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Cover image: Photograph of the Wellington Chee Kung Tong Orchestra, taken ca. 1925 at Hardie Shaw Studios, Willis Street, Wellington (Ref.: 1/2-169302-F). Courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library (National Library of New Zealand).

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DIWALI IN DUNEDIN: A CASE STUDY OF FESTIVALISATION AND INTERVENTION IN INDIAN CULTURAL PERFORMANCE IN NEW ZEALAND

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Abstract

This article presents an ethnographic case study that discusses the festivalisation process of a public Diwali festival as celebrated in the southern city of Dunedin, Aotearoa New Zealand. In Aotearoa, support for Diwali festivals has spread with the growth and diversity of the Indian diaspora, including both top-down and ground-up backing. Differences in the urban location and demographic makeup of the Indian population have resulted in annual cultural festivals with major variations in size and scope. This has produced festivals with distinct governance structures that affect the organisational structure, participants, size and nature of the audience, and styles of performances. In this article, focus is given to the growing visibility of Diwali in Dunedin in terms of the interconnection of a festivalisation process in the national cultural sphere, and the intervention of key local individuals who work from the ground up to make the festival happen. We ask two main questions as a way of attempting to comprehend New Zealand's contemporary engagement with Diwali and how it is played out in a relatively small city in comparison to the large-scale events in the country's largest city, Auckland. How has Diwali become a form of festivalised culture? What role has intervention played in establishing the event? A new theoretical model is presented to assist in the developing of event portfolios by considering the strategic relationships between the host city, community and festival stakeholders.

Keywords: Diwali, Dunedin, festivalisation, intervention

Introduction

A Saturday afternoon in late October 2019 and Dunedin's lower central plaza known as the Octagon is filling up with people attending the open-air public performances of music, song and dance in celebration of the Hindu "Festival of Lights", Diwali. The Otago Museum on the other side of town hosted several cultural performances and displays in the morning, and the Dunedin Public Art Gallery in the Octagon had information stalls and artwork exhibited as part of the day-long event. Along one side of the main road cutting through the centre of the Octagon for about 80 metres, food vendors were selling a range of Indian cuisine, and crowds were gathering as a DJ played Indian music as a cultural soundscape to the event. On the paved performance space, the creative contributions were varied, ranging from traditional Indian singing

to Bollywood dance with backing track, and juxtaposing religious and secular musical styles. In recognition of the public multicultural milieu, Indian performances were complemented by contemporary *taiko* drumming with Japanese roots and global reach, which offered a visually and audibly dynamic opening to the event. The performances ran for about 90 minutes as members of the public came and went, listening, watching and experiencing the sound, vision and tastes of Dunedin's rendering of one of India's main festivals.

Over the past few decades, the celebration of Diwali in Aotearoa New Zealand has blossomed into a vibrant public display of multiculturalism and Indian identity (Booth, 2014; 2018; Johnson, 2007; 2010; Johnson & Figgins, 2005). As well as numerous festivities organised within distinct community organisations in various locations around the country, which sometimes overlap into the broader population, several noticeably public spectacles have been instituted in Auckland, New Zealand's largest city (population in 2018: 1.6M), and Wellington, New Zealand's capital (population in 2018: 514,000