data literacy. At a minimum, humanities researchers should know what a database is and understand the first normal form. Some researchers cannot distinguish between anomalies, outliers, and missing values. This may seem trivial, but the difference is essential. Also, if one is going to do statistical analysis, they should at least have introductory-level statistical knowledge. Nowadays, we have convenient tools available for free, so obtaining some analytical results is simple if you have data. However, I have seen some cases where a researcher uses a tool or algorithm regardless of whether it meets the data requirements it assumes.

While all this may be true, it is unreasonable to ask humanities researchers to study informatics thoroughly. It is also challenging for them to devote a significant amount of time to creating perfect data. On the other hand, we in the informatics field do not want to spend most of our limited research time helping others. Therefore, creating a position to support data science is necessary. Although funding may be an issue, I think there should be at least one person in every organization who specializes in data science, such as a URA (University Research Administrator) or a research assistant.

■Advice for the Next Generation of Researchers: Be Ready with 2+1 Topics

——Do you have any advice for researchers who want to get into informatics or related academic fields?

I have occasionally heard people in data science say, "I am a data analyst, so I do not know the detail about the data itself." This is very curious. I question researchers who present results based on poor-quality data or without reviewing the data's validity. Although algorithms are essential, it is not good for researchers to use computers if they have not acquired the ability to read data or an adequate level of data literacy.

I do not want to sound old by giving advice, per se. However, I will repeat something that my supervisor told me, which is that if you are involved in research, you should have two main themes and one sub-theme, for a total of three. I want to share this advice with others, because if you are devoted to only one topic, there will inevitably come a time when you get stuck. But if you have two research topics, one of them will always be in motion. Many researchers have studied the same topic in humanities for a long time. However, in engineering or natural science, trends go out of style quickly, so you must be prepared for your next move in case one topic is gone in a few years. To be ready for such a scenario, you should keep a sub-theme in mind as well.

I did not follow my supervisor's advice faithfully, but I have found myself conducting research mostly by adhering to the 2+1 rule. At the NIJL, my main work concerned text databases and resource sharing, but I also started research on the application of GISs (Geographic Information Systems) to the humanities. By the time I moved to Kyoto University, this had become my primary research topic, which led to the development of spatiotemporal processing tools and the creation and publication of a historical gazetteer.[38] Machine learning—which began as a sub-theme—became my main research focus during my work at the Unit of Academic Knowledge Integration Studies.

In science and technology-related research, it is possible to branch out from a single research topic (my trajectory was artificial intelligence → databases → big data). Therefore, while it is good to have a single base, you should have 2+1 themes in mind.

——Indeed, if one persists with single-themed research, it is sometimes difficult to make progress, isn't it?

Exactly. I remember being upset when I first heard this advice. I thought, "I don't know if I can do that" (laughs), but now that I think about it, it was wise advice.

■Source of Ideas and Inspiration: Science Fiction, Anime, and Communication

——Where do you get inspiration for your research? You mentioned that you like science fiction. Is that a source of ideas for you?

Science fiction and anime often provide hints when I think about developing and using an idea.[39] I think anime may have made a more significant contribution. I still enjoy watching anime, a habit my wife disapproves of (laughs).

As for inspiration, you hear stories about people being struck by inspiration when eating or taking a leisurely walk. It is similar for me, but I have my own routine. Be it a question or whatever else, when I come up with something that needs to be solved, I have an image of "sinking it." It is like having a swamp in my head and letting the problem sink there. After a while, something that looks like an answer may pop up. If that does not solve the problem, I will push it back into the swamp. In this way, countless things have been forgotten and rotten (laughs), but there are also rare occasions when something I have forgotten comes to mind again. For example, the idea for resource sharing was like that. When I wonder what I should do, I try pushing it back into the swamp in my head. As for when something like an answer comes out of the swamp, in my case, it tends to happen while I'm talking. When I am talking with someone, an idea suddenly comes to me, and I think, "Ah, I can do it this way." Sometimes I think about it alone, but if there is anyone nearby that I can talk to, I explain it all to them

38 https://www.nihu.jp/ja/database/source_map
39 Isaac Asimov's "Psychohistory" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psy-

chohistory_(fictional)) provided inspiration for the application of big data to area studies.

without delay, even though it may be an annoying experience for them. They may give me feedback, and in this way, I solidify the idea.

——So, talking to people and general communication is also important.

Exactly. The H-GIS Research Group, a group of about 20 humanities and informatics researchers, has met about once every two months for over fifteen years. The meetings have no specific theme. We talk about problems we are having, present new and interesting materials or any new ideas that have emerged, and sometimes, members prepare summaries. However, most of the time, it functions as a space where we just talk a lot. This research group has become a valuable place for me to communicate with others; I often discover ideas that are useful for my research or find ways to advance my stalled research.

Through discussing various ideas in the research group, I have realized that although we may say the same things, humanities researchers and informatics researchers sometimes have different images in mind. For example, once in a mixed researcher group, we tried to plot incident data from a neighboring countries on a map. The locations of the incidents were identifiable to the extent that we could assign latitudes and longitudes. However, without knowing the administrative borders, how could we draw the map? The informatics researchers assumed that since there was no information between the two locations, it was void, and they took the bisector of the points where the two incidents occurred as the border. They thought that if additional information was obtained later, they could modify borders accordingly. The humanities researchers, however, realized that boundaries often follow natural topography and tried to draw the border referencing the mountain ridges and rivers. It is fun to recognize these differences in how we see things, and it can also lead to new research. In fact, the research topic of managing ambiguous borders was adopted as a project under the Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research.

The H-GIS Research Group is very active in identifying new research themes by polishing ideas that come out of discussions and applying for Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research. This group also organizes national and international conferences, inviting people from within and outside the university to join our research group.

■Post-Retirement Activities: Continuing Big Data Research and Operating System Development

**——What kinds of research activities do you plan to undertake after you retire in March 2023?**

Fortunately, the Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (A) "Development of Evidence-Based Quantitative Area Studies" will continue until 2026, so I would like to continue my research on big data.

Beyond that, if I really have nothing left to do, I would like to create an OS[40] by the elderly for the elderly. The latest OSs are nice, but they are too complicated to use. I want to make one that is simpler to use. The image I have now is similar to BASIC of the old PCs. It was both a programming language and an OS, and we could do everything from computer control to programming, just by using BASIC. If I could return to that simple world again, it would be a great OS for older people because we would not have to learn many extra commands. I would like to work on it.

(Interview conducted on January 10, 2023 in the Seminar Room on the 2nd floor of Inamori Foundation Memorial Hall, Kyoto University)

---

40 An operating system, or software that controls the operation of a computer and directs the processing of programs, such as Unix, ↗ Windows, and so on.
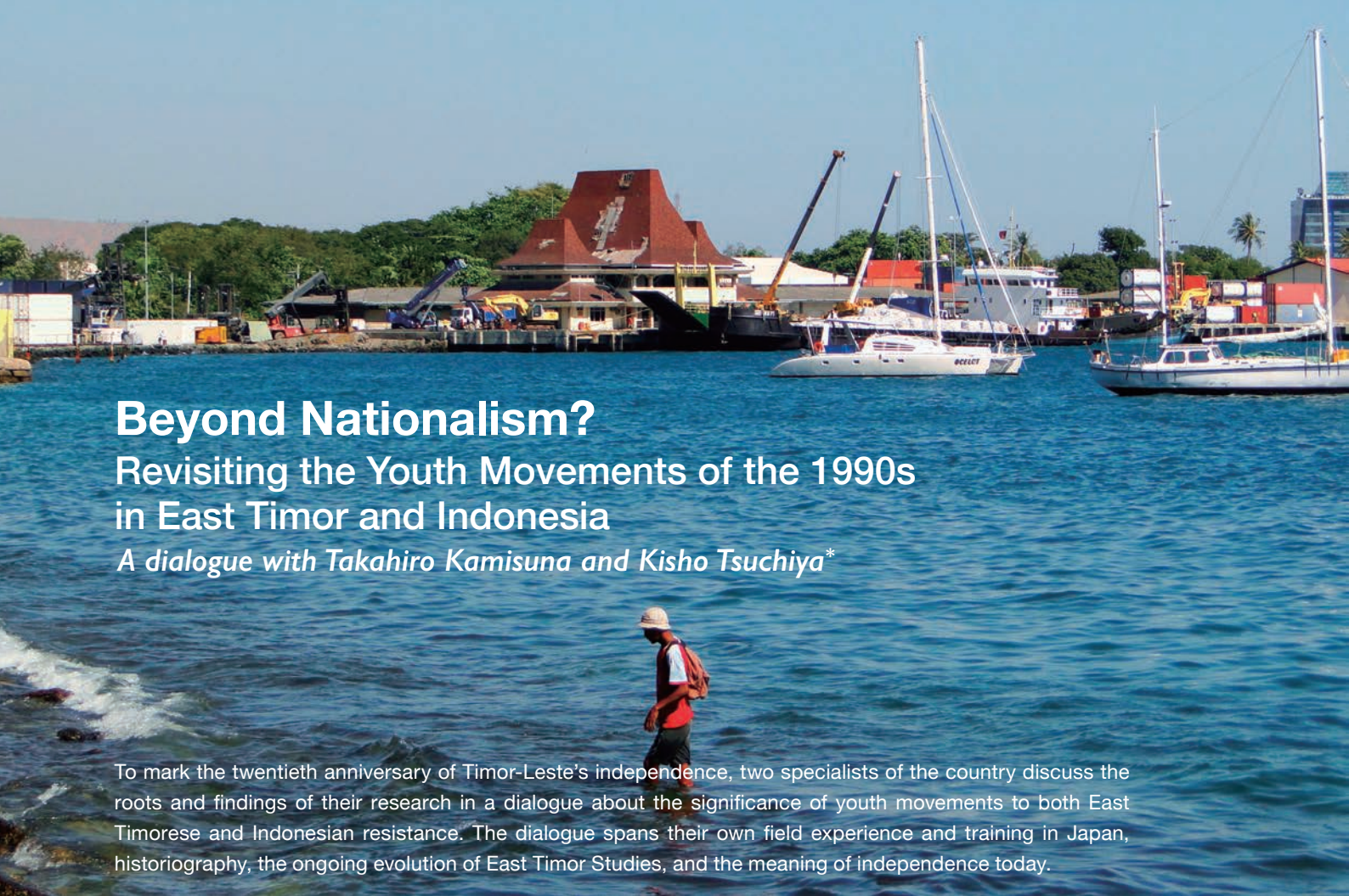
Beyond Nationalism?
Revisiting the Youth Movements of the 1990s in East Timor and Indonesia
*A dialogue with Takahiro Kamisuna and Kisho Tsuchiya**

To mark the twentieth anniversary of Timor-Leste's independence, two specialists of the country discuss the roots and findings of their research in a dialogue about the significance of youth movements to both East Timorese and Indonesian resistance. The dialogue spans their own field experience and training in Japan, historiography, the ongoing evolution of East Timor Studies, and the meaning of independence today.

Research Roots and Findings

Tsuchiya: As a historian of East Timor who also began research in the 2010s, I have been excited by your new approach to resistance. How did your research journey begin?

Kamisuna: During my undergraduate study, I was fascinated with theories of nationalism and began to read seminal works by Eric Hobsbawm, Ernest Gellner, Anthony Smith, and Benedict Anderson. While being exposed to theoretical and normative arguments, I was quite skeptical of the empirical foundations of the theories and began questioning, "Where do such phenomenon actually take place?"

Theories of nationalism in Europe tended to be normative and empirically based in European history. Frustrated with Europe-centric formulations of these theories, I picked up Benedict Anderson's influential work *Imagined Communities*. This was my first intellectual encounter with Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia. After reading Anderson's works, I became intrigued with the nationalism of newly born nations. It

did not take long to turn to East Timor, which had just celebrated its tenth anniversary of independence from Indonesia.

Tsuchiya: Your award-winning paper, "Beyond Nationalism: Youth Struggle for the Independence of East Timor and Democracy for Indonesia," is based on your MA thesis at Osaka University under Professor Akihisa Matsuno's supervision. While you continue Matsuno's exploration of East Timorese resistance, your work asserts quite a different argument. Could you briefly explain the contents and your argument?

Kamisuna: East Timor was colonized by Portugal until 1975 and then occupied by Indonesia from 1975 to 1999. My study focuses on the so-called New Generation (*Geraçao Foun*) of East Timorese who grew up under the Indonesian occupation. I was originally interested in shedding light on the thoughts and movements of this generation through interviews with East Timorese activists who resisted the occupation. However, concurrent to the East Timorese resistance,

* Takahiro Kamisuna is a first-year PhD student at the University of Cambridge-Centre of Development Studies. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Policy Studies from Kansai University in Japan where he studied political philosophy and western political thought, and a Master's Degree from Osaka School of International Public Policy (OSIPP) at Osaka University. In 2020, his research "Beyond Nationalism: Youth Struggle for the Independence of East Timor and Democracy for Indonesia" won the Association for Asian Studies' Pattana Kitiarsa Prize. Kisho Tsuchiya is an Assistant Professor at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University. He served on the United Nations' Electoral Support Team from 2009–2010.

Indonesian youth and activists also engaged in pro-democracy and human rights activism against the Suharto regime. As I conducted interviews in East Timor, I gradually discovered that the East Timorese New Generation and the Indonesian activists cooperated in their resistance against Suharto's rule in Indonesia. This was surprising because dominant discourses of the independence movement had downplayed the role of Indonesians and Indonesian-educated Timorese. Meanwhile, official narratives of the Indonesian pro-democracy movement had marginalized the role of East Timorese youth in the democratic struggle.

I realized that although the East Timorese were struggling against Indonesia, they had received an Indonesian education, the language of their resistance was Indonesian, and they operated with Indonesian activist networks within Indonesian national space. Understanding this backdrop, I grew more interested in the synthesis of the East Timorese independence struggle with the Indonesian pro-democracy movement. My new question became, "why did two groups belonging to different nations engage in a single political movement together?" Conventional theories assume that nationalism is a political movement to establish a state defined by a certain physical territory. But they have not explored joint struggles of different nations that aim to establish different national polities.

In short, East Timorese and Indonesian youth were able to share a political movement while pursing different national goals. Some may disagree with calling this phenomenon "nationalism." Nevertheless, in interviews with former activists in Dili and Jakarta, both groups clearly define their movement as a *nationalist* struggle. In this respect, there is room to explore a different form of nationalism that does not necessarily rely on the notion of territory.

Studying under Pioneering Japanese Academics of East Timor Studies

Tsuchiya: I originally became interested in East Timor through my undergraduate education at Hosei University under Professor Sukehiro Hasegawa, who was the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General to East Timor from 2004 to 2006. Accepting responsibility for the 2006 Crisis in East Timor, he stepped down from the UN position and was later appointed to the Department of International Politics in Hosei University. He was interested in peace building and the United Nations' role, and his plan was to train us as future international officers to

"save the world." His teaching, therefore, concerned how to stabilize conflict and post-conflict societies. Timor-Leste was his most important case.

Kamisuna: Yes, the UN's peace building project has been the predominant research topic of Japanese literature on East Timor. Professor Sukehiro Hasegawa is the pioneer in this field. Hence, East Timor Studies was a part of UN Studies in Japan. Meanwhile, Professor Akihisa Matsuno wrote the history of East Timorese struggle from the 1970s–1999. Professor Matsuno himself supported the East Timorese independence movement. His book *Higashi Timōru Dokuritsu-Shi* [*The History of East Timorese Independence Movement*] (Waseda University Press, 2002) is based on a vast range of historical sources that were available during the Indonesian Occupation.

Tsuchiya: When I decided to become a historian and a Southeast Asia area specialist, Professor Hasegawa told me, "you have flown away in a totally different direction." But, Hasegawa's training shaped my research in a way that he did not expect. He would ask, "What do you think, why did the Timorese people end up killing each other?" Xanana Gusmão, the charismatic leader of the East Timorese resistance, often revisited this same question. It has remained in my heart and comes through in my publications.

How was your apprenticeship under Professor Akihisa Matsuno, the premier Japanese historian of East Timor?

Kamisuna: Professor Matsuno is very kind and supportive professor. He is fieldworker and historian, but, interestingly, a linguist by training. After studying

linguistics and the Indonesian language, he taught Indonesian. In the 1980s, he supported the East Timorese struggle. Hence, he has this broader network with Indonesian and East Timorese activists. I often consulted him on how to use local historical resources and with whom I should interview in Dili and Jakarta. Studying linguistics, most of his research is based on meticulous text analysis of historical documents. Professor Matsuno also has profound knowledge on political thought and philosophy. I decided to work with him because when I first met him, I felt that we may have similar intellectual interests.

Tsuchiya: In his book *Higashi Timōru Dokuritsu-Shi*, although he mentions Renetil, the primary focus is on the armed guerrillas educated during the Portuguese colonial period.

Kamisuna: Yes. I was very impressed with the wide range of sources that he collected. His focus is, however, on Fretilin's armed independence movement in East Timor. My MA thesis was an extension of his work, as I explored East Timor's young generation, which Professor Matsuno has hardly written about.

Field Experience

Tsuchiya: How did field experience in the 2010s influence your research?

Kamisuma: While I stayed with an East Timorese family, the kids often watched Indonesian dramas at home. My host family was quite wealthy, and they often said that culturally, they were Indonesians, as

they studied at Indonesian universities (even after independence). I attended workshops of a local NGO that were conducted in Indonesian, not the *lingua franca* of Timor-Leste, Tetum (although East Timorese spoke Tetum in their everyday life). Having read numerous texts on East Timor in Japanese and English, these experiences came as a shock to me. Yet through my stay, I gradually understood that East Timorese sometimes accept *Indonesian-ness* positively as a part of their life.

Tsuchiya: I had similar experiences. My first visit to Timor-Leste was soon after the 2006 Crisis. At that time, the dominant discourses of East Timorese resistance emphasized the diplomatic contributions of diaspora activists and Falintil's armed struggle at the expense of the younger Indonesian-educated generation. Such discourses were promoted by the East Timorese government, transnational activists, and the United Nations. This was questioned by the East Timorese themselves through the crisis, as the youth expressed frustrations about the post-independence order. An example was the language policy. Although UN higher-ups discouraged the use of the Indonesian language, many of the Timorese officers in the UN offices belonged to the "New Generation," who were more familiar with Indonesian than Portuguese.

   I stayed in the household of an ex-FALINTIL guerrilla soldier, whose family also defied simple categorization. The father/husband grew up during the late Portuguese period and joined the FRETILIN movement in the mid-70s; he was proud of his heroic resistance against Indonesia. His wife belonged to the "New Generation" and she and the children watched Indonesian melodramas every night. I sat with the ex-guerrilla soldier in a corner of the living room because the two of us did not sufficiently understand Indonesian. So, although the state discourse and available history books praised the FALINTIL soldiers as national heroes, his experience was rather marginal at home. I had many experiences like this, which did not fit into the ready-made image of the East Timorese. I came to realize that the majority of the UN's international officers and the existing Anglo-American-Japanese scholarship did not have sufficient understanding of what exactly "Indonesia" meant for various groups of the East Timorese people.

   Was there a specific "foundational experience" that shaped the course of your research in this regard?

Kamisuna: Fortune favors you in fieldwork. I often ate my lunch in the canteen of the local NGO Haburas Foundation. The restaurant was full of former activists

of Renetil, the most prominent clandestine organization that actively engaged in the independence movement in the Indonesian mainland. The former secretary general of Renetil, who later became President of the National Parliament, Fernando de Araújo sometimes visited this restaurant too. So, this was the base for the activists of the *Geraçao Foun*.

When I interviewed Renetil activists, they always expressed nostalgia for the heroic independence struggle, saying "we fought with Indonesians!" East Timorese youth understood that Indonesians were also oppressed by the Suharto regime. Thus, they believed that it was important to make Indonesians recognize that the issue of East Timor was not an 'international' issue, but their 'domestic' issue in Indonesia. Renetil crystalized this idea as the Indonesianization of the Conflict in East Timor [*Indonesiação do Conflito de Timor-Leste*].

With this revelation, I decided to visit Jakarta to interview former pro-democracy activists in Indonesia who supported the East Timorese struggle. This was an unexpected but extremely exciting moment in my fieldwork. During the interviews in Jakarta, Indonesian activists were also enthusiastic when talking about East Timorese struggle. One former Indonesian activist told me that the East Timorese struggle opened their eyes to democracy. In principle, Indonesian pro-democracy activists believed that without allowing the East Timorese referendum, Indonesia could not be substantially democratised. Therefore, they supported the East Timorese struggle to realize their own democracy. This made me confident that I had discovered a new idea that would lead me to a new theoretical formulation of nationalism.

Tsuchiya: It seems that your discomfort with the incompatibility between your field experience and the existing scholarship led you to modify and even change your research plan. Following the findings from initial interviews in Dili, you decided to collect interviews with Indonesian activists in Jakarta. This resulted in an unexpected finding about the cooperation between East Timorese youth nationalists and Indonesian democracy activists. You encountered a Timorese world different from the texts. What was your thought about the available texts at the time?

Kamsiuna: My impression was that most of the literature focused on East Timor as a single territorial entity. As the result, the literature has been confined to East Timorese territory.

Tsuchiya: What do you mean by research that is "confined to East Timorese territory"?

Kamisuna: While some works by Western anthropologists have examined the identity of East Timorese youth, the studies tend to downplay their relations with Indonesians. Although political scientists and historians have extensively written about East Timorese political history, they are also confined within the territory of East Timor. For example, Professor Michael Leach's great work critically explains the construction and development of East Timorese nationalism during the Indonesian occupation. Nevertheless, the relation to Indonesian society is only superficially examined.

Tsuchiya: I have had a similar impression regarding the territoriality of East Timor Studies. When I lived in Timor-Leste, Timorese colleagues in the UN said things like "I am married to an Indonesian woman," "I sent my son to Indonesia," "my relatives are on the other side of the border," and so forth. If one would confine our research space to the East Timorese territory, it could result in a grave misunderstanding of the East Timorese spatial experience, which is not necessarily confined to the territory of the nation of Timor-Leste.

Evolution and New Frontiers of East Timor Studies

Tsuchiya: From the conventional perspective of East Timor Studies, your research method and arguments are rather novel. What types of responses have you received so far?

Kamisuna: Scholars of the countries of East Timor and Indonesia, especially those who engage in social activism, have reacted negatively to my work with the critique that the research overestimates the joint actions between the Indonesians and East Timorese. Indeed, the joint movement may be only one part of the entire struggles of both Indonesia and East Timor.

Tsuchiya: Do you think this is because you focus on those who have been marginalized by both Indonesian and East Timorese dominant discourses?

Kamisuna: Absolutely. In contrast, scholars who study nationalism or other countries in Southeast Asia have appreciated my work more favorably.

Tsuchiya: I believe that these favorable responses demonstrate the success of your theorization regarding transnational cooperation of two separate nationalist groups sharing one political movement. On the

other hand, some activists who struggled for an independent East Timor may feel that by focusing on this cooperation, you marginalize their own heroic struggles "against" Indonesia.

Kamisuna: There may also be an antipathy toward the idea that Indonesians contributed to the East Timorese national struggle. Simultaneously, average Indonesians do not think that the referendum for East Timorese was historically significant for Indonesia's democratization.

Tsuchiya: I have also received similar reviews and responses when I wrote about the conflation of both Timorese sense of belonging and colonial boundaries in the historical construction of East Timor as a national space. As academics, however, we must be open to new interpretations and indeed, to challenge the dominant notions of our time. Expanding research sites beyond existing borders can certainly help with this. When a historian decides to write "Indonesian history" or "Japanese history," at that exact moment, they make an important selection of sources. No matter how many sources they consult at the archives of Indonesian or Japanese history, they necessarily exclude those that are categorized as sources for "East Timorese history" or "Korean history." Your argument regarding the transnational cooperation of Indonesian and East Timorese youth nationalists would never have emerged if you had adhered to country studies or one research site. Your argument became possible only as a result of doing research in more than one site and crossing more than one perspective.

I believe that generally, "good research" balances theory and empiricism. A lack of empirical data leaves us a theory with no basis. On the other hand, a lack of theory leaves us asking "so what?" How do you balance theory and data?

Kamisuna: I became interested in Indonesia and East Timor due to my intellectual curiosity toward nationalism. Because pioneer social science scholars such as Benedict Anderson and Clifford Geertz began their career as Indonesianists, I thought that Indonesia would be an interesting theoretical seedbed, if you will, compared to other countries. East Timor's tragic history of Western and third world colonialism seemed to me to offer new ground. But to be honest, I did not seek out a theory. I was initially motivated to go to Jakarta because I was afraid that East Timorese activists may have overstated their roles, which can happen when you interview "heroes." Nevertheless, it turned out that Indonesian activists were even more

enthusiastic about the East Timorese struggle than the East Timorese activists I met in Dili.

Tsuchiya: Most researchers of East Timor Studies have been Western Caucasian academics. After the UN intervention, numerous foreign researchers went to Timor-Leste in the 2000s for fieldwork. We entered in the late 2000s to the early 2010s, becoming basically the first batch of Asian researchers to do fieldwork in independent Timor-Leste. Do you think that our being Asian affected the result of our data collection?

Kamisuna: That is a difficult question.

Tsuchiya: Let me provide an example. For the past several years, I have been comparing Australian, Portuguese, and Japanese historical sources from the mid-twentieth century. Most Australian informants described Portuguese Timor as a "tranquil," "peaceful," and "idle" place. This school includes the memoir of James Dunn. The oft referred-to book emphasizes changes from "peaceful Portuguese Timor" to "violent Indonesian occupation."

On the other hand, Kyoto University student Tōru Takahashi, visited Portuguese Timor only two years after the Viqueque Rebellion of 1959 (in which Indonesian citizens and eastern Timorese revolted against the Portuguese administration). He witnessed naked racism among the European Portuguese, ethnic Chinese, and Timorese people and sensed deep social tensions. Border incursions were being reported before and during Takahashi's visit. Being Japanese (former invader), the Portuguese policemen looked at him with suspicion, but Takahashi found close interlocutors among ethnic Chinese and Timorese populations. I mention this to illustrate that perhaps my knowledge of Japanese sources (in addition to Portuguese scholarship) and "being Asian" led me to see more continuities in twentieth century East Timorese history than James Dunn did.

In the field, some Timorese friends in Dili told me, "Indonesians are friendly, but Portuguese people are mean." I wonder, though, if they would say the same thing to Western researchers. When I collected oral histories in the Philippines, no matter how I emphasized that I was "neutral," most Filipino elders did not want to make negative comments about the Japanese occupation of the Philippines. They worried that I might get hurt. So, I believe that "who is talking to whom" really matters in conducting research.

Kamisuna: Indeed, the researcher's nationality could affect their research results. Perhaps, East Timorese

activists were more open to me in talking about their struggle because I am Japanese, i.e. an outsider of both Indonesian and East Timorese society. As their youth struggle has been marginalized by both Indonesian and East Timorese official discourses, a Japanese person may be in a good position to hear their stories.

Twenty Years of Independence: Looking Forward

Tsuchiya: This year officially marks the twentieth anniversary of Timor-Leste's independence. In my own reflections on what "independence" means in East Timorese history, I emphasize the diversity of Timorese experience as well as the idea that the independence of 2002 can be seen as a repetition of a longer historical pattern—of migration and displacement, regime change, political consolidation, and deepening of social tensions—in modern East Timorese history. What are your thoughts about independence?

Kamisuna: My view is that the independence of East Timor confirmed the victory of the old elites of Fretilin rather than of East Timor as an entire nation. Drawing from my research on the *Geração Foun*, I see that the cleavage between older and newer generations has become politically salient over policy-making and political representation in post-independence East Timor. Perhaps, the presidential election this year reflects the last twenty years of representational politics. Although several candidates from the *Geração Foun* ran in the election, the victory of Ramos Horta, a prominent figure from the old generation, suggests that history is still on their side. The dichotomous perspectives of the old and new generations also blur our analysis of post-independence East Timor. Although scholars contend that the *Geração Foun* has been marginalized from the cultural and political epicenter of East Timor, I agree with Professor Matsuno that elites from the *Geração Foun* have enjoyed relatively lucrative positions in politics and social avenues in post-independence East Timor. Rather, marginalization is visible when comparing those who were actively involved in the national struggle and those who were not, as well as those in the geographical center (Dili) and those in the peripheries. I suppose that the time has come

for us to shift our analytical lens from a short-sighted one that traces the political history back to the national struggle against Indonesia to more long-sighted and holistic approaches that allow us to analyze beyond the modern territory of East Timor, to understand the country's everyday politics more fully.

Tsuchiya: I agree that we should take a longer view, making use of newly available sources and fieldwork. As for "independence," for the groups of East Timorese whose independence is not yet realized, *luta continua*: resistance continues.

Further Readings

1. Dunn, J. 2003. *East Timor: A Rough Passage to Independence*. N.S.W.: Longueville Books.
2. Kamisuna, T. 2020. "Beyond Nationalism: Youth Struggle for the Independence of East Timor and Democracy for Indonesia." *Indonesia* 110: 73–99.
3. Leach, M. 2019. "The Distinctive Character of East Timorese Nationalism." *Bulletin of the National Museum of Ethnology* 43, no. 3: 283–300.
4. Mastsuno, A. 2002. *Higashi Timōru Dokuritsu-Shi* [*The History of East Timorese Independence Movement*] Tokyo: Waseda University Press.
5. Tsuchiya, K. 2018. "Indigenization of the Pacific War in Timor Island: A Multi-language Study of its Contexts and Impact." *War & Society* 38, no. 1: 19–40.
6. Tsuchiya, K. 2021. "Southeast Asian Cultural Landscape, Resistance, and Belonging in East Timor's FRETILIN movement (1974–75)." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 52, no. 3: 515–538.
7. Tsuchiya, K. 2023. "What was "Independence" for the East Timorese? A historian's autobiographical reflections over perceptions of the past." *Revista Oriente* 29, 91–104.

Knowledge Hegemonies and Autonomous Knowledge
with Syed Farid Alatas (National University of Singapore)

Takamichi Serizawa*

On October 21, CSEAS hosted a lively discussion with Syed Farid Alatas, a prominent sociologist and leading scholar of Malay studies, on knowledge production and the challenges of multiple biases and hegemonies. Two discussants, Caroline Hau from CSEAS and Bomen Guillermo from the University of the Philippines Diliman, furthered the discussion with regional perspectives. The event was attended by more than 50 participants both on-site and online, including many CSEAS post-doc scholars and junior faculty.

As modern social sciences developed in the 19th century, there came a recognition of knowledge imperialism—the dominant orientation in knowledge production toward imperial centers—or Eurocentrism. This orientation remains dominant in various disciplines of the humanities and social sciences today. According to Alatas, however, several additional hegemonic orientations, many of which predate the colonial period by centuries and have little to do with the colonial experience, affect knowledge production in the Third World. These hegemonies include androcentrism, traditionalism, culturalism, ethnonationalism, and sectarianism.

To challenge such hegemonies of knowledge production, scholars must generate autonomous knowledge—that is, knowledge independent not only of Eurocentric, but also of other biased orientations. This effort was pioneered by Altatas' father, Syed Hussein Alatas, who established the Department of Malay Studies at the National University of Singapore (then the University of Singapore) in 1967. The work of the father Alatas formed the basis of the School of Autonomous Knowledge, which emphasizes openness to ideas and influences from various fields and does not recognize artificial boundaries between disciplines (for example, history and sociology). It is, therefore, a foundation of the interdisciplinary tradition.[1] Alatas' works on colonialism, such as *The Myth of the Lazy Native*, are greatly founded on this lack of disciplinary distinction. While based at NUS for more than two decades, the father Alatas remained vigilantly critical of departments in the university that he believed were "mimicking" UK and US universities.

In response to Alatas' presentation, Caroline Hau from CSEAS noted the shift in metropoles for Malay-Indonesian and Philippine studies. Centers of knowledge production and validation for Malay-Indonesian studies historically have been in the UK, Australia, and the Netherlands, and for Philippine studies, in the US. In recent years, however, area studies in the Western world has declined and the metropolitan centers for Malay-Indonesian studies now include Java and Singapore. The center of gravity for Philippine studies has to some extent already shifted from the US to the Philippines. The metropole-periphery divide and the hierarchies and inequalities that organize it can be better understood and analyzed not only by looking at the relationship between the West and the East, but also, and just as important, the relationship between the capitals of Southeast Asia and the regional and local centers. Given these different scales of hegemony (not only at the supranational, but also at the regional, national, and subnational levels), Hau asks what the "grounds" for knowledge would look like if the metropolitan center for Philippine as well as Malay-Indonesian studies is not anymore in Euro-America or Japan, but, say, in Manila, Java, or Singapore. In other words, what new hegemonies should scholars be aware—and wary—of, given these new shifts? Should scholars not only critique a specific, or indeed new, center, but also consistently question hegemonic production itself where-ever and however it emerges?

Hau's second point concerns the question of audience(s). A scholar makes decisions about what topic to pursue, what language to write in, where to publish, and how and where research results circulate based on their targeted audience. How then can we cultivate networks for autonomous knowledge in Asia to gain enough leverage that scholars can produce knowledge on their own terms, rather than accepting the prescriptions emanating from Euro-American centers? The challenge lies in nurturing and safeguarding younger generations of researchers so that

*   Research Fellow, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University

1   The father Alatas trained at the University of Amsterdam with Professor Willem Wertheim, who played a significant role in the development of social history and whose academic program Modern History and Sociology of Southeast Asia influenced Alatas.

they will not be penalized by decisions to engage in intellectual border-crossing and border-raiding.

Bomen Guillermo from the University of the Philippines Diliman elaborated on the dominant hegemonic orientations in the Philippines that are distinct from Euro-centrism. Guillermo first pointed out Filipino religious traditionalism and sectarianism in their dominant Roman Catholic variants, which are deeply rooted in academic intellectual production. Dominant or emerging oppressive hegemonic forms have been actively critiqued and opposed from the ground up by social movements of workers, peasants, women, LGBTQ communities, and marginalized cultural minorities, at least from the radical 1960s onwards. However, according to Guillermo, the call for academic engagement with grassroots social movements has faced several challenges in the decades after the collapse of the Marcos dictatorship in 1986. One of these is the still-prevalent "culturalism," or cultural nationalism, in Philippine social sciences and humanities, which has turned its back on class analysis as well as ideological and structural critiques. As evidence of his critique, he notes how this culturalism, ironically, was aided and abetted by two seemingly oppositional intellectual approaches—neoliberal postmodernism and ethnonationalist nativism, both of which became influential in the 1980s.

According to Guillermo, what most resembles schools of autonomous knowledge production in the Philippines are Sikolohiyang Pilipino (Filipino Psychology), led by Virgilio G. Enriquez, and Pantayong Pananaw (From us for us perspective), led by Zeus A. Salazar. However, unlike Alatas (the father), these approaches only engage in incomplete autocritiques with respect to their more or less strong culturalist and nativist tendencies and, although their ideas may continue to be discussed and developed by scattered individuals, they may not last as well-defined schools beyond the current generation. The crisis facing Filipino scholars in recent years can be traced in part to language and neoliberal academic internationalization. The pressure to publish in journals of the academic metropoles in the Anglo-American world, which now has a significant bearing on recognition, tenure, and promotion, continues to undermine efforts

to write academic essays in Philippine languages and has negatively affected attempts at local theorizing.

As a response to Hau and Guillermo, Syed Farid Alatas emphasized the need for further networking among scholars in Asia and to train graduate students and nurturing critical thinking. He expressed concern that although the School of Autonomous Knowledge, as it emerged from the Department of Malay Studies at NUS, has lasted almost 60 years, the pressure of today's neoliberal policies in education and universities may lead to its decline following his and his generation's retirement. To avoid such degeneration, he stressed that scholars in Asia should not be required, for example, to adhere to the current system of global rankings. But politicians and bureaucrats in Asia may not move away from such a regime. Echoing Hau and Guillermo, Alatas stressed that to secure the space for autonomous knowledge, institutes and universities cannot stand alone against the current prevailing Euro-American paradigms of academic research and university education. Networking among scholars is paramount.

Voyage to Autonomous Knowledge, with Farid Alatas

A conversation with

Syed Farid Alatas, Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, National University of Singapore (FA),

Takeo Suzuki, Project Researcher, Office for Research Initiatives and Development, Doshisha University (TS), and

Zenta Nishio, Project Researcher, Graduate School of Core Ethics and Frontier Sciences, Ritsumeikan University (ZN)

1 Doing sociology differently: Critique and construction

Takeo Suzuki (TS): Could you tell us about your first encounter with sociology?

Syed Farid Alatas (FA): I learned about sociology from my father (Syed Hussein Alatas), who was a sociologist. We always had discussions in the house, especially during dinner time, about society and social issues, about social problems, and history. So, I was very familiar with sociological discourse, although I was not introduced to sociology formally until I went to university. I did my undergraduate study at the University of Oregon and graduate work at Johns Hopkins University.

TS: What was your impression of the sociology taught at university? Was it different from your father's talks, or was it familiar?

FA: Much of it was familiar, because whether the sociology is Eurocentric or not, there are similarities in sociological modes of reasoning and in sociological interest in the group. The sociology department at the University of Oregon offered many courses that were quite leftist and paid attention to sociology of the masses. For me this was also very comfortable because my father conducted class analyses connected to the study of ideology (his book *The Myth of the Lazy Native* analyzes colonial ideology and colonial capitalism[1]). I was very familiar and comfortable with Marxist analysis. At the same time, I understood very well the problem of intellectual imperialism and the captive mind,[2] and I could see how the American sociology curriculum was uncritically adopted by scholars outside of the West.

TS: So, you were conscious of this from your student days.

FA: I was conscious of it because of my father. He wrote on the captive mind in the 1970s and was one of the first in the Third World to conceptualize intellectual imperialism (his first essay about this was published in 1969[3]). At that time, very few people spoke about intellectual imperialism. Among those who did were Professor Johan Galtung, a renowned professor of peace studies from Scandinavia, who wrote about scientific colonialism in the 1960s.[4] The Indian journal Seminar also published a special issue on intellectual colonialism in 1968.[5] These familiarized me with the issues.

I attended university in the 1980s and as a young academic in the 1990s, my interest was more the critique of Eurocentrism. But during the last ten years or so, I have become more focused on the construction of alternative discourses—in going beyond the critique to construct new knowledge, new theories, and new concepts.

TS: I can see that change in your works. In the 1990s, you were dealing with the indigenization of knowledge and from around 2000, you began to talk about autonomous knowledge production.

Zenta Nishio (ZN): How did this transition happen? From the outside it looks like a transition, but maybe inside your thinking process these two orientations coexisted?

FA: Yes, it is not really a transition. These are just logical developments.

TS: It is a continuum, right?

FA: That's right. And it is also overlapping. When we study knowledge creation, there is critique and there is construction—critique of Eurocentrism and construction of non-Eurocentric social science. I am still interested in critiquing Eurocentrism, but I am also going more into construction of non-Eurocentric social science. For this, I have focused especially on Ibn Khaldūn's works as an example of non-Eurocentric social science.[6] I have also published some on José Rizal, and plan to do more.[7] This is the construction part. At the same time, I think my critique of Eurocentrism has developed and become more sophisticated. Compared to the way I defined Eurocentrism in the 1990s, today my definition is more nuanced, more sophisticated, more complex. I continue with the critique of Eurocentrism, analyzing the structural context within which Eurocentric knowledge production takes place: intellectual imperialism, academic

1 Alatas, Syed Hussein. 1977. *The Myth of the Lazy Native: A Study of the Image of the Malays, Filipinos and Javanese from the 16th to the 20th Century and Its Function in the Ideology of Colonial Capitalism.* London: Frank Cass.

2 "Captive mind" is the concept that Hussein Alatas, father of Farid, used to criticize the uncritical reception and imitation of Western thoughts by non-Western intellectuals (see also note 3).

3 Alatas, Syed Hussein. 1969. "The Captive Mind and Creative Development," in K.B. Madhava, ed., *International Development*, New York: Oceania Publications.

4 Galtung, Johan. 1967. "Scientific Colonialism." *Transition*, 30: 10–15.

5 *Seminar* (1959–) is a monthly opinion journal. Its 112th issue in December 1968 focused on academic colonialism.

6 See for example Alatas, Syed Farid. 2014. *Applying Ibn Khaldūn: The Recovery of a Lost Tradition in Sociology.* London: Routledge.

7 See for example Alatas, Syed Farid. 2010. "Religion and Reform: Two Exemplars for Autonomous Sociology in the Non-Western Context," in Sujata Patel, *The ISA Handbook of Diverse Sociological Traditions*, London: Sage.

dependency, and academic extractivism. So there is no transition. In the 1990s and early 2000s I was more concerned with the critique of Eurocentrism, and I continue to have that interest. But during the past ten years or so, I have begun to pay more attention to the construction of alternative social sciences.

ZN: Did any specific event or turning point lead to this change?

FA: I do not remember any specific turning point, but I would say that over the last 15 or even 20 years, I began to realize that we were spending too much time critiquing Eurocentrism without constructing alternative knowledge. We speak about alternative knowledge, we speak about the need to create alternative knowledge, but we are not doing it. We are just speaking about it.

TS: Often just in conclusion, right?

FA: Exactly.

TS: I think this is a very important point. Too many scholars, probably, indulge in that critique and do not, or cannot, endeavor to construct alternative ways of doing sociology and doing social sciences.

ZN: When you began to realize this, did you already have Ibn Khaldūn in mind and did you think studying him may lead to an alternative sociology? Did you already have a pathway, so to speak?

FA: Yes, I had been interested in Ibn Khaldūn since I was a student. I began collecting articles and books by and about Ibn Khaldūn, but when I was a student and a young scholar, I had no idea how to construct a Khaldūnian sociology. I believed it could be done, but I had no idea how to go about it. As time went on and I read more and had more discussions with various scholars, I began to realize that

we need a kind of structural framework for the construction of the theory.

Are you familiar with George Ritzer? During my masters' degree course, I was a teaching assistant for him at the University of Maryland. He used to speak about the architectonics of sociology, or the underlying structure of social theory.[8] This gave me some idea about how to reconstruct Ibn Khaldūn's social theory for a modern sociology. As I became older, my thinking matured, and I was able to write two books about Ibn Khaldūn.[9] I am now trying to do the same for José Rizal. I am currently writing a paper on the construction of Rizal's theory of colonial society in which I use Ritzer's concept of architectonic.

ZN: I listened to your keynote speech at the 2020 Decolonizing Global Studies conference.[10] In it, you talked about how decolonial thought can be discovered in José Rizal. This left quite an impression—although we Filipino area scholars know Rizal very well, we do not view him that way. Your description of the potential science that one can find in Rizal was very eye-opening.

FA: When you read Rizal, you find a critique of colonial knowledge. Rizal did not call it Eurocentrism, but he was critiquing colonial knowledge. On the one hand, he presents a critique of colonial knowledge, and on the other, he offers his own understanding of colonial society. These are the two basic parts of his theory of colonial society.

Rizal examines Filipino history to criticize the Spanish (colonial) understanding of Filipinos as backward and uncivilized. Drawing on

the work of German anthropologists,[11] he demonstrates that Filipinos had a progressive, or advanced, civilization, that they controlled trade routes, and that they were involved in shipbuilding and other industries. Having established that before colonial rule the Filipinos had a progressive society, he then argues that the reason for the "backwardness" is not because of Filipino culture or because the Filipinos are uncivilized, but rather it is because of colonization. In this way, his theory of colonial society is a critique of colonial rule.

ZN: In your speech, you quoted this from Rizal: "the miseries of a people without freedom should not be imputed to the people but to their rulers."[12]

FA: Yes. I am currently expanding this speech into a paper, using a detailed structure to reconstruct Rizal's theory. When I
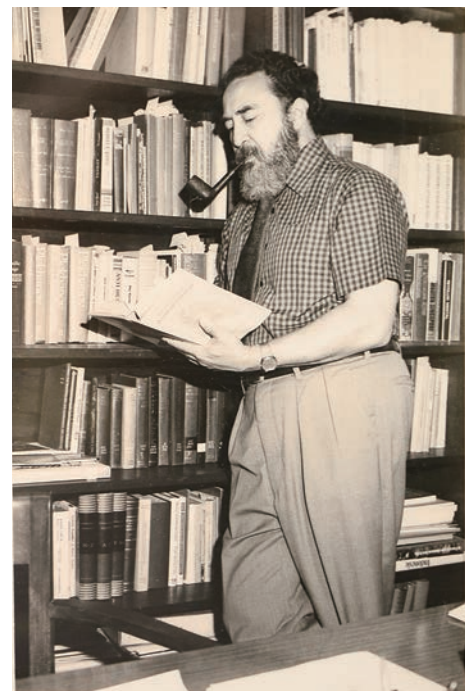
Syed Hussein Alatas in his office (photo courtesy: Syed Farid Alatas)

---

8 For Ritzer's argument on architectonics, see Ritzer, George. 2001. "The Delineation of an Underlying Architectonic," in his *Explorations in Social Theory: From Metatheorizing to Rationalization*, London: Sage.

9 Alatas, Syed Farid. 2013. *Ibn Khaldun*. Delhi: Oxford University Press; 2014, *Applying Ibn Khaldūn* (note 6).

10 Alatas, Syed Farid, September 17, 2020, "Theorising from Asia," a keynote speech delivered at the international conference "Decolonizing Global Studies: Charting Trends, Mapping Trajectories" (Retrieved December 9, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2BejPL5Ex7g).

11 While studying in Germany, Rizal was in contact with Wilhelm Joest (1852–97) and Adolf Bastian (1826–1905, who influenced Franz Boas). See Mojares, Resil B. 2013. "José Rizal in the World of German Anthropology." *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*, 41(3/4): 163–94. Rizal tried to translate Theodor Waitz's "Die Malaien (The Malays)." For this, see Quibuyen, Floro Cayanan. 2020. *The Future Has an Ancient Heart: In Search of Our Antiguas Buenas Calidades. A Voyage of Rediscovery from José Rizal's (Ignored) Translation of Theodor Waitz's Die Malaien to the Jesuit Missionaries' (Forgotten) Reports on the Chamorros of Marianas*. Quezon: UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies.

12 Rizal, José. 1963. "The Truth for All," in his *Political and Historical Writings*, Manila: National Historical Institute, 31. Farid quotes this phrase in the keynote speech (from 39:43 to 40:21 of the video cited in note 10).

say structure, I mean that every theory, every sociological theory, has a concept of human society. This is a concept of how human societies create institutions and how those institutions dominate people. People create the institutions, but the institutions dominate the people. They do not allow people to develop their potential as humans, and they distort human nature. For example, Marx said that capitalist institutions create alienation. As people become conscious of the problems of the institutions, they revolt against them and there is a struggle for emancipation. Like Marx's social theory, every theory has a main structure. I use such a structure to construct Rizal's theory of society.

TS: In other words, you apply the structural model to Rizal's works because we cannot know directly from them about his sociological thinking. This is very theoretical work.

FA: Yes, because Rizal does not present his thinking as sociology. In fact, he wrote journalistic articles, novels, and poems. Therefore, we need to develop a structure and select the aspects from all his writings and thought that can fit into the structure, to give us a theory.

2 Collaboration: "South-to-South"?

ZN: I imagine collaboration among various scholars and networks is important when trying to construct and reconstruct social theories. Some may pretend as if they are writing articles alone, but in fact other people are always around them: friends, colleagues, and so on. What are your thoughts on collaboration in academia?

FA: Well, I think it is very good to do collaborative work, there is no question about that. Collaborative work is always important. Unfortunately, in my case,

I have never found many scholars with whom I could collaborate. An exception is my colleague Vineeta Sinha, with whom I have been teaching a course on sociological theory for many years. From our teaching together and our similar thinking about the problem of Eurocentrism, a natural collaboration emerged, and we decided to co-write a book, *Sociological Theory beyond the Canon*.[13]

I have not found such similar possibilities for collaboration for my work on Ibn Khaldūn or José Rizal. I have not come across people with a similar way of thinking. This is something that I miss. In the Arab world—as you know, Ibn Khaldūn was an Arab thinker—I did not encounter thinkers who would like to approach Ibn Khaldūn in a similar manner. The same is true with the Philippines; it seems that most of the scholars interested in José Rizal are not sociologists or anthropologists, but perhaps more historians.

ZN: It seems that in the Philippines, José Rizal is basically a kind of symbol. How we understand him is the basis of our understanding of Filipino history. This is important, but at the same time quite limited. You try to establish a construct, a new science. This kind of idea is perhaps new for Filipino scholars.

FA: Yes, I remember joking with some Filipinos once that we need to save José Rizal from the Filipinos, because, as you said, he has for many years been only a symbol. But of course, there have been great Filipino works on José Rizal. The writings of scholars like Rey Ileto and Floro Quibuyen are excellent. The works of Resil Mojares and Ramon Guillermo have also been very beneficial. I think their works have been very important in terms of providing ideas for the reconstruction of Rizal's thinking. For example, Quibuyen provides some very important arguments to support the claim that Rizal was not an assimilationist, but rather a

revolutionary for Filipino independence.[14] The works of Ileto and Quibuyen also help us to understand the roots of Rizal's thinking in Filipino folklore Christianity and Catholicism.[15] Ramon Guillermo's argument have been very useful in terms of helping me to articulate Rizal's concept of the human being, which for me is the starting point of understanding Rizal's social theory.[16]

I have not been formally collaborating with these scholars, but I am in touch with some of them and I very much benefit from their work, although they are not doing the same thing that I am, and they have different interests and different expertise. I do look forward to continuing contact. In fact, through the National University of Singapore and the University of Malaya, where I am a visiting professor at the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, we are organizing a study trip on José Rizal to Manila in February (2023). Through that trip, we will try to establish stronger ties with our colleagues and with students in the Philippines, especially regarding Rizal studies.

TS: It is common to label that kind of collaboration as South-to-South relations in the Third World.

ZN: People say that South-to-South collaborative relationships are very important, but this sometimes feels like a North idea. Of course, it is sometimes good and sometimes not good. People do not say "North to North collaboration is productive." Productivity depends on the people and what they do.

TS: Yes, collaborative relationships are not produced artificially, but rather begin from a common issue or similar interest. In the book *Decolonizing Sociology*, Ali Meghji critiques your arguments for not engaging in South-to-South collaboration.[17] I feel that this is unfair to some extent, because South-to-South relations,

13 Alatas, Syed Farid and Vineeta Sinha. 2017. *Sociological Theory beyond the Canon*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

14 See for example Quibuyen, Floro Cayanan. 1999. *A Nation Aborted: Rizal, American Hegemony, and Philippine Nationalism*. Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

15 See for example Ileto, Reynaldo Clemeña. 1979. *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910*. Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

16 See for example Guillermo, Ramon. 2012. "Moral Forces, Philosophy of History, and War in José Rizal." *Philippine Studies: Historical & Ethnographic Viewpoints*, 60(1): 5–32. Guillermo, Ramon. 2009. *Translation & Revolution: A Study of José Rizal's Guillermo Tell*. Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

17 Meghji, Ali. 2021. *Decolonizing Sociology: An Introduction*, Cambridge; Medford: Polity. Farid's arguments are treated in pp. 86–90 of the book with his father's, and critically commented as they are mainly about how to deal with Western knowledge and do not endeavor to have dialogue with other non-Western traditions.

if there is such a thing, cannot be so readily discovered just from the text.

FA: It is not about South-South collaboration; what is important is collaboration between people with similar minds. In other words, you may be a scholar working in North America, but you may have a South mentality. Who we are looking for is not the scholars belonging to specific university or country, but those with similar mentality and interests.

3 Decolonizing the mind: "Take our language seriously"

ZN: In your 2021 keynote speech at the Bandung international conference on social science, you said that we must take our language seriously.[18] When you said "seriously" and "language," what did you really mean?

FA: After we critique Eurocentrism, we want to construct new knowledge that is not Eurocentric. The core of this is theory building and concept formation, which is where language comes in. Taking language seriously for concept formation means that the words in our language are not just used as terminology, but rather that we see concepts in the words. Words are not simply translated from one language to another. When we look at the words in our language seriously, we see the possibility of social scientific concepts.

To give you an example, in Malay or Indonesian migration studies, scholars use the English word "migration," modified as *migraci*. They simply use the conventional concept of migration. They do not take their own language seriously, because in Malay or Indonesian there are other words that refer to migration, such as the word *marantau*. This word is not just a translation of "migration." Instead, it refers to a specific *type* of migration and hence signifies a different concept

of migration. Another word in Malay, *berhijrah*, also refers to migration, but it is different from *marantau*. This is a very simple example of how different words can present different conceptions of the movement of people, different conceptions of migration. This is what I mean by "take the language seriously": look at the meaning of words and see the possibility of concepts.

ZN: This is part of the process of the construction of alternative knowledge.

FA: Yes. I will give another example. In Western social science, the dichotomy of urban and rural is very important because the history of modern Western society is the history of conflict between towns and the countryside. All the revolutions in Europe were a result of the bourgeoisie emerging in the towns and attempting to destroy the feudal model. Town versus countryside. Now, in the Malay world—Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines—the dichotomy is not town and countryside, but land and sea. We had communities that lived on the sea, *Orang Bajau* in Sabah and the Philippines.[19] In other words, the sea was not just a medium of transportation, but also where people lived. These communities provided military support for the rulers on the land. Therefore, the dynamics of history in the Malay world does not mainly concern relations between towns and the countryside, but relations between the sea and the land. This is why we have the associated terminology of land people and sea people, or *Orang Darat* and *Orang Laut*. If you look at the language, then you will find new ideas. This is the point.

4 Knowledge production beyond academic texts

TS: As I mentioned earlier, I think we need to look beyond the outside of academic texts to find collaboration really

happening among people. This is related to the topic of decolonization: how to produce decolonial knowledge not only in a text, but also using other ways. We are interested in such communication outside the academic papers.

ZN: Some area studies scholars are not very familiar with decolonial texts, but try to widen the scope of the "decolonial" through various practices. For me, if the decolonial is only limited to the text, it can become narrow. How we can think about decolonial practices outside of the academic text, for example in the films, photography, or other art forms, is also important.

FA: This is a good point. One of my critiques of Eurocentric social science is that it limits the source of knowledge: the method of knowledge construction is limited to the scientific method, meaning induction and deduction. This requires facts, from which you generalize, and then you have a premise or principle from which you make conclusions. The Western tradition, the modern tradition, limits social science to scientific methods. But within premodern methods, from the Christian to the Greek and Islamic traditions, we find knowledge creation through such things as poetics and rhetoric. Poetics is related to art, which means you make a claim about knowledge through imagination, not through induction or deduction.

For example, some write about the Philippine Revolution based on archives and making some generalizations from the facts. This is the scientific method. Others, like Juan Luna, paint a scene of the revolution.[20] This is also knowledge about the revolution, but through imagination, through feeling and emotion. It is knowledge, because knowledge is not only fact; it is not only assembling data and making a conclusion from that. Knowledge can be created through a poem, or through a novel like *Noli Me*

---

18 Alatas, Syed Farid. 2021, July 7, "Autonomous Social Science: Contemporary Issues in Social Science," a keynote speech delivered at the 1st Bandung international conference on social science (Retrieved December 10, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BkLXUpV8PA&t=973s). Farid says "Part of the problem is that we don't take our language seriously" from 14:20 to 14:23 of the video.

19 A part of a people called as *Sama* or *Bajau* (*Badjau*, *Bajo*) live in Sabah in Malaysia and southern Philippines.

20 Juan Luna (1857–99) was a painter, sculptor, and political activist of the Philippine Revolution.

Tángere.[21] Novel is a method of poetics that uses metaphors, similes, allegory. The novel (*Noli Me Tángere*) gives us information about the conditions of colonial society by allowing us to imagine ourselves through the characters in the novel. Literature, arts, music—these are all means of making knowledge claims that we should use. We should not restrict ourselves to the scientific method.

I use song, music, films, and novels in my teaching. For example, next week in my class we are reading *Noli Me Tángere.* Last week we read Multatuli, a Dutch colonial officer who became critical of colonization and wrote a book that eventually influenced Rizal.[22] We read Multatuli, Rizal, and then *The Myth of the Lazy Native.* Every week my students read a book. But I also ask them to watch movies and listen to music, which we discuss in class. I like 1970s British (not American) rock, because it is progressive, it includes a critique of society. There is a sociological theory *in* the rock music. These are just some of the ways that we can teach.

ZN: For you, then, the important thing is stimulating and expanding imagination, whether that is through music, films, novels, poems, or other means.

FA: Yes, that is right. The imagination through poetics is important for inspiration: to influence and inspire us and our students to be interested in different types of issues, especially those related to the decolonial. Reading novels or watching films, rather than reading theoretical texts, can be very influential.

ZN: How do you distinguish inspiration and imagination?

FA: Imagination works when you put yourself in the place of a character in a novel—you feel you are in their place, and you try to imagine what it is like to be in their time. For example, when you read *Noli Me Tángere*, you imagine what it is like to be the character Ibarra in Manila during the Spanish time. This

is imagination. Inspiration is feeling encouraged to do something. You may be inspired because of imagination. For example, after watching the movie *José Rizal*,[23] I wanted to study Rizal more, because I was inspired.

5 How to teach in a different way: Some prerequisites

ZN: Although teaching is difficult, it must be also an important practice in the construction of alternative knowledge.

TS: What are your thoughts on teaching sociology and sociological theory?

FA: Well, if we want to teach in a decolonial way (let's just say we want to teach in a decolonial way), there are some prerequisites. The first prerequisite is that the professor, or teacher, must be interested in the critique of Eurocentrism and in presenting new knowledge which is decolonial. They must be inspired. And I would say that they must feel shame—meaning they should feel shameful that they do not know their own intellectual tradition and history of ideas, and that they are unable to communicate this to their students. When you have this shame, then you will feel the urge to critique and to create new

knowledge.

For example, suppose that you were a Japanese anthropologist who knows Franz Boas and Malinowski, but cannot explain Yanagita's theories.[24] If you do not feel embarrassed about this, then there is nothing to do. But if you feel shame, then it will inspire them to read Yanagita and other thinkers, such as Fei Hsiao-tung[25] or José Rizal. Then your thinking becomes more civilizational, more cosmopolitan, not only American or Western. This is one prerequisite.

Secondly, a professor must have the freedom within their institution. The university, even if it is Eurocentric, should not stop you from teaching in a different way, or interfere. If you want to teach sociological theory or historiography, the head of the department should not tell you that you cannot teach this or you must teach that. It is important that the university gives you enough flexibility and freedom to develop your own syllabi.

If we have these two prerequisites, then the professor can do anything in class. Right? If I was a Japanese sociologist teaching social theory in Japan, I would teach Marx and Weber, but I would also teach Rizal and Yanagita. I would use text, but I would also use films and novels.

---

21 *Noli Me Tángere* is Rizal's novel first published in Berlin in 1887.
22 Multatuli is the pen name of the Dutch writer Eduard Douwes Dekker (1820–87).
23 A historical drama film directed by Marilou Diaz-Abaya that was released in 1998.
24 Kunio Yanagita (1875–1962) is the founder of modern Japanese folklore studies.
25 Fei Hsiao-tung, or Fei Xiaotong, (1910–2005) was a pioneering Chinese social anthropologist who studied at the London School of Economics under Malinowski.

It is not difficult, but the professor must have the interest. If the professor does not have the interest, then there is nothing else to discuss.

It is also important to mention that education is not just in the classroom, but also outside the classroom. I spend a lot of time with students sitting in cafes and talking for hours. I also have a reading group in my home. Some of the people in the reading group are my students, but some may come from other universities. We read all kinds of things, including Rizal. Once a month we read books and discuss them informally over coffee and cigars. This kind of informal discussion sometimes is more important than discussing in the classroom because it can provide a kind of mutual inspiration through close contact, which you cannot achieve in the classroom. Sometimes you develop a relationship with students for many years, learning from each other. This is very important.

TS: It sounds very nice. I hear that in Japan we had that kind of culture in the past among early anthropologists in Kyoto. Before there was an anthropology department at Kyoto University, or any university in Kyoto, they would gather and discuss together on their own. This was a self-made grassroots collective, without funding and without a department.[26]

ZN: It is quite interesting that you organize reading groups in your home. While the autonomous is sought at the institutional level, at the same time, the autonomous is also emerging in more private or semi-private levels. We should have a broad imagination when it comes to producing autonomous knowledge.

6 Autonomy from hegemonic orientations

TS: Recently there is a trend to "decolonize" everything. Perhaps we must be more careful about how we use the term "decolonize" and what we mean by the term exactly. In this regard, I'm interested in Hountondji's concept of "endogenous."[27] What do you think about his arguments on endogenous knowledge?

FA: It is important. Raewyn Connell often refers to him in her book *Southern Theory*.[28]

TS: Yes. Is "endogenous" different from what you think by the term "decolonial"?

FA: No. Well, in the 1970s, (in knowledge production) people did not really use the word "decolonization." They spoke about "indigenization" of knowledge and "endogenous" knowledge. "Indigenize" means you take concepts from the outside, such as the West, and localize them. "Endogenous" means you take concepts from inside and you make them into social scientific ideas. To decolonize knowledge, both "indigenize" and "endogenous" are necessary.

TS: What do you think of Bhambra and Holmwood's work in *Colonialism and Modern Social Theory?*[29] While it is kind of decolonial, the figures dealt with in the book are still largely limited to Western scholars like Hobbes, Tocqueville, Marx, and Durkheim.

FA: Yes, that is right, but it is important to remember that decolonized social theory does not only involve non-Western scholars. It also involves critiquing Western scholars from a decolonial perspective. In *Sociological Theory beyond the Canon*, my colleague and I also have chapters on Marx and Weber, but from a decolonial perspective.

I would like to make two points about the decolonization of knowledge. First, decolonization should not be limited to diversity. In the US and the UK, people are concerned with the need for proper representation of, for example women or people of color. This is of course important, but it is not what I mean by decolonization. It is not just about representation; it is about ideas and concepts. It is about having a decolonial politics.

Second, while decolonization *is* important, it is not our only problem. Not all the problems in knowledge creation can be reduced to coloniality. This relates to autonomous knowledge. If you speak about decolonization, the problem is Eurocentrism, right? But there are other hegemonic orientations that are not related to coloniality, such as sectarianism, ethnonationalism, or traditionalism. These are also hegemonic orientations that affect knowledge production. But they are not due to colonialism or Eurocentrism.

TS: But they are related to each other, aren't they?

FA: Some of them are. But sectarianism, for example, and the way it affects knowledge production in the Muslim world, predates Eurocentrism and colonialism by centuries. There is a long tradition of sectarian thinking that has nothing to do with colonialism. We must distinguish between those that are entangled with colonialism and those that are independent of colonialism. Take androcentrism—you may solve the Eurocentric problem, but you may still be androcentric.

This is why in the Malay world, we not only speak about decolonization, but we also speak about autonomous knowledge. Knowledge must be autonomous from Eurocentrism—that is the decolonization. But it also must be autonomous from androcentrism, traditionalism, sectarianism, ethnonationalism, and various hegemonic orientations. I have written about this in the *Third World Quarterly*.[30] Eurocentrism is only *one* hegemonic orientation. The decolonization of knowledge is only *part* of the effort to produce autonomous knowledge.

---

26 Referring to *Konoe Rondo*, an anthropology study gathering held around Kyoto University from 1964 to at least 1989.

27 Hountondji, Paulin J., ed. (translated by Ayi Kwesi Armah). 1997. *Endogenous Knowledge: Research Trails*, Dakar: CODERSIA.

28 Raewyn Connell. 2007. *Southern Theory: The Global Dynamics of Knowledge in Social Science*. Crows Nest NSW: Allen & Unwin.

29 Bhambra, Gurminder K. and John Holmwood. 2021. *Colonialism and Modern Social Theory*. Cambridge; Medford: Polity.

30 Alatas, Syed Farid. 2022. "Knowledge Hegemonies and Autonomous Knowledge." *Third World Quarterly*. DOI: 10.1080/01436597.2022.2124155. This was also the title of the CSEAS special seminar.

Seeing Southeast Asia through Chinese-Language Newspapers

Gen Shibayama*

During the twentieth and into the twenty-first century, Chinese-language newspapers have been a mainstay of Southeast Asian cities. Although newspaper articles are often fragmentary, they give us answers about key events, such as when and where they occurred, who was involved, and why they happened. Newspapers also convey the atmosphere of a locale at a certain time. They are therefore an important source material for area studies.

The Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS) Library at Kyoto University has collected nearly 6,000 newspaper materials in microfilm format. However, since few people associated with the CSEAS Library understand Chinese-language materials, especially those written in traditional Chinese characters, these resources have remained largely unexamined. During the process of compiling a directory, I have closely examined two newspapers published in Bangkok and Manila.[1]

In introducing the basic information of these two papers, I consider the usefulness of such materials in Southeast Asian studies from the standpoint of a researcher who understands the Chinese language. I would like to note that I am not a researcher of Thai or Philippines studies, much less an expert on modern and contemporary Southeast Asian history. My current main research interest is the practice of place-making of Indonesian immigrants in contemporary Taiwan from an anthropological perspective.

Two Leading Newspapers from Thailand and the Philippines Available at CSEAS

Aw Boon-haw (胡文虎), a prominent overseas Chinese businessman who amassed his riches through the sale of Tiger Balm, published several Chinese-language newspapers in Southeast Asian and southern Chinese cities, including a series called "Sin Chew," or "star newspapers" [photo 1]. *Sin Chew Jit Poh* (星洲日報) (founded in Singapore in 1929) and *Sing Tao Daily* (星島日報) (founded in Hong Kong in

Photo 1 An advertisement for Tiger Balm (on the bottom row, second from the right), in *Sing Thai Wan Pao* (July 2, 1951)

1938) are representative examples of this series. *Sing Sian Yit Pao* and *Sing Thai Wan Pao* were the Thai editions of this series. The daily *Sing Sian Yit Pao* (星暹日報) originally had eight pages when it was founded in Bangkok in June 1950, but this gradually increased to twelve pages by 1954. *Sing Thai Wan Pao* (星泰晚報), the evening edition of *Sing Sian Yit Pao*, consisted of four pages. The two-page *Sing Sian Hua Pao* (星暹畫報) was published every Sunday morning. As of January 2022, the CSEAS Library had collected microfilm of issues of *Sing Sian Yit Pao* and its Sunday edition published from September 1950 to June 1970, and issues of the evening *Sing Thai Wan Pao* published from September 1950 to July 1973.

Chinese Commercial News (華僑商報), founded in Manila in 1919, is the oldest existing Chinese-language newspaper in the Philippines. A monthly newspaper when it was first published, it has been a daily since 1922. This newspaper consists of 8 pages

Photo 2 Advertisements celebrating Double Tenth Day, in *Chinese Commercial News* (October 10, 1950)

Photo 3 An advertisement for medicine with a message expressing the gratitude of a Chinese man in Saigon to a doctor in Manila, in *Chinese Commercial News* (September 2, 1950)

advertisements alone published in the Chinese-language newspapers of various countries, we can quickly see that a variety of goods were circulated based on regional connections. This circulation facilitated further communication and connection. For example, an advertisement for medicine in *Chinese Commercial News* includes a letter from an overseas Chinese in Saigon expressing his gratitude to a Chinese doctor in Manila for sending the medicine to him [photo 3]. From this advertisement, we can see—printed on the page—a cross-border communication among overseas Chinese that is mediated by the Chinese language.

Clearly, Chinese-language media have enabled overseas Chinese in Southeast Asian countries, who share a common writing system, to communicate across borders. This media can therefore help clarify the manner of information distribution among these communities and thus contribute to comparative analyses of social changes linked to their transnational networks. Previously limited (largely) to studies of overseas Chinese communities within a single country, Chinese-language newspapers have the potential to inform area and regional studies in new ways. To date, Southeast Asian studies have tended to focus on a single location or country. Chinese-language newspapers allow us to expand our understanding of an "area" to include a variety, or indeed all, communities where written Chinese characters are understood. In other words, Chinese newspaper materials allow us to break away from the stereotypical area studies that define a specific nation-state as an "area."

My hope is that the directory of Chinese-language newspapers currently being prepared will not only facilitate library users' material searches, but also help users realize fresh approaches to these valuable resources. I look forward to new inquiries into the concept of "area" as researchers read through newspapers written in Chinese characters, the lingua franca of written communication among the overseas Chinese communities of Southeast Asia. As more people make active use of the Chinese-language newspapers in the CSEAS Library, I expect that scholars will reconfirm the connections between East and Southeast Asia.

and a *Chinese Weekly* (華僑週刊) is published on Sundays. As of January 2022, the CSEAS Library had collected issue of this newspaper published from April 1948 to September 1972 in microfilm format. What is noteworthy about this newspaper is its clear anti-communism and pro-ROC (Republic of China, or Taiwan) stance during the Cold War period. For example, on October 10, 1950, National Day of ROC (also known as Double Tenth Day), *Chinese Commercial News* increased its number of pages to 22 and published many feature articles and advertisements celebrating the holiday [photo 2].

Chinese-language Newspapers: Helping to Redefine "Area"

Due to their readership, Chinese-language newspapers have been used mainly for research on overseas Chinese. Such research has focused on Chinese communities within a single country, discussing for example their assimilation into a destination society and questions of Chinese identity. Studies have also probed the maintenance and transmission of the Chinese language. Yet how can Chinese-language newspapers be utilized in Southeast Asian studies?

The publication and distribution of these media are not limited to one country, but extend from East to Southeast Asia, including areas as disparate as Hong Kong, Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore, and Indonesia. When comparing Chinese-language newspapers published in different areas, we can find connections not only between source and destination countries or between China and Taiwan, but also among different destination countries. By focusing on the

Imperial Japan's Propaganda: Political Publicity and Visual Media Coverage Fueling "War Fever"

by Toshihiko Kishi

As we have been reminded by the Russian invasion of Ukraine since February 2022, there are places in the world where war is still ongoing, and we are touched by the grief of refugees who must flee from war zones. We are becoming keenly aware that war is not a thing of the past, but a very contemporary phenomenon.

Amid this state of ongoing affairs, this book reexamines Imperial Japan's war from a fresh perspective. Why was Imperial Japan obsessed with war propaganda and why did it continue to perpetuate "war fever"? How were impressions about war created domestically and internationally? The visual media coverage that began at the end of the 19th century helps us answer some of these questions.

Covering the half-century period from the Sino-Japanese War period (1894–95) to the occupation by the Allied Powers (1945–52), the book explores the transitions of propaganda through a study of a vast range of visual media, focusing on the inter-relations among the government, the military, the press, and the people. Political propaganda is treated not merely as a technique to spread ideology, but rather, in a broad sense, as a reflection of the times, including Japan's institutions and mechanisms. It is therefore distinct from earlier books on propaganda tactics.

The content of the book is as follows:
Introduction: War and Propaganda
Chapter 1: Sino-Japanese War Period: Trends in Print Reporting (1890s)
Chapter 2: The Russo-Japanese War Period: The Spread of the "Victory Myth" (1900s)
Chapter 3: World War I Period: Press Coverage of the Japanese-German War (1910s)
Chapter 4: Anti-Japanese Movements in China and the U.S.: The Relationship between the Press and Politics (1920s)
Chapter 5: The Taiwan *Musha* Incident and the Manchurian Incident: Proximity of Newspapers and Military Power (early 1930s)
Chapter 6: The Sino-Japanese War: The Period of National Propaganda (Late 1930s)
Chapter 7: The Asia-Pacific War: The Decline of Visual Reporting (Early 1940s)
Conclusion: Immediately After Defeat: Propaganda for Occupation and Governance (Late 1940s)

In the process of writing this book, I became aware of the commonalities between the previous period of war (1894–1952) and the present. For this reason, I am confident that the book offers insights into how to avoid crises in our time.

Lastly, while my book has been reviewed in newspapers and magazines in Japan, I have also recently received an offer from a Korean publisher to publish it in Korean. Although the publication date is still some way off, I am very grateful for the interest in my book from abroad.

Contemporary Myanmar Politics

by Yoshihiro Nakanishi

The political turmoil in Myanmar since 2021 has puzzled us greatly. On February 1, 2021, the *tatmadaw*, Myanmar's military, suddenly detained the democratically elected state leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, other government ministers, and some political activists based on unsubstantiated claims of electoral fraud. It then proceeded to harshly crack down on any resistance, resulting in over four thousands civilian casualties not only of resistance group members, but also of ordinary citizens. Turning a deaf ear to repeated criticism by the international community, especially Western countries, Myanmar is becoming further isolated from international fora. The *tatmadaw*'s actions toward the democratically elected government and the people's movement must have seemed extreme to many. What could have made the *tatmadaw* behave in this way? The purpose of this book is to explain the causes of the current chaos in Myanmar in the context of its political history since 1988.

The Introduction first presents an analytical framework for Myanmar politics. Chapter One then examines the process by which a student-led anti-junta movement transformed into a mass movement centered on Aung San Suu Kyi in 1988, and the subsequent aftermath. Chapter Two analyzes how the military junta, which lasted from 1988 to 2011, survived amid economic stagnation under strong pressure from the U.S. and other Western countries. Chapter Three discusses the political transition to "civilian" rule in March 2011 and the consequent reforms under the new presidency, addressing why the country seemingly changed so rapidly after a long period of military rule and under-development. Chapter Four examines the reality of the Aung San Suu Kyi administration. The establishment of her government in 2016 marked the beginning of real democratization, but it also marked the beginning of an unstable power-sharing arrangement in which longstanding political rivals coexisted. This chapter delves into the extent to which Suu Kyi's "dream" was realized and what she failed to achieve before 2021. Chapter Five explores the immediate causes of the coup and its aftermath. The coup sparked civil resistance, which was radicalized by the *tatmadaw*'s attempts to suppress it by excessive use of force. This chapter asks why Aung San Suu Kyi's semi-democratic government collapsed, why the *tatmadaw* turned its guns on its own citizens, and how resistance movements rose and have maintained momentum even while using violent tactics. Chapter Six discusses foreign relations, focusing on the policies of international powers toward Myanmar. It maps the trajectory of isolation, re-appearance, and re-isolation of the country in the global diplomatic society. The final chapter presents possible future scenarios of Myanmar politics, none of which appear bright. While *tatmadaw* rule is likely difficult, a successful revolution by resistance forces also appears unlikely. In assessing these realities, the book proposes what Japan can do to help the people of Myanmar. The book seeks to provide a balanced overview of contemporary Myanmar politics and insights into the complexities of the country's politics.

Publications

Seeking Modernity Behind the Veil: Post-Soviet Experiences of Muslim Women in Uzbekistan

by Chika Obiya

University of Tokyo Press
February 2022
255+27 pages
ISBN 978-4-13-026171-5
[In Japanese]

We can observe the so-called Islamic veil/scarf debate very widely in the world today, not only in Muslim, but also Western countries. Although the ex-Soviet region is no exception, only a few academic studies on this topic are of the region, in comparison with the rich analyses found in Islamic gender studies. This book therefore attempts to bridge discussions among post-Soviet/Central Asian area studies and Islamic gender/area studies. It examines the case of Uzbekistan, where, although almost 90 percent of the population is Muslim, the veil (or *hijob* in Uzbek) was strictly controlled by the authoritarian secular regime following the country's independence until 2021. The book first provides an overview of the historical background and the development of the veil question in the region before analyzing the complex contemporary contexts of the scarf debate in Uzbekistan. These contexts include Uzbek nationalism in the post-socialist period, authoritarianism, and Islamic revivalism. The book argues that through the veil question, Uzbekistan is reconsidering the "modern" values promoted under Soviet socialism in the twentieth century, which excluded Islamic practices as bad and/or backward. It concludes that Uzbekistan is primed to establish a new value system for its future.

Contents:

Introduction: How to See the Veil/Scarf Debate in the Context of Post-Socialist Muslim Countries

Part 1. Uzbekistan as an Arena for the Pursuit of Modernity

  Chapter 1. Formation of Uzbekistan: National Delimitation in Central Asia in 1924

  Chapter 2. Light and Shadow of Nationalism in Independent Uzbekistan

  Chapter 3. Religion and Modernity: Rifts over Islam in Uzbek Society

Part 2. Historical Development of the Veil Question

  Chapter 4. Women's Attire and the Veil in Central Asia

  Chapter 5. Discourses About Muslim Women and the Veil in the Russian Empire

  Chapter 6. Discourses and Images About Women and the Veil in Soviet Uzbekistan

Part 3. Politics of the Veil in the Context of Contemporary Uzbekistan

  Chapter 7. Islamic Movements and Extremism Under the Authoritarian Regime

  Chapter 8. Post-Socialist Narratives About Women and the Veil

  Chapter 9. New Veil, New Discourse: *Hijob* Question

Conclusion: Does the Long March to Modernity Restart?

The Strength to Dream: Indonesian Cinema and Imagination

by Yoshimi Nishi

Eimei Information Design
December 2021
364 pages
ISBN 978-4-909151-22-3
[In Japanese]

Following the collapse of the Suharto regime in 1998, the domestic film industry in Indonesia developed rapidly as democratization progressed. Indonesian cinema, as a medium that reflects both reality and ideals, has presented a desired worldview while depicting social difficulties. This book analyzes the stories and narratives of 200 Indonesian films produced since 1998 to reveal how Indonesians have, through cinema, challenged national agendas (such as familism, religion, and violence) and historical perceptions of national tragedies. In renewing the national narrative, Indonesian cinema pursues the universal—a society in which multicultural, multi-religious coexistence and human rights are widely protected.

We introduce six new members of CSEAS who are working with the Maritime Asia Heritage Survey (MAHS) project. The MAHS aims to systematically inventory and document endangered heritage sites in countries across maritime Southern Asia through fieldwork in the Maldives, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam. The project uses cutting-edge technology, including laser scanning, photogrammetry, RTK GIS, CAD, IIIF image tiling, and oral history video interviews to create an open-access resource website and heritage database. The project is funded by Arcadia, a charitable fund of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin.

Alexandru HEGYI

PhD in Geoarchaeology (West University of Timișoara, Romania)
Specialty: Geoarchaeology, Applied Geophysics, Remote Sensing, 3D documentation

I am currently a Digital Heritage Manager and a Program Specific Researcher for the Maritime Asia Heritage Survey (MAHS) project at Kyoto University's Center for Southeast Asian Studies. I oversee the workflow of big data for the project, which entails using both traditional and cutting-edge methods to shape our 3D documentation of heritage sites across the region. A variety of remote-sensing techniques, including various combinations of drone and DSLR photogrammetry, aerial and terrestrial laser-scanning, GIS, and satellite imagery, assist us in documenting and studying each site.

In addition to my role with MAHS, I am also the Principal Investigator of the MegaForts project (https://megaforts.projects.uvt.ro/), which was founded by the Romanian government and is administered by West University of Timișoara. The project investigates the defensive systems of the largest European Bronze Age fortifications, which were built in a small area between the Tisza and Mureș rivers after 1500 BCE. The project uses aerial and ground remote sensing (i.e. applied shallow geophysics) and core drillings for stratigraphy, micromorphology assessment, and soil sampling, including radiocarbon dating. As the project nears completion, impressive results have been confirmed, which will form the basis for several papers and a book publication.

In terms of my studies and qualification, I obtained an MA in Interdisciplinary Archaeology and a PhD in Geoarchaeology from West University of Timișoara. For my PhD, focused on the interpretation of geophysical data in archaeology using advanced geospatial techniques, I developed a segmentation algorithm within Ecognition Developer Software for individualization and classification of geophysical anomalies. This algorithm, based on GEOBIA, can also be used in various fields of archaeological research, creating geostatistical data for a GIS approach. It could also be applied to any research that requires extraction and individualized study of some parts of the content.

Due to the necessity of accurate digital models for archaeology, I became involved in the study of fast field surveys with drones or laser scanning (terrestrial or aerial) that allow researchers to acquire and process data, run data models, and integrate results. Working with a plethora of GIS-related software and with a variety of methods (including magnetics, ER, ERT, and GPR), I have conducted several case studies, including mapping the subsurface structures of a lost medieval village in Romania and digital imaging of a Roman sanctuary. Over the years, I have also been part of several international archaeological and environmental projects in Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Montenegro, Albania, and Greece.

My long-term research goals include expanding international access to research grants, exploring new technical and scientific directions for archaeology, and developing accessible infrastructure for multidisciplinary research involving geosciences and archaeology.
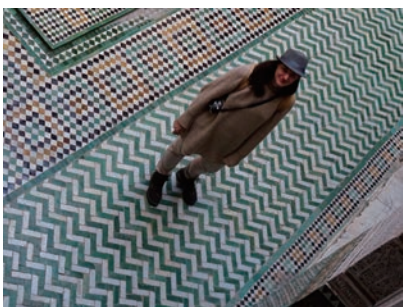
Krisztina Anna Baranyai

MA in Archaeology (University of Pécs, Hungary)
Specialty: Archaeology, Digital heritage, Geoinformatics, Database development and management

I received a master's degree in archaeology from the University of Pécs (Hungary). During my studies, I specialized in the archaeology of the prehistoric and Roman periods, with a geographic focus on the Carpathian basin.

After obtaining my degree, I took up positions as an archaeologist, initially at the Balaton Museum and then at the Zala Museum (both in Hungary). Working in those museum contexts, I supervised and documented rescue excavations and participated in the development and execution of different outreach and museum education programs.

Later, to pursue another interest of mine, I studied computer programming. This has allowed me to develop and apply my skills in both IT and archeology as I shifted my career trajectory toward spatial data analysis, GIS, and database development. I moved to the UK, where I gained experience in collecting, managing, and processing heritage related spatial data while working on large scale, multi-period field projects across England.

In 2019, I joined the Maldives Heritage Survey (MHS) under the direction of Professor Michael Feener at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies. When the project moved, in its extended form as the Maritime Asia Heritage Survey (MAHS), in 2021, I followed its development to Kyoto University, where I was appointed as a program-specific researcher. Here at CSEAS, I oversee data and database management for the project.

My role in the MAHS includes not only designing and developing our data structures and managing our open-access project database, but also providing the technical infrastructure to facilitate the dataflow between our project countries and our Digital Heritage Documentation Lab in Kyoto. This can be particularly challenging for our project considering the large amount of data generated by our field teams, who are using advanced digital technologies often in very remote areas with unstable internet access.

I hope that our work can contribute to the preservation of the endangered heritage of maritime Asia and that our multimedia dataset can be a useful tool for heritage professionals, local communities, and scholars alike.

Shaun Ian Mackey

Archaeology (University of Sydney)
Specialty: Archaeology, Fieldwork and Interpretation, Cultural Heritage Management, Historical Archaeology, Landscape Archaeology, Conflict Archaeology

I am an Australian archaeologist and a 30+ year veteran of Cultural Heritage Management and international research projects. In August 2022, I joined CSEAS as Heritage Survey Manager for the Maritime Asia Heritage Survey (MAHS) Project.

I specialize in site identification, archaeological field methods, interpretation, and analysis. To me, archaeology is an incomplete and ever-changing three-dimensional jigsaw puzzle, with everything from the material remains, site topography, vegetation, and stratigraphy to historical documents, paintings, and more being the pieces that develop a fuller picture. The framework for my perspective is landscape archaeology, which is a palimpsest: a gathering of the past, continually re-writing itself over and leaving traces of what precedes it. As a discipline, archaeology requires you to be part time-traveler and detective.

My career has been diverse in both geographic and temporal scope. It has taken me into the deserts of inland Australia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt; across the maritime world of the Solomon Islands, the Zanzibar archipelago, North-West Australia, and the Recherche archipelago off southern Australia; through the jungle forests of Cambodia and Thailand; and amongst urban and remote settlements, ancient and modern.

Based in Southeast Asia from 2015 to 2018, I worked on several projects that relied on LiDAR data to understand complex archaeological landscapes in Cambodia and Thailand. With the Cambodian Archaeological LiDAR Initiative (CALI) based at Angkor, I performed site verification and data uploads from field surveys to assist in identifying and interpreting c.2000 sq km of GIS-mapped imagery. On The Middle Period and Related Sites Project, I participated in and advised on appropriate archaeological strategies for an extensive survey and excavation program at Cambodia's Early Modern Period capitals.

While my curiosity has been described as cat-like, my specific research interests are focused on the colonial period of former French Indochina. I am particularly interested in colonial conflict and the archaeological traces of the development of aviation in Southeast Asia. The CSEAS Library archive of aerial photographs and Japanese military maps (Gaihōzu, 外邦図) have been invaluable sources of information for this period.

Maida Irawani

MEd in Education Leadership, Policy and Change (Monash University, Australia)
Specialty: Project Management, Education and Gender

I am a program specific researcher at Kyoto University's Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS) and the project manager of the Maritime Asia Heritage Survey (MAHS).

I obtained my MEd in Education Leadership, Policy and Change from Monash University, Australia in 2009. I have experience working with international NGOs and the UN on tsunami reconstruction and development in Indonesia. Since 2013, I have been involved in several research projects, including work on female education leadership and female livelihoods in post-tsunami Aceh. I also managed the 'Aftermath of Aid' research project, a collaboration between the International Centre for Aceh, Indian Ocean Studies (ICAIOS), and the Earth Observatory of Singapore (EOS) at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

In the ensuing years, I have expanded my managerial roles, first in 2015, with the Aceh Geohazard Project (AGP), which combined geology, geomorphology, history, and archaeology to better understand the past occurrence of tsunami in Aceh. In 2018, I joined the Maldives Heritage Survey under the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies (OXCIS) to document endangered tangible cultural heritage in the Maldives. I travelled with an international field team across six atolls in the Maldives for more than two years as Project Manager. In early 2020, I moved to Kyoto to coordinate the work of the project's field teams in four countries and manage the Maritime Asia Heritage Survey while based at CSEAS.

Maria Eliza Agabin

Master's in World Heritage and Cultural Projects for Development (ITC-ILO Turin School of Development, Universita degli Studi di Torino, Politecnico di Torino, Italy); Master's in Cultural Heritage Studies (Unibersidad ng Santo Tomas, Philippines)
Specialty: Cultural heritage management, Historic urban landscapes, Heritage and development in Southeast Asia

My research interests are culture-based urban regeneration, heritage and development, and Southeast Asian trading entrepôts. I am keen to explore practical ways that heritage can be used as a vector of development to directly benefit communities.

During the past decade, I have helped manage cultural heritage projects across Southeast Asia, including a heritage and climate change project with the SEAMEO SPAFA Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts in Bangkok, Thailand. Much of my previous work focused on the Philippines, where I have led collaborative heritage projects spanning heritage conservation, archaeology, anthropology, history, and museology.

Prior to joining CSEAS in 2022, I supervised several built heritage conservation projects in the World Heritage town of Vigan and beyond. I have conducted research on the intangible heritage of Ilocos, the urban history of the entrepôt town of Vigan, and maritime history in the West Philippine Sea / South China Sea. I have also managed projects on the digitization of Ilocos archival records and archaeological digs of pre-Spanish contact period Ilocos sites. More recently, I have been involved in setting up several museums and curating exhibits, at Museo Balay Mestizo (a local urban heritage museum), Museo ti Sakada (a labor history museum), and Museo ti Belen (a crèche museum).

As Heritage Resource Manager for the Maritime Asia Heritage Survey (MAHS) and a Program-Specific Researcher at CSEAS, I now have the valuable opportunity of working on the fascinating heritage of maritime Southern Asia, including the Maldives, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam, and collaborating with colleagues from this region.

Marcela Szalanska

MLitt in Cultural Property Protection (Newcastle University)
Specialty: Cultural Property Protection during armed conflict and following disaster, Digital heritage

I am a Digital Heritage Coordinator for the MAHS. My main research interests include cultural property protection during conflict and disaster, with a particular focus on engagements between the heritage and humanitarian sectors from the perspectives of international law and heritage policy. While International Humanitarian Law, including the 1954 Hague Convention, is integral to the work of organizations such as the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in contributing to Cultural Property Protection (CPP), other areas of CPP are still being developed.

Prior to my move to Kyoto, I completed an MA in Archaeological Heritage Management at Leiden University. During my study, I was involved in a heritage project in Palestine, and I volunteered with the Centre for International Heritage Activities (CIE) in Leiden, where I worked on mutual heritage projects between the Netherlands and countries such as India, Sri Lanka, and Australia, and a culture and development project in Afghanistan. I also have previous experience working in the field of cultural emergency response in developing countries.

During my time in Leiden, I began more intensive work on digital recording methods. Subsequently, I completed a post-graduate diploma in GIS and remote sensing at the Military Academy of Technology in Warsaw, focusing on the application of satellite imagery to analyze the destruction of archaeological sites in regions affected by armed conflict.

Before joining CSEAS, I worked on a large multi-site, multi-period archaeological project in the UK. My main tasks involved collection of data, processing, and creation of databases using GIS spatial analysis and technologies. This experience has been particularly valuable to my role as Digital Heritage Coordinator for the Maritime Asia Heritage Survey project here at CSEAS. I hope that the work of the MAHS project can make substantial contributions toward improving the management, protection, and preservation of endangered cultural heritage in maritime Southern Asia and support the sustainability of healthy, secure, and peaceful communities.

Interview with

Benjamas Kumsueb

Guest Research Associate of CSEAS from March – June 2022

The Research Contribution to Organic and Conventional Cassava in Thailand

Please tell us about your research.

My research assesses organic and conventional cassava productivity in Yasothon Province, Thailand. Cassava is one of the top three commodities contributing both quantity and value to Thailand's agricultural sector, with a total of 506,000 farming households in the cassava supply chain. In seeking to better understand the transformation from conventional to organic cassava production systems, I identify key factors influencing the change, focusing specifically on the yield gap between the two systems. Finally, I use a simulation model to provide site-specific technologies to farmers of both production systems to improve cassava productivity.

Cassava roots in farmer field, Thailand

How many research themes do you have?

My research consists of 1) analyzing key socioeconomic factors, biophysical properties, and crop management practices related to the transformation of production practices and yield gaps by using function models; and 2) developing DSSAT crop models to provide site-specific recommendations for cassava production practices that are appropriate to each farm's environment and management conditions. The hope is to facilitate farmers' decision making to maximize the use of farm resources and reap the most benefits.

Why do you find your research topic interesting?

Cassava is a suitable crop for resource-poor environments because it can succeed with low inputs of fertilizers, water, and farm labor. However, because it is most often cultivated as a monocrop, its production impacts biodiversity and deteriorates soil quality. Productivity improvement and technological solutions could enhance both conventional and organic production systems. Integrated systems not only produce high yields, but also enhance the quality of soil and reduce negative impacts on the environment, thus contributing to sustainability.

How did you get started in your research and how did you come to focus on your current research?

I have been researching how to improve crop productivity for more than ten years. For my PhD dissertation, I focus on cassava because this crop has a wide range of uses, from food and animal feed to energy. Nowadays, cassava supply is lower than the demand and Thailand is seeking supply from other countries. Both farmers and factories need upgraded practices and technical innovations to be assured of continued growth.

Have you had any difficulties in putting together the results of your research into a research paper or book?

My research is conducted in the field working with farmers. This requires a significant amount of time to collect, organize, and analyze the data. It is important to advance both theories and techniques. Therefore, writing is a time-consuming and iterative process. Every now and then, I have to remind myself not to give up. I know that I am not perfect, but I do my best along my route and responsibility.

Cassava harvesting in Thailand

Can you share with us an episode about any influential people, things, and places you have encountered whilst doing your research?

I had a chance to join a training course on organic farming as the lecturer on the topic "nutrient management to increase organic cassava" in Yasothon Province. The participating farmers believe organic practices can provide a good livelihood and sustain their soils. I could sense their ambition to switch their practices despite most people in their community pointing out the disadvantages of such a switch. The organic farmers want to prove that the practices can be successful, and they hope that people in the community will change their minds. From my side as a researcher, I can support them with knowledge and be their partner. We cannot predict our success, but we can continuously work toward it

Which books or people have influenced you?

I often read various kinds of positive thinking books to boost my mind, to move forward, and to move out from my comfort zone and routine way of thinking. It helps me to find new ways of mobilizing myself to be a good, friendly, and active person. I like *Leadership and Self-Deception: Getting out of the Box* (in Thai). I love to read motivational and positive quotes. People who have influenced me are Nelson Mandela, Walt Disney, and Benjamin Franklin, whose quotes are powerful. They easily support and push me to keep going and move forward

What is your ideal image of a researcher?

To be a good researcher, a student must reach the required knowledge base and gain experience in the research study area. A good researcher works in a collaborative way, but is also able to prepare and manage research independently with a creative approach to complex problems. In addition, good researchers write, present, and publish academic papers to the public.

What is your must-have gear for field research and writing?

The academic student should be knowing and inquiring; they should synthesize knowledge to solve problems. They should seek solutions to fulfill research outcomes by continuously planning, acting, observing, and learning in professional practice. I am striving to achieve those qualifications every day

What books can you recommend to a younger people?

I would like to recommend I*ntroduction to Research Method*, which explores the nature of being a researcher, its challenges, and ethical considerations relating to various fields. This book offers young researchers a solid foundation from which they can make decisions about the next steps in their research path.

What would you say to people who want to become researchers?

To become a researcher, we should have a strong interest in learning, demonstrate a strong work ethic, and have a desire to work in various working environments. We must have good communication skills and be focused. We should also have advanced knowledge of one or more specialized areas.

What ambitions do you have for the future?

I will continue to develop my scholarship and research career. I would like to improve my knowledge and skill and enhance my areas of specialization. I am an agricultural researcher. Today agricultural systems must be concerned with the maximum use of resources to maximize profit. Therefore, people move out of agriculture. How can we support people to return to agriculture? It is the main source of food and income for many people and the economic sector that employs the most people. I hope that my work can benefit farmers and the sector as a whole.

(July 2022)

Reference

Pajo, B. 2017. *Introduction to Research Methods: A Hands-on Approach*. Edition 1. Singapore: SAGE Publications

Interview with

Patrick McCormick

Visiting Research Scholar of CSEAS from April – September 2022

When 'the Field' Becomes Home

Please tell us about your research.

The research I am working on while I am here at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies is a book project which I started many years ago. I am a historian working on Burmese history. I lived in Burma for sixteen years before having to leave because of the coup d'état in 2021, otherwise I would have stayed longer. So my perspective and my project are different from that of most other historians. I didn't see myself as an outside researcher who was visiting the country for only a year or two, and would then return to the US or wherever to write up my findings.

Over the course of my time in Burma, I noticed the profound impact that British ideas and practices have had on so many aspects of people's lives. Equally striking was how that situation seems to be normal and natural to most people living there—it's not like in, say, India, where people have thought a lot more about colonization and decolonization.

My book project is about how British ideas and practices are key to how Burmese people understand their past and write their histories, for example, the idea of race (now called "ethnicity"). I argue that the British created this place called "Burma," which is not the same as the kingdoms that went before it. My ideas are not that revolutionary—the British created India, the French Cambodia (what they called *Cambodge*) and the Dutch created Indonesia. It's just that no one has talked about those processes in the context of Burma before.

How many research themes do you have?

I've outlined my main interest in history just now. I also have a project about Gordon Luce, one of the foundational British colonial scholars who wrote on Burma. I look at the idea of migration in his work, which reflected a larger idea in European thought at the time that the peoples of Asia had migrated from somewhere else.

I also have a few lines of research related to contact and historical linguistics. I have done some work on the dialects of Burmese, and have been meaning to look at the intersection between difference in language and the drive to assert ethnic difference. Also related to the Burmese dialects, I eventually want to do some analysis of features of their syntax.

I also have an abiding interest in the use of English in Burma. English is not a national language in Burma, and there is not the language fragmentation of a country like India. Yet English is everywhere and a sign of being educated.

Why do you find your research topic interesting?

To return to what I said a bit earlier, my research interests are not abstract—these were topics related to the people around me, and are aspects of phenomena that I could see all around. There are so many things that have not been talked about, or described, or thought about critically. It's not like in, say, Thailand or Indonesia, much less India, where a sizeable number of scholars have built up generations of scholarship and research. There have been fewer intellectuals in Burma working on the humanities, and generally their research interests are not the same as those of international scholars.

Also remember that so many of the foreigners in Burma who write about the country do not speak the language, yet consider themselves experts. They write their reports or their books based on the same old ideas and interpretations, which keep getting recirculated. That reality has served as an impetus for me to think more deeply about these topics.

How did you get started in your research and how did you come to focus on your current research?

My research started before I moved to Burma full time in 2006. I started learning Burmese in 1995, but even before then I had been exposed to the country when I took some classes on Southeast Asian history at university. I was initially interested in the Mon people and their language—today they live mainly in Burma, but there are many people of Mon ancestry and Mon migrants from Burma living in Thailand, too. It was from my initial interest in Mons that I came to my research, then living in Burma I saw that

Fig.1

Fig.2

Fig.3

Fig.4

Fig.5

Fig.1 Reception for a Mon-language Manuscript Recitation, 2008

Fig.2 Talking with a Thai Mon monk, February 2019

Fig.3 Looking at Thai Mon Manuscripts at Aj. Bang'orn's House, January 2019

Fig.4 Talking with Jinghpaw People, Anisakhan Burma, 2016

Fig.5 Young Lao-Speakers, Mon State, Burma, 2012

much of the thinking and the processes that I had seen among them were also present among other ethnic minority groups, and in fact, present generally in the wider society.

Have you had any difficulties in putting together the results of your research into a research paper or book?

I have had many challenges over the years. When you have experienced a lot or have a lot to say, it is hard to trim things down or leave them out. When you can see the complexity of a situation or a phenomenon, it takes a lot of practice to learn what to leave out, and how to express yourself in a way that your audience can understand and appreciate. Another temptation is to write a book that is "Everything I know about Burma," as I joke with a friend of mine who has similar research experiences.

Something that I've learned is to think about my audience in my writing. What will they want to know? How can I help them understand? As a young writer, it's very easy to focus on what *I* want to say, and what I think is interesting instead.

I have been working with two writing coaches. It has helped me a lot. One of them in particular has helped me look at my own perfectionism, and how for people of my background (white Americans), the impulse can be very strong. She even helped me see that perfectionism can be tied up with white supremacy, which really surprised me. It's very subtle and subconscious. The idea is that we must be perfect, so that *we* aren't like *them*…

Can you share with us an episode about any influential people, things, and places you have encountered whilst doing your research?

I only went to public universities, so I generally didn't come across the really big name, famous academics, or rather, the kinds of academics that people make a big fuss over. Not that the work of the people who trained me wasn't influential or important! Intellectually, so many of my encounters have been through what other people have written. I was able to chew on their ideas slowly and let them sink in.

I have occasionally then met one of those famous academics in real life. If I'm only chatting with them for a few minutes, or meeting them in a group, there's little possibility for developing a rapport. Or sometimes I've thought, "Man, what a big ego this guy has…."

Which books or people have influenced you?

When I was at the University of Washington, there were so many people who pushed me and mentored me. I've kept in touch with most of them. My advisor Laurie Sears was one. Even though she wasn't a Burma specialist, she believed in my work and helped me see the value in what I did, but also pushed my thinking forward. I've had so many language teachers who have been so patient and generous, like John Okell and U Saw Htun, both of whom also helped me think deeply about Burmese as a language. I also want to mention Richard O'Connor, whom I heard speak during the summer of 1996 and whose ideas got me thinking. We have a tradition of spending an hour or two together whenever we can meet at the Association for Asian Studies conference. He listens to me but is also a generous intellectual mentor.

What is your ideal image of a researcher?

My ideas have changed a lot. When I was younger, I had a lot of unhelpful and unrealistic images in my head. Especially in the US, there is this cult of the "scholar genius," who is almost always a man. He goes off into the field by himself, he speaks lots of languages, he has authentic experiences, he has been "over there" for so long he is practically a native, he has a fantastic job at a first-rank university and so always has funding, his books win awards.

None of that is realistic or sustainable, for so many reasons, not least of which because that vision of academic "success" has become infinitely more out of reach than ever before. Now that I've reached a certain age, I try to mentor some younger scholars and tell them specifically not to compare themselves to the scholars they read, or to think that those scholars had everything all figured out, or that if you can't be like them, there's no point to doing your work.

So my ideal would now be someone who is not overly ambitious, someone who does their best to learn local languages (I don't want to read anything by another Burma or Thailand expert who speaks neither of those languages—and I don't just mean enough for ordering food), and someone who is open and honest.

What is your must-have gear for field research and writing?

I wouldn't consider my work as a historian "fieldwork," because it was just me talking to people where I lived. When I've done linguistic research, I've had to make recordings, so a good recorder and microphone were crucial. Even more so was a quiet place to make the recordings, which is not always easy to find in Southeast Asia. Working with men is one thing, but what do you do when you are working with women informants? You can't just say, "Please come to my home." So having a woman colleague or assistant or friend, especially when I was working with strangers, was very helpful.

For writing, the ideal is a good laptop, a big external monitor, and an office, or failing that, a quiet coffee shop. Instrumental music is also helpful, as is of course tea!

What would you say to people who want to become researchers?

Listen, learn, be open. Do research on something that really inspires you, because research involves a lot of time and heartache. It's okay to be confused and discouraged—that probably means you are getting somewhere. It's important, though, to seek out guidance or help when you feel like it's all impossible.

Be aware: you cannot always take what people tell you literally. Analyze, and tell us what you think. Some younger people think it's the right and ethical thing to just repeat what people in the field tell them without any critical framing or analysis. I find this dangerous and naïve.

Be aware of how people perceive you, because your race and gender and nationality do matter, though some of my European mentees do not want to hear that. If you yourself are Asian and are working in Asia, you will have a very different experience from what I have had. It's important to understand how locals perceive us as researchers, who are usually of another race and nationality, and how they may want to please us, or make themselves look good, or alternately, may want to get us on their side and have us perceive them in a certain way. It takes practice to understand these things.

What ambitions do you have for the future?

I would like to finish some of the books and articles that I've been thinking about. If I can do that, I'll be happy.

(June 2022)

Interview with

Uxía Alonso
Guest Research Associate of CSEAS from May – September 2022

Playing on a Relay Team: The Passage of Knowledge in the Study of Viruses

Please tell us about your research.

My research is focused on African swine fever (ASFV), a viral disease that affects different members of the Suidae family, especially pigs and wild boars. The disease has been endemic in Africa since 1921, when pigs were brought from Europe to England's colonies. The virus jumped from the European pigs to warthogs (wild African pigs) and eventually to domestic African pigs.

There is no vaccine or treatment for this disease and the incidence of a positive case has widespread socio-economic consequences. The virus jumped twice to Europe; first during 1950-1960 in Portugal and Spain, from where it then spread to the rest of Europe, Russia, and Latin America. This outbreak lasted 30 years at an

enormous expense to affected countries. In 2007, the virus reappeared in Russia and has since spread to other parts of Europe through wild boars. In 2018, the virus appeared in China, a major producer of pigs. The consequences were devastating. Today, African swine fever is a global pandemic, with the virus moving around Asia, Europe, and the Caribbean region. The main aim of my research is to understand the immunological mechanisms of protection against the disease to develop an effective vaccine.

How many research themes do you have?

My research is characterized by a synthesis of three broad disciplines. First, virology uses molecular biology techniques to explain the virus's mechanisms. Second, immunology investigates protection mechanisms. Ultimately, this disease affects pigs; therefore, concerns about animal production need to be considered. Thus, veterinary medicine is indispensable in broadening perspectives. For my dissertation, I have been focused on the immunological side of things. We implement new techniques, such as single cell RNAseq, which allow us to study each individual gene as it is activated. It is amazing be able to incorporate these new tools in our research.

Why do you find your research topic interesting?

Although African swine fever was isolated in 1921, today the virus continues to appear in places around the world. There is no vaccine or treatment for the disease. Furthermore, knowledge of the factors involved in protection and immunity are very unclear. This makes it rewarding to contribute new immunological data in pursuit of a vaccine. Creating some new information on this topic will be beneficial not only to the scientific community, but also from a socio-economic point of view. Many countries are waiting for the vaccine.

How did you get started in your research and how did you come to focus on your current research?

I first studied veterinary medicine and then completed my master's degree in virology. Having a background in both disciplines was a perfect match for working on a viral disease that affects pigs. Working with this virus is a great opportunity and I am pleased to be able to do this work. In the beginning of my PhD study, it was a bit challenging. But in this last phase of developing my thesis, I have focused on immunological responses related to African swine fever vaccination, which has been exciting.

Have you had any difficulties in putting together the results of your research into a research paper or book?

In my research, I think that the most difficult part is the experiments. I usually do some *in vivo* studies with pigs. In this type of experiment, you do not always obtain the results that you are looking for. During the last few years, I have gotten some very nice results from some of my experiments. When you obtain these, you feel excited about sharing them with the community and it makes the writing part easier.

Can you share with us an episode about any influential people, things, and places you have encountered whilst doing your research?

During my PhD program, a postdoc researcher named Jordi Arguilaguet Marquès joined our group. He is an immunologist, and with him I discovered how amazing immunology could be. He taught me so much in a very patient manner. During those moments when I felt most insecure about my PhD, talking with him helped me recover my hope for our work.

Which books or people have influenced you?

A book that inspired me recently was *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* written by Donna J. Haraway, a feminist thinker. This book makes us reflect upon how we can live in this era of ecological devastation, the Anthropocene, reorganizing our relations with nature. She gave me the opportunity to think about new ways to live together with other species. Also, the book challenged me think about how to change the way we are doing science: we need an open mind when we are looking for answers. We need to be on this damaged earth, but we can try to live in new, more sympoietic ways.

What is your ideal image of a researcher?

I do not have an ideal image of a researcher. Since I started my master's degree study, I realized that there are many types of researchers. I think that one of the key characteristics of a researcher is to continue learning and feeling curious about new things.

What would you say to people who want to become researchers?

Being a researcher in the natural sciences allows you to continue to learn new things, improve yourself, and share your knowledge with other people. This last one is a key point because science is made to be shared. Science is like a relay race. You cannot play alone; you receive knowledge and give knowledge to advance the study. It is also hard work; you can feel very frustrated sometimes when things do not go as expected.

What ambitions do you have for the future?

First, I will finish my PhD and then think about my near future. My plans are to look for a two- to three-year postdoc position outside of my country (Spain). A research career in Spain is a bit hard because it is difficult to get a stable position. I would like to find a job in a university so that I can conduct laboratory research and teach. I would like to continue working in animal health, focusing on diseases related to animals and viruses.

(July 2022)

Reference

Haraway, Donna. 2016. *Staying With the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Experimental Futures: Technological Lives, Scientific Arts, Anthropological Voices). Duke University Press.

Interview with
Arief W. Djati
Research Scholar of CSEAS from June – August 2022

Uncovering a Colonial Cosmopolitan:
A biography of Kwee Thiam Tjing

Please tell us about your research.

First let me explain that I am not an academic or a scholar. As a Non-Governmental Organization activist, some people call me a public intellectual. I conduct research, but my research is not as rigorous as an academic's. Currently, I am working on the intellectual biography of an Indonesian-Chinese writer during the Dutch East Indies period. His real name is Kwee Thiam Tjing (1900-1974), but he often used Tjamboek Berdoeri (Thorned Whip) as his favorite pseudonym. This was a reminder to (Chinese) readers of the terrible weapon of antiquity to punish bad people. As far as I know, he used more than a dozen pseudonyms during his career as a journalist cum columnist to avoid the censorship of the colonial government.[1]

How many research themes do you have?

I examine several groups in my research, namely, laborers, survivors of the PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia, or Indonesian Communist Party), political prisoners, and Chinese. These groups together can be included in the framework of the subaltern group, as they were suppressed during Indonesia's New Order period and continue to be today. Laborers and Peranakan Chinese can be seen from the theme of class and identity. Ethnic Chinese in Indonesia are mostly entrepreneurs, and as in the colonial context, are defined in economic terms as "economic animals," especially those wealthy groups. Those who are not very rich face numerous troubles in daily life..

Why do you find your research topic interesting?

The theme of Tjamboek Berdoeri is becoming more and more interesting to me for several reasons. First, this research focuses only on newspapers and archives in the library (and if possible, interviews). This is something that is challenging for me—to learn a new thing such as systematically reading and understanding archives, which are slightly different from the materials in a general li-

brary. Second, this author employs many tricks to mislead his readers. For example, his pseudonyms. When he was a bachelor, he used the pseudonym Hudjin Tjamboek Berdoeri, or "Mrs. Tjamboek Berdoeri"[2] to pen several articles. A few years ago, a doctoral candidate from an American university who was interested in Hudjin Tjamboek Berdoeri's work wrote a research proposal about "her." The candidate cancelled the proposal after I explained that the works by Hudjin Tjamboek Berdoeri were written by Kwee Thiam Tjing himself, not his wife, and I pointed out several articles that demonstrated the candidate's claim as baseless. The third thing that makes my research interesting is being able to conduct interviews with several elderly Chinese people in Malang and Semarang who were friends and neighbors of Kwee Thiam Tjing. It is a great exercise and opportunity for me because I can interview people who are around 90 years old, and I need to be patient to listen to their stories.

Fig.1 Tjamboek Berdoeri's books

Fig.2 Kwee's wedding photo from his family collection

Fig.3 Kwee Thiam Tjing's newspaper at Jember, East Java

How did you get started in your research and how did you come to focus on your current research?

Actually, this research was a topic of the late Ben Anderson's research. He wanted to write a biography of the author and I helped him to edit and publish two of Tjamboek Berdoeri's works in Indonesian.[3] After Ben Anderson suddenly passed away, I felt that I had to continue the research as he had requested before. Moreover, we had already collected quite a number of materials. So

there I was, on and off, trying to work on and on, deepening and expanding my knowledge of this writer's life journey. And it turned out that the more I delved into it, the more I felt that there were many parts of this person's life and relationships that were extremely interesting and it would be useful if we saw and interpreted their history not just to understand the past, but also as a perspective on the future.

Have you had any difficulties in putting together the results of your research into a research paper or book?

There is always a problem putting it together because there is so much material and we want to include everything. We want it to be perfect, detailed, and complete. Putting it all together takes its own time and readiness—it cannot be rushed. Knowing this, I first write a draft, once or twice, and then I re-read it, proofread it, and then perfect it.

Can you share with us an episode about any influential people, things, and places you have encountered whilst doing your research?

A few people have been influential in my research journey and given me a comprehensive overview. Of course, the first is the late Benedict Anderson, who brought me this far by giving me many opportunities to write about this topic and helping me greatly to systematize my writings. The second person is James Siegel, who taught me to always think critically and not to be afraid to look for answers. Unfortunately, my ability and limited horizon of thought cannot fully follow his thoughts and explanations. The third person is the late Mr. Sartono (pseudonym). He is a survivor of the 1965 tragedy, which, as you know, is when Soeharto's New Order killed almost one million Indonesian communist party members and sympathizers and detained more than one million others.[4] Although Mr. Sartono never joined or was affiliated with the PKI, he was arrested, and after being detained on Buru Island for about 10 years, he had to start his life again from scratch. I was amazed and impressed by his willingness to learn, his courage, and his fortitude. My interview with him was popularly written up in a chapter in the book *Menembus Tirai Asap: Kesaksian Tahanan Politik 1965* (2003).[5]

Which books or people have influenced you?

Two books in particular have had an impact on me because they inspired me to confront everyday problems with the ideas that they put forward. The first is *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1980)[6] by Paulo Freire (1921-1997), a Brazilian educator. It was translated into Indonesian in 1984, and I only read the book around 1988. The Indonesian translation was awful, but fortunately for me, I had a friend who had the English edition, so that is what I read. The book seemed to guide me to help the weak and the suppressed to voice their concerns and to encourage them to overcome their daily problems. The second book was *Madilog* (1943) written by Tan Malaka (1897-1949),[7] one of the leaders of the Indonesian independence struggle before Soekarno and Hatta. *Madilog* means *Materialism, Dialectic* and *Logic*

and the title is intended to invite readers to be more critical and not to believe in superstitions. Remarkably, the book was written underground when Japan occupied Indonesia. Tan Malaka wrote the book based only on his memories and notes because he had no access to existing books. I read it when the book was banned by Indonesian's New Order Government in the 1980s.

What is your ideal image of a researcher?

A researcher should, in my view, not only write down and report what is found in the research field, but also, as far as they can, help the people and improve the situations they encounter. For this reason, researchers must be able to write honestly and openly about what they find. And, then, as a human being, they should try to help others where they can. Maybe this ideal is different from the imagination of scholars or academics generally.

What is your must-have gear for field research and writing?

I think tools are just tools. They are not a must-have. When it comes to must-haves, then some important things are patience, perseverance, and hard work. Patience, because the researcher sometimes must listen to interviewees talk about issues that they do not appreciate or may think are irrelevant, but also perseverance and hard work when working in the field. If these are in place, then the tools can be discussed. Actually, I only use the Endnotes app occasionally when writing; for transcribing, which is sometimes tiring. I sometimes use a live transcribing app. However, the transcription is not accurate, especially if it is not in English, and it has to be checked and edited again. Also, I use my mobile phone to capture ideas with some note-taking app, and sometimes I use paper to back it up. For reading journals and articles, I mostly use my e-book reader.

What books can you recommend to a younger people?

I cannot mention this or that title. If I must make a suggestion, I suggest them to read any book that they like. Everything. It is also important to always take the time to read literary works to train your style and sensitivity in analyzing problems/situations.

What would you say to people who want to become researchers?

Maybe before beginning research, you should first ask yourself whether you are really enthusiastic about this field of work. If the answer is "yes," then do it wholeheartedly and to the best of your ability. Practice writing and listening to other people's thoughts while reading more.

What ambitions do you have for the future?

Working on the biography of this person has encouraged me to read more and expand my knowledge. Therefore, after the biography is completed, I want to expand this research and supplement it with writing about his close circle from the *Sin Tit Po* newspaper, which included members from various ethnicities and, later, political ori-

entations. They were: Kwee Thiam Tjing himself, from PTI (Partai Tionghoa Indonesia, or the Indonesian Chinese Party) but non-partisan, Liem Koen Hian (1897-1951), from PTI and Gerindo (Gerakan Rakyat Indonesia, or the Indonesian People's Movement), A.R. Baswedan (1908-1986), from PAI (Partai Arab Indonesia, or the Indonesian Arab Party) and a Parliament member (a Junior Minister), Tjoa Tjie Liang alias Anang Satyawardaya (1913-2006), from PTI and later Golkar (Golongan Karya, or the Functional Party), and D.J. Syranamual (1900-1956), from Serikat Ambon and a Parliament member. In contrast to Furnivall's classic thesis on plural society, that various ethnicities meet each other only in the marketplace, the *Sin Tit Po* circle illustrates that people worked together in various spheres of colonial life and in the broader contexts of, among other things, nationalism and cosmopolitanism.

(July 2022)

Notes

[1]   His prolific use of pseudonyms reminds us of the great Portuguese author Fernando Pessoa (1888-1935), a contemporary of Kwee Thiam Tjing, who also used many pseudonyms. See Richard Zenith, *Pessoa: A Biography*, Liveright Pub Corp, 2021.

[2]   "Hudjin" from "Hudjin Tjamboek Berdoeri" comes from a Hokkien word, and it means "Nyonya" in Indonesian or "Mrs." in English. Kwee Thiam Tjing used this pseudonym many times before he married Nie Hiang Nio in 1928.

[3]   Tjamboek Berdoeri, *Indonesia Dalem Api dan Bara* [Indonesia in Flames and Embers] (Jakarta: Elkasa, 2004, 2nd ed.) and Kwee Thiam Tjing (Author), Arief W. Djati and Ben Anderson (Eds.), James Siegel (Pref.), *Menjadi Tjamboek Berdoeri* [Being Tjamboek Berdoeri] (Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu, 2010). The former is the only book published while Kwee Thiam Tjing was still alive, and the first edition was published in Malang in 1947. The latter is a collection of his daily columns that were written in the Jakarta newspaper *Indonesia Raya* in the 1970s.

[4]   See Robert Cribb (Ed.), T*he Indonesian Killings of 1965-1966: Studies from Java and Bali,* Clayton, Victoria, Australia: Monash University Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, 1990.

[5]   See Mr. Sartono's testimony in H.D. Sasongko dan Melani Budianta (Eds.), *Menembus Tirai Asap: Kesaksian Tahanan Politik 1965* [Passing Through the Dark Shadows, testimonies of political prisoners 1965], Jakarta: Yayasan Lontar dan Yayasan Budaya Indonesia, 2003.

[6]   Indonesian translation of Paulo Freire's book, *Pendidikan Kaum Tertindas*, Jakarta: LP3ES, 1984.

[7]   On Tan Malaka, see Harry Poeze, T*an Malaka: Strijder voor Indonesie's Vrijheid Levesloop van 1897 tot 1945* [*Tan Malaka, Struggle toward Indonesian Independence 1897-1945*] (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976) and Tan Malaka's own book, *Madilog* (Jakarta: Terbitan Wijaya, 1951).

Interview with
Krishna Bahadur KC
**Visiting Research Scholar of CSEAS from June – August 2022**

Seeking Pathways to Sustainably Feed the World's Growing Population

Please tell us about your research.

I am an interdisciplinary researcher. I focus on four key areas: climate change, land-use dynamics, food systems, and food security. Before entering into academia, I was a forest officer of the Government of Nepal. My academic research began with my postgraduate studies. I first did a master's in natural resources management at the Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand. My master's work focused on soil erosion susceptibility mapping using remote sensing and geographic information systems (GIS). I earned my PhD in agricultural sciences from the University of Hohenheim, Germany. My PhD dissertation combined socioeconomic and spatial methods to enhance rural resource and livelihood development in the hills of Nepal. After my PhD, in addition to case study-based research, I also started to work on global issues such as global food security, specifically, climate change, its impact on agriculture, and vice versa. Currently, I am working on the following big questions: 1) Does current food production meet the nutritional needs of the global population? 2) Which currently unfarmed areas across the world may be suitable for agriculture in the face of climate change and digital agricultural technologies?

How many research themes do you have?

My research is based on an integrated interdisciplinary spatial approach that emphasizes qualitative and quantitative methods across a range of spatial scales, from the household and community to the watershed, regional, national, and global levels. Throughout my research career, I have conducted multidisciplinary research on the complex links between climate change, food security, and environmental sustainability. I have been working on several distinct but overlapping themes. These include: 1) understanding the factors associated with global food production and food waste, 2) exploring the implications of different geographical areas for food security and other ecosystem services, 3) evaluating solutions to the glob-
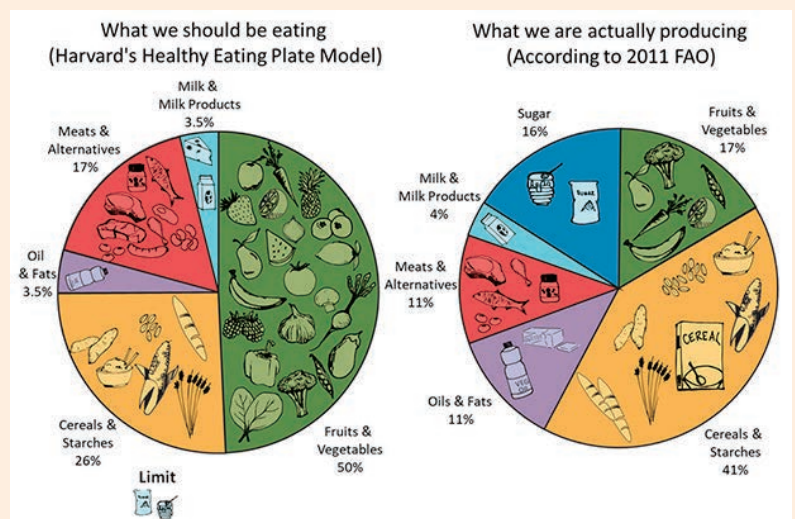
Fig.1 For more details, see Hannah L, Roehrdanz PR, KC KB, Fraser EDG, Donatti CI, Saenz L, *et al*. (2020) and KC KB, Dias GM, Veeramani A, Swanton CJ, Fraser D, Steinke D, *et al*. (2018).

al food insecurity crisis, and 4) understanding the opportunities and constraints of developing new agricultural frontiers in the face of climate change and digital agriculture technologies.

Why do you find your research topic interesting?

I mainly work on issues that have direct societal impacts. For example, today's leading global problem is how to feed the world's growing population sustainably. Much of the conversation about "feeding the future" focuses on whether we will be able to produce enough food for everyone in the year 2100. However, one side-stepped topic is whether we are producing the right kinds of food for all of us to be healthy. Upon investigation, I discovered that we are producing only 50 percent of the fruits and vegetables necessary to fulfill the diet recommended by the Harvard healthy eating plate model. Another area

global food production could be boosted is to explore novel agricultural frontiers in the face of climate change and digital agriculture technologies. Over the last couple of years, I have become fascinated by the potential of farming in the far North. This is a topic that, together with new technologies, is capturing the imagination of policymakers and industry. New varieties of crops that mature faster and have a longer growing season due to climate change may provide new opportunities for farming in areas where it has not been possible in the past.
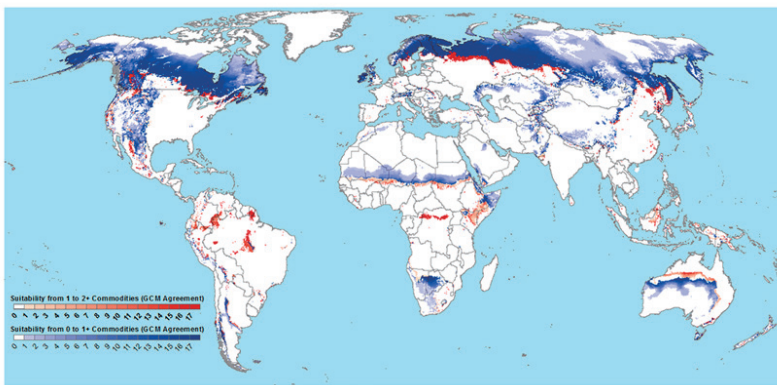
Agricultural frontiers cover about 9.1 million km² of the planet's surface

Fig.2 For more details, see Hannah L, Roehrdanz PR, KC KB, Fraser EDG, Donatti CI, Saenz L, *et al*. (2020) and KC KB, Dias GM, Veeramani A, Swanton CJ, Fraser D, Steinke D, *et al*. (2018).

How did you get started in your research and how did you come to focus on your current research?

During the early stage of my career, I concentrated on the lessons of small, more technical case study-based work, similar to what I conducted for my master's and PhD research. Over time, I felt I needed to work on areas that would attract the attention of policymakers and that will also immediately impact society. Therefore, in addition to technical and case study-based analysis, I began to work on a global scale.

Have you had any difficulties in putting together the results of your research into a research paper or book?

Putting research results together and publishing research articles or books is a challenging task. I struggled a lot when I began writing my first research papers many years ago. I found it difficult to organize the results of my data analysis in the form of tables, figures, and graphics. Even until a few years ago, although I felt I could conduct sophisticated analyses and generate exciting results, it was difficult for me to decide which results to include and which to leave out. I also felt challenged when formulating a broader thesis statement, and it was not that easy to write discussion and conclusion sections, particularly relating my work to others.

Writing research papers is a learning process and a different kind of art. Over time, I learned that my main problem was that I usually generate tremendous amounts of results in the form of maps, graphics, and tables. As I produced the results through arduous effort, I wanted to use as much as possible in my writing, which made it

challenging to produce short, sharp, and synthesized writing.

Which books or people have influenced you?

I was very much influenced by, among others, Navin Ramankutty and Johnathan Foley's papers on the global consequences of land use, solutions for a cultivated planet, and farming the planet: the geographic distribution of global agricultural lands. These were fundamental in motivating me to start researching global issues.

What is your ideal image of a researcher?

Working as a researcher is an excellent opportunity to contribute to society. I consider a researcher a think tank. A researcher should work as neutrally as possible, should not be aligned with any political parties, should not produce biased or skewed results, and should not publish papers for the benefit of a specific group, firm, or company. Researchers should always think and work for the well-being of the greater community and society.

What is your must-have gear for field research and writing?

As I conduct interdisciplinary research, I use many different data types, from remote sensing images to geospatial data, as well as econometric and socioeconomic data. I use various image processing and geospatial data analysis software. Out of all of these, statistical software, such as STATA and SPSS, are absolutely must-haves for me.

What books can you recommend to younger people?

I was very much influenced by, among others, Navin Ramankutty and Johnathan Foley's papers on the global consequences of land use, solutions for a cultivated planet, and farming the planet: the geographic distribution of global agricultural lands. These were fundamental in motivating me to start researching global issues.

What would you say to people who want to become researchers?

Working as a researcher is an excellent opportunity to contribute to society. I consider a researcher a think tank. A researcher should work as neutrally as possible, should not be aligned with any political parties, should not produce biased or skewed results, and should not publish papers for the benefit of a specific group, firm, or company. Researchers should always think and work for the well-being of the greater community and society.

What ambitions do you have for the future?

I am finishing my PhD, and I need to think about my near future. My plans are looking for a postdoc position for two or three years outside of my country, Spain. The researcher career in Spain is a bit hard, because it is difficult to get a stable position. I would like to find a job in a university, so I can do research in the lab and teach. I would like to continue working in animal health, in disease related to animals and viruses.

(July 2022)

References

Hannah, L., Roehrdanz, P.R.; KC, K.B.; Fraser, E.D.G.; Donatti, C.I.; Berg, A., *et al.* 2020. The Environmental Consequences of Climate-Driven Agricultural Frontiers. *PLoS ONE* 15(2): e0228305.

https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0228305

KC, K.B.; Dias, G.M.; Veermani, A.; Swanton, C.J.; Steinke, D., *et al.* 2018. When too Much Isn't Enough: Does Current Food Production Meet Global Nutritional Needs? *PLoS ONE* 13 (10): e0205683.

https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0205683

Interview with

May Adadol Ingawanij

Visiting Research Scholar of CSEAS from June – August 2022

Please tell us about your research.

I am a writer, theorist, and curator specialising in the moving image practices, contemporary art, and cinema of Southeast Asian artists. My major research and pedagogical themes intersect contemporary art, curatorial and artistic practice, film studies, art history, and area studies. My research projects tend to combine methods of formal and conjunctural analysis with historicisation, curatorial practice, film programming, and a variety of writing forms. I am interested in essayistic and creative modes of writing, and in combining storytelling and fictional registers of writing in long-form research projects. Overall, my research projects and publications try to creatively develop de-westernised and decolonize methods to engage with Southeast Asia's histories and genealogies of artistic and cinematic practice.

My academic training and trajectory of career development is quite an unusual one. I started out with an undergraduate degree in the social sciences. I completed my PhD on the historical imagination and cultural politics of contemporary Thai cinema. This was at a multidisciplinary graduate school set up as a collaboration between several London arts and architectural institutions and Birkbeck, University of London. During the past fifteen years, I have been based in an art school context within the University of Westminster. I run the University's Centre for Research and Education in Arts and Media, which is a leading centre of practice-based, artistic, critical, theoretical, and historical research in the broad areas of art and creative and interdisciplinary practice. In my teaching activities, I mostly supervise PhD researchers who undertake what is called practice research (or sometimes artistic research). They develop projects that incorporate artistic or curatorial practice into their processes and methods of research. Their research outcomes combine artistic and creative works with diverse forms of writing. These experiences have taught and enabled me to develop a multidisciplinary approach to research, one which incorporates a plurality of analytic and creative forms.

VISITOR'S VOICE

How many research themes do you have?

My research explores decolonial and de-centred histories and genealogies of cinematic arts; legacies of artistic and political vanguardism in Southeast Asia; forms of potentiality and future-making in contemporary artistic and curatorial practices; and the aesthetics and circulation of moving images, art, and independent films in, of, aligned, and related to Southeast Asia.

Why do you find your research topic interesting?

Southeast Asian contemporary art and moving image practices are incredibly fertile grounds for exploring some of the key questions of our time. Among these are questions concerning the potential of art and imaginative practices to propose different common futures and ways to exist otherwise. Significantly, this area of research and practice raises important questions about 1) the ways that colonial and revolutionary legacies persist and shape present-day practices of institutions and peoples, and 2) how communicative, aesthetic, and expressive forms emerge in response to such legacies.

Researching contemporary Southeast Asian artistic practices also means constantly asking how you want your work to contribute to the task of undoing the legacies of epistemological colonization; and asking what you need to do to fully participate in this very dynamic terrain of practice, debate, and thinking that has been emerging over the past few decades, rather than just observing from a distance. I love how demanding and sociable this terrain is ⎯ there is a lot of thinking and doing with other people, an expectation to develop capacities to look and listen closely, to try to think legible thoughts with objects and experiences that retain their right to opacity, to keep learning new technologies and practical skills. There is an openness to experimentation. There is also the constant push and pull between, on the one hand, the need to develop disciplinary tradition through establishing commonly recognised concepts, methods, and research procedures, and on the other hand, the need to keep things open, make unusual connections, and resist the building of disciplinary boundary.

An example is one of my current major projects, *Animistic Apparatus*. It places contemporary moving image practices, such as the installations, films, and videos of Southeast Asian artists Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Lav Diaz, Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook and Nguyen Trinh Thi, in constellation with the region's itinerant film projection rituals that are performed as an offering to powerful local spirits. The project thus entwines artists' moving image practices with Southeast Asia's scattered genealogies of animism (defined as improvisatory rituals and apparatuses of human-spirit sociality and communication).

In devising this experimental method for gathering and juxtaposing cinematic and mediating practices, the underlying aim of *Animistic Apparatus* is to conceptualise the regional, enunciative, cosmological, and relational characteristics of Southeast Asian artists' moving image practices. The affinity between artistic and animistic practices that the project identifies ultimately concerns the agency of precarious humans to enhance life's possibility and build relations. It affirms bonds of sociality across times and beings within an ecology of existence in which powerless humans nevertheless claim the agency to ori-

entate toward and to imagine other futures. The project has already stimulated a variety of activities.[1] While a visiting fellow at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, I am working on the monograph component of the project, *Animistic Medium: Contemporary Southeast Asian Artists Moving Image*.

Insert Image.1 *Central Region* (Tanatchai Bandasak, 2019), video installation inside a medieval tower in Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northeast England. Tanatchai's work is inspired by the presence of standing stones in Sam Neua, Laos. It evokes the Southeast Asian animistic idea of sacred spaces. Image by Tanatchai Bandasak

How did you get started in your research and how did you come to focus on your current research?

Given that my background is itinerant, it is probably not surprising that I have a longstanding interest in different ways of knowing, in the politics of cultural and epistemological difference, and in trying to understand that which challenges received wisdom and eludes neat categorisation. Over time, these interests have grown into an agenda to develop experimental and decolonial methods for researching cinematic arts in Southeast Asia and the global south, which would de-centre teleological assumptions concerning the connection between the traditional, the modern, and the contemporary.

During the past decade, I have been developing speculative approaches to historicising genealogies of cinematic practice in Thailand and Southeast Asia. My motivation is to shift away from the established narrative that cinema is the cultural form and contribution of cosmopolitan urban elites. For instance, in my work on the proliferation of film circulation in Thailand during the Cold War period, I disinter practices and circuits of itinerant open-air screenings via the projection of junk celluloid prints to conceptualise the role of humans as intermediaries in the cinematic apparatus. My proposition is to consider what cinema is when humans form part of the ecology of cinema as voice narrators in intermedial live film projection performances, or as projectionists in itinerant rituals of cinematic offerings to spirits.

Working with independent and dissident artists whose contexts of creation are fragile and at-risk artistic and cultural infrastructures, I have learned that it is my job to curate works in ways that support artistic processes, and to highlight practice as forms of research and experimentation in knowing, relating, communicating, and existing otherwise. It is for this reason that I prioritise sit-

Insert Image.2 Announcement of movie projection ritual as an offering to a 'grandfather spirit,' Jao Pu Nong Jok shrine, Udon Thani Province, Northeast Thailand, April 2019. Image by May Adadol Ingawanij

uating my written publications within curatorial projects that have multiple components and many collaborators.

One of my longstanding research commitments is to the praxis of the Filipino radical filmmaker Lav Diaz, whose films I have been curating and writing about since the late 2000s. Through curatorial activities and publications, I explore the material, institutional, and discursive challenges of exhibiting Diaz's very long films. My curatorial approach to thinking with and about Diaz's films adapts the migratory model of exhibiting radical films and artists' moving image. I draw inspiration from Southeast Asian genealogies of itinerant film projection, along with the values of informality and affirmation of the everyday that is characteristic of a mode of socially engaged Southeast Asian contemporary art. My writings analyse Diaz's historiographic and temporal aesthetics in the context of the legacies and aporias of the Philippines's artistic and cultural vanguardism. I also analyse the vexed exhibition history of Diaz's long films, critically highlighting tensions shaped by the persistence of the western modernist paradigm of art film spectatorship in advocating global contemporary art or radical films.

Have you had any difficulties in putting together the results of your research into a research paper or book?

All the time! I have learned that the struggle to pull together coherent thoughts and expressions from complex, intense, and confusing research experiences, and from the plethora of materials you have gathered, is part of the process. The skill to develop is to stay inside that process, give it time, and not be afraid of not knowing, or the possibility that your initial ideas will unravel, the process will escalate out of control, or things will run aground. This is how surprising thoughts emerge. Not fearing the process of inquiring and learning something new and trusting your own capacity and intuition to push initial thoughts further along even amid that sense of your ever-inadequate grasp, is something I have learned from many of the Southeast Asian artists I have had the privilege of spending time with.

What would you say to people who want to become researchers?

Research is what you do with other people, and trust is an

important quality when it comes to finding out something together.

What ambitions do you have for the future?

I would like to develop new collaborative research around the theme of speculative and imaginative practices of future-making, involving the creation and dissemination of moving images. This would explore ecological and redistributive concerns, and imaginings of possible futures, in artistic and curatorial practices. One strand of this project would explore the potential of Southeast Asian artistic research to engage with climate and ecological change. Questions to ask would include: What are the characteristic features of artistic research that responds to Southeast Asian realities of climate change? How might definitions, concepts, values, and methods of artistic research be refined, enhanced, or challenged through studying Southeast Asian artistic research practices that are responding to climate change? I would also like to develop a film curatorial project that explores critical, historical, speculative, and retroactive visions of the future. This would situate Southeast Asia as a starting point for inquiry, yet open up toward other global south localities and regions. It would include a screening series on the student as an emblematic figure of transformation in modern and contemporary film and moving image practices.

(July 2022)

VISITOR'S VOICE

Interview with

Richard MacDonald

Guest Scholar of CSEAS from June – August 2022

Outside the Smart City

Please tell us about your research.

My research is broadly concerned with the problem of participation in a technological society. I've approached this larger question through more focused ethnographic research on smart urbanism in Thailand and, more recently, on the mediation of public controversy surrounding the construction of high-speed rail in the UK.

A few years ago, I became interested in the idea of the smart city which was then being promoted by influential international and regional agencies, such as ASEAN and the EU, as a policy framework for solving a wide range of urban problems. Broadly speaking the idea of the smart city crystallises around the urban ideal of the data-centred city, a city in which movements, flows and processes could be efficiently managed through ubiquitous computing. Much of the earlier scholarship on smart cities focused on a rather small number of canonical, totemic and perhaps atypical real estate developments. I was more interested in what other scholars of the phenomena referred to as "the actually existing smart city." For a previous research project on the ritual economy of outdoor cinema in Thailand I had spent time in Khon Khaen, a city in the Northeast of the country. Returning to Khon Kaen I found a city heavily invested, symbolically at least, in smart urbanism, an agenda driven locally by a recently formed private sector development corporation but supported by the central government through its digital economy programme under the banner Thailand 4.0. Undertaking a form of patchwork ethnography, conducted by necessity in short bursts of fieldwork over a period of about a year, I set out to understand the meanings, attractions and address of smart urbanism on the ground. Over the course of the research, I came to think about the smart city less in terms of specific technologies actually deployed in the world, and more in terms of an alluring horizon, a way of channelling aspiration and speaking about and imagining the future. Framing it in this way helped me to situate the entrepreneurial dreams of the urban networks promoting the smart city in Khon Kaen within a broader landscape in which other hopes, hopes of social and political change are perpetually deferred.

Being unable to travel during the first year or so of the pandemic encouraged many of us to re-engage with our immediate surroundings. For me, both the pandemic and the feeling that the climate emergency obliges us to fly less often has encouraged me to develop more geographically proximate lines of research inquiry. My interest in high-speed rail controversies evolved out of this shift of focus, the route tunnels through hills not far from my house. I can cycle to the construction sites!

Fig.1 Computer Generated Images of Khon Kaen Transit System (Source: Khon Kaen Development Corporation)

How many research themes do you have?

Quite a few! I began my research career as a historian of cinema and film culture. I still teach a module called the Archaeology of the Moving Image which explores moving image practice and technology from a critical historical perspective. I have written about vernacular memory practices and urban change. I have an enduring interest in the (historical) infrastructures that support and sustain informal learning and auto-didacticism: public libraries,

adult education, public service broadcasting. I consider each of these themes live and open, awaiting renewal.

The thread that runs through these themes has not always been apparent to me at the time. In retrospect I can see that I have been repeatedly drawn to examine the tensions between professions, their forms of expertise and authority and lay people – non-specialists, or to put it another way, the hierarchical relationship, asymmetries and frictions between codified, institutionalised knowledge and situated or experiential knowledge.

Why do you find your research topic interesting?

Smart urbanism has been presented to citizens as the new common sense, a persuasive formula for efficient urban governance in a context of scarcity. It struck me as both interesting and necessary to ask: who is the smart city for? Who benefits most from the smart city? Who is empowered by this particular vision of the future? Of course, many other researchers have been posing these same critical questions—one never works alone. In Thailand, however, my sense was that the technocratic vision of smart urbanism, especially when carried on the powerful currents of entrepreneurial localism, tapping into sentiments of provincial civic pride and identity, had been appraised rather uncritically.

The radical geographer Doreen Massey memorably described space as the sphere of "contemporaneous plurality." There is plurality because space is composed of a multiplicity of interactions, the implication being that space is always in the process of being made, it is always unfinished. As researcher I am compelled to ask: what else is going on here? How can we multiply the readings of this space? In this case, what alternative futures, alternative modes of collective action, are suppressed or struggling to be heard?

How did you get started in your research and how did you come to focus on your current research?

I came to higher education as a mature student fairly late in life. I was hungry for learning. Studying anthropology and then cultural studies provided me with tools for a more disciplined critical examination of the world and my place in it. I wanted to continue that journey and embarked on a PhD researching the history of amateur film clubs. At the time I was a big cinephile, and I decided to make the institutionalisation of film culture the focus of my research. In hindsight I think that was because cinephilia had provided me with a solid framework for auto-didacticism, self-directed informal learning, in the absence of formal educational institutions. Over time my interests have shifted away from cinema, and the cultures of critical understanding and appreciation constructed around it, to consider how we live with the technological infrastructures of contemporary urban life. As much as anything I think this was simply because I wanted to learn new things and I wanted those things to be closer to the pulse of contemporary life.

Have you had any difficulties in putting together the results of your research into a research paper or book?

I certainly have, writing is always difficult. Added to which it is not always easy to reconcile institutional demands to produce auditable research, that is research published in specific academic journals, with one's own creative interests and ethical impulses. The writing I admire repays reading many times whilst being jargon-free and accessible to those beyond a specialised discipline. I've always aspired to write in a way that would resonate beyond the narrow confines of a discipline or field. I'm not sure I have achieved that yet.

Which books or people have influenced you?
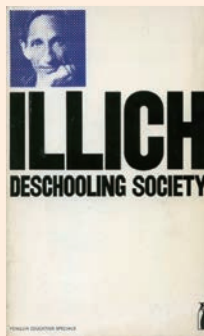
When I was a rebellious seventeen year old and rather dissatisfied with school, I read Ivan Illich's book *Descholing Society*. I promptly stopped going to school and consequently flunked my school leavers exams. To this day I'm not sure whether this was a positive or negative influence. Either way I have always been drawn to non-conformist figures and thinkers who are in some way discomforted by academic institutions and ambivalent towards the kinds of educational capital that accrue there.

What is your ideal image of a researcher?

I'm not sure that I have an ideal image. And I'm not sure if it is helpful to idealise research and researchers when the demands made on early career researchers seeking a foothold in academia get more and more unrealistic and outlandish each year. The researchers I admire go their own way. They are not followers of fashion or fad—they dance to their own beat. They have the courage to undertake slow research, to resist the metrics by which researchers are often judged by their peers. They undertake forms of inquiry that are ethically informed and politically engaged. They are listeners first and foremost, people capable of crossing social thresholds and barriers whilst never forgetting how they themselves are socially situated. They commit to communicate their research to others with candour. They reflect openly on their failures and learn from them. They can readily articulate the larger forces at stake in the specific areas with which they are concerned.

The Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci insisted that everyone has the capacity and capability for intellectual inquiry, for developing a critical conception of the world and their place in it. So our image of research or intellectual life should not be exclusively concerned with academia as a profession. Perhaps in an ideal world, universities would be spaces dedicated to lifelong learning which would have the role of nurturing those critical capacities and capabilities throughout life and throughout the population. Universities as centres of specialised knowledge production would build strong reciprocal links with researcher educators in social movements, community organisations and trade unions.

What is your must-have gear for field research and writing?

A laptop, a universal plug adaptor, a voice recorder, lots of notepads and pens. And Zotero, of course, which is free and open-source bibliographic software.

VISITOR'S VOICE

What would you say to people who want to become researchers?

In the UK where I work, I am often approached by people interested in researching and writing a PhD who are seeking advice. Understandably the idea of pursuing a PhD and a career in research beyond it crystallises some very powerful ideals and desires: autonomy over one's work; a sense of meaningful, purposeful work; the pursuit of an intellectual life and self-directed inquiry; a chance to grow creatively and intellectually. Many of us are denied these things in our working lives so the desires are powerful and the motivations strong. It is undeniable that for some embarking on a research career may help them realise some of these goals. In the UK, however, higher education is in a state of prolonged but intensifying crisis caused by a combination of chronic underfunding, marketisation and the long-term erosion of the autonomy and independence of universities. Academics wages have fallen dramatically, and their pensions have been slashed. In arts and humanities disciplines in particular, departments are closing in universities around the country, including my own. In these circumstances so many of my good friends, brilliant researchers, writers and teachers have spent years precariously employed on short-term contracts while the pool of permanent academics in these areas shrinks year on year. A recent survey of 7000 university staff found that two thirds were considering

Fig.1 Protesting job cuts at Goldsmiths, University of London

leaving higher education. In the UK currently postgraduate researchers who are funded for the duration of their PhD are currently protesting the fact that their stipend corresponds to a material existence below the poverty line. In these circumstances, undertaking a PhD and embarking on a research career looks like a massive gamble with the odds stacked against you, and as much as I recognise and respect the desire motivating people toward that path, I would have to urge caution. That said, leaving aside professionalised institutions and careers, I believe cultivating a love of research and inquiry is an essential element of the good life.

(September 2022)

Interview with
Bounthong Bouahom
Visiting Research Scholar of CSEAS from July – October 2022

Honesty and Perseverance: Must-haves for a Researcher

Fig.1 Discussion with a rubber company from Vietnam

Please tell us about your research.

My research while at CSEAS as a visiting research scholar is entitled "Natural Rubber Sustainable Development and Responsible Investment in Laos."

Due to increasing demand and subsequent high prices for natural rubber, investment in rubber boomed in Laos during 2005-2015. The government granted land concessions for rubber production to Foreign Direct Investors (FDI) from China, Vietnam, and Thailand, which significantly contributed to the development of

the industry. But many people keep asking the questions, "is this rubber industry fair for the local people and does it contribute to export earnings for the government? Is the investment responsible? How much do smallholders benefit?"

How many research themes do you have?

I worked for almost 20 years at the National Agriculture and Research Institute (NAFRI) as one of its co-founders. The institute conducts agricultural and forestry research; I led the implementation of the following four research programs: agriculture biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, productivity improvement, climate change adaptation, and agriculture policy research.

At present, I work for the Lao Rubber Association, advocating for equitable benefit sharing for small-scale rubber farmers. I also promote responsible investment to foreign rubber companies, encouraging them to consider environmental protection and social welfare apart from profits alone.

Fig.1 (L to R) Vice Minister for Agriculture and Forestry, Minister for Science and Technology, Vice Prime Minister, Vice Minister for Agriculture and Forestry, Bounthong Bouahom (author) at the 20th Anniversary ceremony of NAFRI.

Why do you find your research topic interesting?

During the past two decades in Laos, Foreign Direct Investment (with land concessions) in the mining, hydroelectric dam, and agriculture sectors has created tremendous pressure on the environment, resulting in biodiversity loss, land degradation, and worsening climate change. Our research on agriculture biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, productivity improvement, and climate change adaptation is generating results and useful knowledge for society. We organize policy dialogues to deliver the research results to policy makers.

My aim is to use evidence-based research to contribute to sustainable and responsible rubber industry development in the country. Laos currently does not have a national rubber standard. This affects the price that is paid to growers, particularly small farmers. In addition, Lao rubber cannot be exported to countries that require a national standard. Therefore, the foreign rubber companies use their own country's standard when exporting rubber from Laos.

How did you get started in your research and how did you come to focus on your current research?

Rubber development in Laos is led by FDI. Approximately 70 percent of rubber production areas in Laos are concessions granted to foreign companies; only 30 percent of production areas are owned by smallholders. Therefore, rubber production also causes many challenges for food security, land, labor, livelihoods, and the environment.

The rapid development of rubber production in Laos outpaced the abilities of the government; it was not ready or well prepared in advance for this development. The responsible authorities related to rubber production also did not have adequate capacity and coordination.

Have you had any difficulties in putting together the results of your research into a research paper or book?

It is very important to pose the appropriate and timely questions to research. Data collection, data analysis, and writing are all difficult when putting together a scientific research paper. Writing a research paper is an effort of researchers to communicate with different audiences. Yet it is difficult to present research results for policymakers in a way that the research can be used in formulating policies. In other words, policy uptake of research results is an enduring challenge. Science-policy dialogue is needed to close the gaps between researchers and policymakers.

Can you share with us an episode about any influential people, things, and places you have encountered whilst doing your research?

When I was young and had just graduated from university, I had a chance to network with research colleagues, senior researchers, and research institute representatives when attending regional and international meetings and conferences.

In rural areas of Laos, people are still poor and live in difficult conditions, the biodiversity is under pressure of loss, the environment is challenged by illegal logging and land-based investment. The policy of the government is to promote "Green Growth" and reduce the gaps between urban and rural development. But in real life, the gaps between urban and rural livelihoods remain significant. The question is how can research contribute to improving rural livelihood in the country?

All these factors pushed me to become a researcher and encouraged me to contribute to the establishment of a Lao national agriculture and forestry research system. As a first step in this, I co-founded the National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI) in 1999.

Which books or people have influenced you?

I first served as a civil servant in the Department of Livestock and Fisheries. There, Mr. Singkham Phonvixay, the Director General of the Department, mentored me as a young staff, passing on valuable suggestions about

VISITOR'S VOICE

holistic approaches to farming systems. I respect Dr. Ty Phommasak, the founder of NAFRI, who mentored me in research strategy and vision. I also sincerely respect Dr. Siene Saphangthong of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, who signed the agreement to establish NAFRI and provided us useful guidance in research and research management.

What is your ideal image of a researcher?

I think there is no 100 percent perfect researcher. I work more with the adaptive research and I do not have a chance to do basic research due to limited research facilities in the country.

Society often complains that researchers do research for themselves. The researcher should first pose useful research questions and then try to answer these questions with appropriate methodology. The aim of researchers should not be to produce research papers alone; they need to think about the use of the research results for human beings.

What is your must-have gear for field research and writing?

In agriculture and forestry, field research is critical to generate knowledge, contribute to productivity, and increase sustainability. In-depth understanding of community, livelihood, agroecosystems, and surrounding environments are vital for field research.

In some cases, research results and reports are stored in the library without dissemination and some research findings are not disseminated in usable forms. This should change.

What books can you recommend to a younger people?

Today the youth and researchers have better choices for accessing information and books online through different search engines. However, young people are currently using tools such mobile phones, the internet, and computers to play games and search information that is not useful. Younger people may have their own choice to read a book that they like. The most important thing you gain from reading a book is the knowledge you get from the book and the key messages the writer wants to communicate and deliver.

What would you say to people who want to become researchers?

Research is a scientific and systematic search for pertinent information on a specific topic. Research is hard work throughout the research cycle, from setting the research question, conducting a literature review, writing a research proposal, seeking an appropriate research methodology, collecting and analyzing data, and writing a research paper, to disseminating research results, ensuring research uptake, and utilizing research results. Networking is also very important to discuss and exchange views with colleagues.

If you want to be a researcher, you should have enough patience and enough energy. Dare to express your evidence-based view and be ready to work for society, not for yourself.

But I think that the most important thing a researcher should have is the ethic to be honest and never give up.

What ambitions do you have for the future?

I would like to see more quality researchers and research in Laos in the future. Believing that research is needed for knowledge generation, innovation, and ultimately, for the perspectives to grow the society and ensure the welfare of its citizens. The government should spend more on human resource development and research to generate knowledge and innovation, to contribute to national socio-economic development, and to reduce the exploitation of natural resources.

I am impressed with Kyoto University's motto "freedom of academic culture." This is the dream of a researcher—to be free to express their view.

I hope that researchers and policymakers will have more dialogue in the future. The policy-making process largely occurs without any research input or the support of scientific evidence. In Laos today, socio-economic development policies and plans heavily depend on the exploitation of the country's natural resources. This, coupled with improper management mechanisms and laws, has created tremendously negative impacts on people's livelihoods and the environment. With these poor policy outcomes becoming obvious over the past 20 years, policymakers and decision-makers are increasingly open to evidence-based recommendations and actively seek advice from researchers. Thus, I am hopeful that the science-policy nexus in Laos will gradually emerge and take shape.

(July 2022)

Interview with

William Womack

Visiting Research Scholar of CSEAS from July – October 2022

Writing in a Connected World

Please tell us about your research.

During my time in Kyoto I am working on reframing my PhD research project for publication. The initial project focused on the many writing systems that were introduced for Sgaw and Pwo Karen languages in Burma during the colonial period. A lot of writers had noted the importance of the Sgaw Karen script introduced by American Baptist missionaries in the 1830s, and the impact of the Baptist church organization on Karen political identity later on. Others had noted that this helped to harden ethnopolitical and dialect categories. But I was intrigued by the fact that even after Sgaw Karen literature had developed, many other writing systems emerged and that some were in direct competition with each other. So in my thesis I set about recovering the stories of all of these scripts, framing them as overlapping networks of literate practice that drew on larger traditions of writing, all of which were tied to religious identities (English-speaking Baptists, Mon and Burmese and Karen-speaking Buddhists, European Catholics, etc.). Now the academic literature on politics of literacy, on colonial formatons of religion, on Karen history, and on describing social networks have all developed further since I wrote the thesis. So I am trying to integrate these new ideas into my analysis.

How many research themes do you have?

Too many. One reason I am so keen to publish my work on Karen writing is to put it behind me so I can work on other projects. Overall I am interested in historical connections that transcend geographic space or national categories. I'm particularly interested in how people in the 19th century began to experience the world as connected in new ways, and the changes that came about as a result. Maybe that's just one big theme, but I am interested in many different applications of it.

Why do you find your research topic interesting?

Well I think most historians are bibliophiles. So choosing to focus on books and written objects reflects that taste. There are strong antiquarian and book-loving cultures in

Myanmar, too, which makes it an interesting place for me. But on a deeper level, I think Myanmar is a place where people have a keenly developed sense of history. That has some good aspects and some bad ones as well. Obviously competing versions of history can fuel conflict. The violent displacement of the Rohingya population is just one recent example of that. Of course this is a universal phenomenon, not confined to Myanmar or any particular place. So uncovering the ways that historical narratives shape human decisions, or are used to justify them, is not only interesting, I think it is a profoundly important undertaking.

How did you get started in your research and how did you come to focus on your current research?

At first I was interested in finding more about the background to armed ethnic conflict in Myanmar. I first became aware of that conflict when I visited the Thai/Myanmar border after graduating from college. I ended up staying there as a volunteer teacher in a Karen refugee camp for an entire school term. I found that not much had been written about Karen communities in Burma in the 19th century. Most of it dealt with their participation in missionary institutions because that was well documented. But often it was the foreign missionaries or colonial interests on center stage and "the Karen" were largely passive participants in the story. So I wanted to find a way to recover a history of that period that focused on Karen people as agents, without minimizing the influences of missionaries, the colonial state, and the local contexts of Konbaung Burma and its frontiers.

Have you had any difficulties in putting together the results of your research into a research paper or book?

Yes. I enjoy research and I like the process of writing. But it is not easy for me to find the motivation to revise and edit. Life keeps me busy with things that seem more urgent, and my research gets pushed aside. So it is helpful to have a dedicated space and period of time to focus on the process. CSEAS is a good place to do that and I am grateful to

VISITOR'S VOICE

Prof. Hayami and everyone at the Center for inviting me.

Can you share with us an episode about any influential people, things, and places you have encountered whilst doing your research?

I was lucky to be able to travel a lot during my doctoral research. Because the networks I was tracing led to different parts of the world, I found myself in libraries and archives from London to Mandalay to Mawlamyine to upstate New York. Some of my most vivid memories are of places where the people I was researching lived—scenes they too might have encountered. I remember a black bear crossing the road in front of me while driving through the Catskill mountains. I was on my way to Hamilton, New York where Burmese and Sgaw Karen languages were first taught in the USA to Baptist missionaries in training in the 1830s. The language teachers there were likely the first people from Myanmar to visit America. They might even qualify as the world's first visiting scholars in Southeast Asian Studies. Maybe they encountered an ancestor of "my" bear while making the same journey. Who knows?

Another scene I remember was framed in the window of the overnight train from Yangon to Mandalay. Through the haze of early morning I began to make out the shape of wooden bullock carts piled high with sugar cane coming across the fields. As we rolled along, more and more appeared as the sun rose behind them. At last we stopped at a station where dozens of them were unloading beside the track. Each moment of that looked like a tableau that could have been painted a hundred years ago or more. In Paris I remember looking up from manuscripts at the Missions Étrangères archive. Across from me the windows framed a view of the Eiffel Tower and the golden dome of Les Invalides, above the cloistered garden of the seminary. The Catholic fathers who came to teach in Burma might have recalled the same sight when they encountered the golden domes and *hti* of Burmese pagodas. These experiences provided me with a real sense of the places behind the documents I was reading.

Which books or people have influenced you?

Many people have shaped my thinking but if I had to pick one it would be Prof. Richard O'Connor. I took his introductory course in Anthropology as an undergraduate, then went back for his Southeast Asia course. That course first opened my eyes to the region and led me to explore it further. He also told me about the SEASSI summer language program, where I began studying Burmese. I remember reading some of his work after finishing my MA thesis. It was an article I had never read before but it seemed oddly familiar. I was surprised to find that some of the ideas that I thought were my own were really ones I had absorbed from his class. One book that influenced my thinking about historiography was William Roff's *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*. It drew my attention to the interplay of people, publications, and ideas in global networks of association. I suppose I am still thinking along those lines.

What is your must-have gear for field research and writing?

Coffee, maps, and a legal pad. Zotero is very useful for me as well.

What books can you recommend to younger people?

One of my favorite history books is *A History of the World in Six Glasses* by Tom Standage. It unfolds histories that span the globe in a way that is readable and grounded in everyday things that people can relate to.
For students looking to improve their academic writing, I recommend Graff and Birkenstien's *They Say / I Say*.

What ambitions do you have for the future?

I'd like to find a nifty way to visualize the historical networks that I describe in my writing. More and more digital tools are being developed for this, but none that I have found yet that show enough complexity. I guess my ambition is to hang around long enough for the technology to catch up with my imagination, unless I can figure out a way to do it first.

(August 2022)

References

Roff, William R. 1968. *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Standage, Tom. 2006. *A History of the World in Six Glasses*. New York: Walker Publishing Company.

Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. 2021. *They Say/ I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*, Fifth edition. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Writing Books about Books

Please tell us about your research.

My research is on the survival of early Philippine books, an area that has not been given full attention in Philippine book history. I am conducting case studies on five books printed in Manila during the 17th century. In each case study (or for each book), I examine the book's initial creation and reception, its dormant period, and its emergence as a rare book when it gained new importance among collectors and scholars. Through these studies, I hope to provide more information and insights on 17th-century publishing in the Philippines, the reception of books throughout the ages, and the culture of collecting in modern times. Ultimately, I aim to further the understanding of the survival of Philippine books in general and to contribute to Philippine historiography.

How many research themes do you have?

The main theme of my current research, which is the survival of books, naturally flows into other streams of study, such as book manufacturing and preservation, print culture, colonialism and post-colonialism, collection studies, and digital humanities.

My previous work on Philippine book history was on 20th-century literary publishing, Tagalog bestsellers, and the novel in the Philippines.

Why do you find your research topic interesting?

Books have stories to tell beyond their subjects and contents. Each stage in the life of a book—its authorship, publication, distribution, reception, and survival—involves many persons, interactions, and events that exist amid the social, cultural, and political currents of their time. Book histories uncover complex human stories and incidents that connect to culture and society. For example, the story of why a famous and prolific poet-playwright, nearing death, forbade his children from becoming writers, claiming that it would be better to have their hands cut off than to follow in his footsteps; or the story of how a self-published novelist borrowed money from friends and family and moved to a city where printing was cheaper, yet his books eventually inspired a national revo-

lution; or the story of how one country's presidential decree ignored all international copyright laws, making it quite unpopular with foreign publishers and authors. I am fascinated by stories of books because there is no lack of drama, comedy, and tragedy in them and because I learn so much from them about creativity, conviction, and, ultimately, the human condition.

How did you get started in your research and how did you come to focus on your current research?

I traveled a long route to arrive at book history. I started in journalism, but found that I was not suited to it. I then moved to literary studies, which I became competent enough in, but which I tired of at some point. Eventually, I found out via the Internet that there is this field called 'the History of the Book.' I quickly recognized that it was the best-of-both-worlds spot that I didn't know I was looking for, the discipline where my training and experiences in journalism and literary studies could come together and where my desire to feel and smell books would not seem odd. I began with postgraduate studies in book history, reading and studying countless books in the process, and became a book historian.

My current research sprang from idly scouring the rare book catalogues of antiquarian booksellers and national libraries (mainly the British Library) for fun when I was in postgraduate school. While doing random searches on Philippine books, I would inevitably get to wondering: how in the world did these books get to where they are? Having exhausted the materials from my PhD work and being exhausted by its subject already, I wanted to work on something else and thought that I should finally address the question about the rare old books of the Philippines that had long baffled and fascinated me.

Fig.1
Happy to have in my hands the *Boxer Codex*, a 16th-century manuscript produced in Manila that now in the collection of the Lilly Library, Indiana University.

VISITOR'S VOICE

Fig.1 My case study number three: *Arte de la lengva iloca*, printed in 1627. Copy of the British Library.

Fig.2 My case study number four: *Vocabulario de Iapon*, printed in 1630. Copy of the Lilly Library,Indiana University.Indiana University.

Have you had any difficulties in putting together the results of your research into a research paper or book?

Research and writing are never easy for me, but I immensely enjoy doing both, perhaps precisely because I find them challenging. In research, the most common obstacle I come across is the inaccessibility or unavailability of data. This is because records are not always made or preserved well in the Philippines and because Philippine books do not always survive all too well either. In writing, my process has a rhythm of its own, one that seems to defy all circadian patterns, so the difficulty for me is finding the time, place, and conditions conducive to letting this rhythm run freely and fully.

Which books or people have influenced you?

For my grounding in the History of the Book, the works of Robert Darnton, the model of Thomas R. Adams and Nicolas Barker, the lectures of D. F. McKenzie on the 'sociology of texts,' Jerome J. McGann's critique of textual criticism, and Benedict Anderson's concept of 'imagined community.'

For my studies on Philippine book history, the bibliographies of Trinidad Pardo de Tavera, W. E. Retana, José Toribio Medina, and the works of Damiana L. Eugenio, Resil B. Mojares, Regalado Trota Jose, Vicente S. Hernández, and Ambeth R. Ocampo.

What is your ideal image of a researcher?

I imagine the ideal researcher, specifically one in the Humanities, to be constantly curious, courageous, and tireless in the search for truth; highly articulate in speaking and writing; compassionate and empathetic; and always honest and ethical. Also, one who thinks the world

of one's research area, but recognizes, is unfazed by, and does not resent that there happens to be a world outside of it that does not always understand or care.

What is your must-have gear for field research and writing?

MacBook Pro for research and writing, iPad for reading digital books and documents, iPhone for taking photos and scanning pages, tape measure, white cotton gloves (because some libraries still insist on the use of such for handling rare books when actually this should not be necessary anymore), a good old-fashioned analogue notebook, unruled index cards, pencils, and wet wipes.

What would you say to people who want to become researchers?

Go for it! Seek the truth through research, then tell it and protect it. And always be kind to your books.

What ambitions do you have for the future?

Mainly, to be able to write more books about books. Generally, to keep battling against historical revisionism, negation, and ignorance, especially in the Philippines.

(September 2022)

References

Adams, Thomas R. and Nicolas Barker. 2001. A New Model for the Study of the Book. In *A Potencie of Life*: *Books in Society*, edited by Nicolas Barker, pp. 5–43. London: British Library; New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press.

Anderson, Benedict. 1981. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised ed. London and New York: Verso.

Darnton, Robert. 1982. "What Is the History of Books?" *Daedalus* 111 (3): 65–83. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20024803.

Eugenio, Damiana L. 1987. *Awit and Corrido: Philippine Metrical Romances*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press.

Hernández, Vicente S. 1996. *History of Books and Libraries in the Philippines 1521–1900*. Manila: National Commission for Culture and the Arts.

Jose, Regalado Trota. 1993. *Impreso*: *Philippine Imprints 1593–1811*. Makati: Fundación Santiago and Ayala Foundation.

McGann, Jerome J. 1983. *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*. Chicago and London: Chicago University Press. Reprint, Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 1992.

McKenzie, D. F. 1986. *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*. London: British Library. Reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Medina, José Toribio. 1896. *La imprenta en Manila desde sus orígenes hasta 1810*. Santiago de Chile: Impreso y grabado en casa del autor. Reprint, Amsterdam: N. Israel, 1964.

Mojares, Resil B. 1998. *Origins and Rise of the Filipino Novel: A Generic Study of the Novel Until 1940*, 2nd ed. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press.

Ocampo, Ambeth R. 1990. *Rizal Without the Overcoat*, 2-3. Pasig City: Anvil Publishing.

Pardo de Tavera, Trinidad H. 1903. Biblioteca Filipina. In *Bibliography of the Philippine Islands*. Washington: Government Printing Office. Reprint, Manila: National Historical Institute, 1994.

Retana, W. E. 1911. *Origenes de la imprenta en Filipinas*. Madrid: Librería General de Victoriano Suárez.

Interview with

Herman Hidayat

Visiting Research Scholar of CSEAS fromSeptember 2022 – November 2022

Sustainable peatland management:
Critical for reducing global warming

Please tell us about your research.

My main areas of research are in forest policy and political ecology, and Peat Swamp land management. I and our group at the National Research and Innovation Agency of Indonesia (BRIN) carried out fieldwork on peatland management from 2017-2019. The first set of fieldwork observed and studied the role of various stakeholders involved in peatland management in Pulang Pisau District (2017) and Kapuas District (2018) in Central Kalimantan. The second set of fieldwork focused on the participation of local people in peatland management (see Figs.1-2). These research findings aimed to provide recommendations to the government, through Bappenas (*Badan Perencanaan dan Pembangunan Nasional/Ministry of National Agency of Planning and Development*), to address the disastrous forest fires that occurred in 2015 (Fig. 3). These fires were one of Indonesia's biggest natural disasters and they created large amounts of CO2 emissions, inviting concern and criticism from across the world.

## How many research themes do you have?

In 2022, we had two research themes. The first theme is *social forestry*, particularly *the partnerships* between private companies and local people in village social forestry programs. Fieldwork for this research was conducted in Segah Subdistrict, Berau District, East Kalimantan, in May 2022. The second theme is t*he customary rights of indigenous people* in managing their forests.[1] We conducted fieldwork for this research in Rantau Kermas, Jangkat Subdistrict, Merangin District, Jambi Province in June 2022 (Fig.4). Both topics are necessary to fully understand the role of indigenous people, NGOS (such as WWF,

Fig.1 A big canal in the peatland area of Tumbang Nusa Village, Palangka Raya District, Central Kalimantan

Fig.2 Canal blocked by Dayak Kahayan villagers and transmigrants from Java to prevent water from flooding gardens when flowing to the small river in Simpur Village, Pulang Pisau, Central Kalimantan

Fig.3 Forest fires in peatland area of Pulang Pisau District, Central Kalimantan

Fig.4 Paddy rice storage of indigenous people

Fig.5 Rattan plantation in a customary forest rights area

Fig.6 A Village Forest is to empower of economic and social local people and to maintain forest conservation
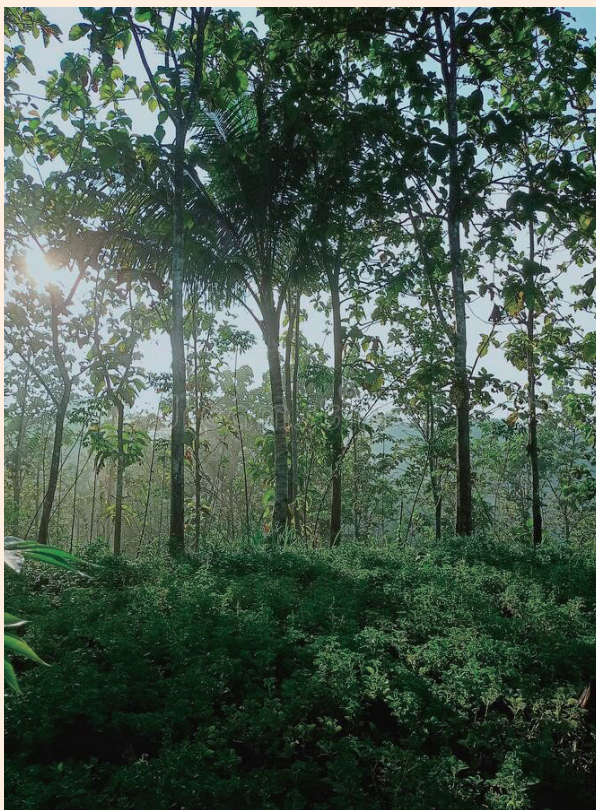
Jakalahari, and Warsi), and private companies in managing forests and non-timber products (NTFPs), such as rattan (Figure 5) and medicinal and other plants.

These themes also provide insights into the utilization, production, and distribution of NTFPs in economic, social, and ecological spheres.

Ultimately, we want to assess the national social forestry program, to monitor and evaluate the extent of policy implementation in the field and its strengths and weaknesses. Based on temporary findings, its strength is the ''synergetic'' cooperation among government institutions and other stakeholders (NGOs, academics, local people, etc.). Meanwhile, one weakness is a lack of cooperation among multiple stakeholders to provide sufficient credit and training in management, human development, production, and marketing. From this perspective, we can see that the focus when implementing social forestry should be supporting local people. Our current research of the social forestry program is very relevant to working hand in hand with peatland management programs at the village (*Desa*), subdistrict (*Kecamatan*), and provincial level to mitigate poverty and ensure a sustainable future.

Why do you find your research topic interesting?

Social Forestry is a national program to economically, socially, and ecologically empower local people, especially those who live in and beside forest areas (Fig. 6). Local people and other stakeholders participate in conservation programs to sustainably manage forests. Since its launch in 2016, the program has designated 12.5 million hectares of forest as social forestry areas. According to the registered National Statistics of 2021, ten percent of poor people, who mainly live in villages in or near forest areas (25-30 million people), are unable to manage forest resources. The economic potential of forest resources accessed through social forestry schemes (such as Village forests (*Hutan Desa*), Community forestry (*Hutan Kemasyarakatan*), Community forest plantations (*Hutan Tanaman Rakyat*), Customary forests (*Hutan Adat*), and Forest Partnerships (*Hutan Kemitraan*), is significant to reducing poverty. During 2011-2016, 2.5 million hectares were designated for social forestry from the total area of 12.7 million hectares. One main challenge to implementing social forestry is the process of *re-centralization* that is now taking place due to law 23/2014. The law shifts the institutional structure from the district to the provincial level with the creation of a Forest Management Unit (FMU). It also realigns the bureaucratic network, drawing out the process so that the very final decision about a social forestry proposal rests in the hands of the central government, specifically the Ministry of Environment and Forestry's Directorate General of Social Forestry, in Jakarta (Fisher, M.R., *et al*. 2018: 350).

How did you get started in your research and how did you come to focus on your current research?

The research agenda began by observing the real conditions of local people who live in areas bordering forests, who amount to more than 10 percent of Indonesia's population. We adopted the current research themes to become more aware, to study, educate, facilitate, and to empower local people for their economic, social, and

ecological advancement, because their performance is significant to the whole of Indonesia.

Have you had any difficulties in putting together the results of your research into a research paper or book?

Yes, frankly speaking I have found it difficult to put the results of my research into a research policy paper, both domestically and internationally, and to produce a book. This is related to insufficient data due to lack of time in the research field, insufficient funding, insufficient budget allocations for payments in international journals, and lack of appropriate methodologies.

Can you share with us an episode about any influential people, things, and places you have encountered whilst doing your research?

II have interviewed many impressive people while conducting fieldwork, including the heads of villages, traders of forest resources, businessmen, local people, and NGO workers. I have listened to their experiences in managing forest resources and distributing forest products to district and provincial trading markets. In this sense, social forestry in peatland areas has encouraged me to strive to implement wisdom and to integrate idealism and action research. If this can be realized, programs that target economic, social and ecological empowerment of local people can mitigate global warming due to climate change.

Which books or people have influenced you?

Relating to peatland and social forestry management, books that have influenced me include *Gambut dan Pengetahuan Ekologi Tradisional* (edited by Robert Siburian), *Tropical Peatland Eco-Management* (by Mitsuru Osaki *et al*.), and *Catastrophe and Regeneration in Indonesia's Peatlands* (by Kosuke Mizuno *et al*.). Social forestry books and articles by Ari Rakatama *et al*., M.R. Fisher *et al*., and Hans Nicholas Jong have been influential as well (see references).

What is your ideal image of a researcher?

Research is a profession. To become a professional researcher, a person should master concepts, theories, and techniques of research into a methodological framework. To master a methodological framework, a researcher should graduate from a doctorate program in a university. Following this, a visiting scholarship can help a researcher establish partnerships and extend networks with a range of colleagues and home scholars. Researchers may apply to some research institutes to help them publish their research and eventually publish a book and articles in domestic and international journals. The Indonesian novelist and essayist Pramudya Ananta Toer said in his a famous novel *Bumi Manusia* (1980), "publishing a book is an eternal work, as it will be read and it is understood to become a social transformation for young generations in the future."

What books can you recommend to a younger people?

To read widely enhances the spirit and inspires you to write articles and books. Certainly, if you wish to be a pro-

fessional scientist, you must practice disciplined studies to extend your views and perspectives, for instance in the social sciences, natural sciences, human sciences, applied technology, and information technology. To expand the human science perspective, I recommend, among others, *Catastrophe and Regeneration in Indonesia's Peatland* by Kosuke Mizuno *et al*., *Climate Change, Disaster Risks, and Human Security* by Juan M. Pulhin *et al*., and *Earthly Politics: Local and Global in Environmental Governance* by Sheila Jassanoff.

What ambitions do you have for the future?

LI aim to be a real scientist of a specific discipline. I hope to publish in international and domestic books and journals, to contribute to the scientific discourse, to educate and socialize scientific transformation for future young generations. As you know, the destiny of every nation depends not only on their spirit, but also mastering science, technology, economics, and military science.

(October 2022)

Note

[1] For further explanation, see Hidayat, H. 2018. "Forests, Law and Customary Rights in Indonesia," in Asia Pacific Viewpoint Journal. Number 59 (3): 293-308.

References

Ananta Toer, Pramudya. 1980. *Bumi Manusia*. Jakarta: Gramedia Press.

Fisher, M.R., *et al*. 2018. "Assessing the New Social Forestry Project in Indonesia: Recognition, Livelihood, and Conservation," *International Forestry Review Journal*, Vol. 20 (3).

Hidayat, Herman. 2016. *Forest Resources Management in Indonesia: A Political Ecology Approach*. Singapore: Springer Press.

Hidayat, Herman. 2018. *Sustainable Plantation Forestry: Problems, Challenges and Solutions*. Singapore: Springer Press.

Hidayat, Herman. 2018. "Forests, Law and Customary Rights in Indonesia: Implications of a Decision of the Indonesian Court in 2012," *Asia Pacific Viewpoint Journal*, Number 59 (3): 293-308.

Hidayat, Herman, *et al*. 2022. "Contribution of Sumalindo Company to Local People: Livelihood, Forest Conservation Program and Climate Change Mitigation", *Journal of Environmental Science and Engineering*, Volume 11, Number 4, July-August, pp. 111-124.

Jassanoff, Sheila. 2004. *Earthly Politics: Local and Global in Environmental Governance*. USA: MIT Press.

Mizuno, Kosuke, *et al*. 2016. *Catastrophe and Regeneration in Indonesia's Peatlands: Ecology, Economy and Society*. Singapore: NUS Press in Association with Kyoto University Press, Japan.

Nicholas Jong, Hans. 2022. "Community Control of Forests hasn't Slowed Deforestation, Indonesia Study Finds," *Indonesian Forests*, 4 January.

Osaki, Mitsuru, *et al*. 2021. *Tropical Peatland Eco-Management*. Singapore: Springer Press.

Rakatama, Ari, *et al*. 2020. "Reviewing Social Forestry in Indonesia: Opportunities and Challenges," *Forest Policy and Economics Journal*, Vol. 11, February.

Pulhin, Juan, *et al*. 2021. *Climate Change, Disaster Risks, and Human Security*. Singapore: Springer Press.

Siburian, Robert (ed). 2020. *Gambut dan Pengetahuan Ekologi Tradisional: Kebijakan, Degradasi, dan Restorasi*. Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Press.

VISITOR'S VOICE

Interview with
Rataya Phanomwan Na Ayuttaya

Visiting Research Scholar of CSEAS from September 2022 – January 2023

Exploring the Wisdom of the Departed

Please tell us about your research.

My work as a visiting research scholar at CSEAS is titled "Cremation Volumes in Thailand: A Case Study of the Thammasat University Library Collection, Thailand." For seven years, I have worked with the Thammasat University Library Rare Books Collection, which includes Thai funeral books. I provide information resources to researchers, among them postgraduate students and instructors. In addition to the usual responsibilities of reshelving books and providing materials upon request, librarians must also guide and counsel users. The memorial volumes I work with have been digitized and uploaded to the Thammasat University Digital Collection database (TUDC). Containing folklore, recipes, medical advice, personal anecdotes, and other information of sociological and historical interest, these funeral volumes are invaluable resources. By examining and analyzing biographical aspects of the subjects, illustrations, and contents, unique elements of Thai culture are revealed. The goal of the research is to provide useful information and assistance to fellow librarians as well as scholars interested in the social sciences and related matters.

How many research themes do you have?

The main theme is the concept of the library, information, and documentation studies. In addition, I am working on newspaper scanning and microfilm conversion as topics of interest. I am also researching the preservation and conservation of library materials, and exploring user behavior as well as user experience with library services.

Why do you find your research topic interesting?

Cremation volumes are seen as a significant resource for studying Thai history. Researchers use them as a reference in their published works. These funeral books generally consist of three principal parts: a biography, individual content, and memorial speeches by relatives and friends. Each section contains unique characteristics for analysis. Illustrations, especially photos of the subjects and their families, as well as maps, can be precious re-

sources. Sometimes surprising or revelatory narratives as uncovered in the volumes.

How did you get started in your research and how did you come to focus on your current research?

The official vision statement of the Thammasat University Library is to be an organization promoting ubiquitous learning and research anywhere, anytime. We are currently transferring printed materials into digital format. Academic works, journals, and textbooks by TU lecturers and students are being processed. My research began with checking book duplication before digitizing. Most Thai memorial booklets contain sections entitled *Wisdom of the Departed*. I have examined over 7,000 volumes with the help of colleagues, compiling a data set with the aim of making this information available to users. In this way, librarianship can enhance the knowledge of researchers.

Have you had any difficulties in putting together the results of your research into a research paper or book?

As a full-time librarian for many years, exploring books and reading and collecting data are pleasurable activities. Difficulties in research and writing sometimes arise related to English writing abilities, which are a work-in-progress for most Thai university staff, including most professors.

What is your must-have gear for field research and writing?

Since I work by exploring e-books in a database, a fast and stable internet connection is the most necessary element. Web OPAC and library online databases are essential sources of information. I use a laptop with a large external screen for searching and writing and an iPhone for making quick notes. Less formal but necessary gear include my eyes, contact lenses, aromatherapy scents, and a clear mind.

What books can you recommend to a younger people?

Among introductory books about historical research that target younger readers, I recommend the new study *Thailand, A Struggle For The Nation* by Charnvit Kasetsiri. This is a basic introduction to modern Thai history by a distinguished Thai historian who is former rector of Thammasat University. Our library is honored to be the recipient of Professor Charnvit's personal library, which is shelved in a special room and is available in circulating form for our students. Books from the personal library of another distinguished historian, Benedict Anderson, are also part of this collection. Another title that I recommend was originally written for the benefit of Japanese students, *A Life Beyond Boundaries: A Memoir* by Benedict Anderson.

What is your ideal image of a librarian?

At the Thammasat University Library, many senior librarians might serve as role models, whose dedication and professionalism I respect. I think of them when I suggest that for librarians, reader satisfaction must be the top priority. Technical librarians must provide precise and accurate cataloging to make library resources easily retrievable and meet user needs. To achieve good service, service-mindedness is necessary. Librarians should treat all readers with high-level customer service, surpassing expectations. They must seek and evaluate resources to maintain library collections for supporting different fields of study. In addition, it is vital to clearly respond to research questions and recommend pertinent data sources.

What would you say to people who want to become librarians?

It is thought that most librarians choose their profession because they love books. However, librarians must deal with many subjects apart from books. Problem-solving is an essential skill. A librarian's work varies according to the organization. School librarians should encourage children to love reading. University or special library jobs can be more complex, requiring skills not previously imagined that lead to continual intellectual and emotional self-improvement. Librarians are essential for readers to achieve their goals. You will be proud to see achievements by students and other researchers that you have helped.

What ambitions do you have for the future?

I hope to continue microfilming and digitizing back-issue newspapers, as these resources are quickly deteriorating due to temperature, humidity, and related issues. In addition, I hope to boost inter-library cooperation to improve service levels, share information resources, and promote learning by exchanging work experiences related to sustainable organizational development. As librarians, we can contribute to educational quality, making every day a happy day.

(September 2022)

References

Charnvit Kasetsiri. 2022. *Thailand: A Struggle for the Nation*. Singapore: ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute.

Anderson, Benedict R. O'G. (Benedict Richard O'Gorman). 2018. *A Life Beyond Boundaries: A Memoir*. London: Verso.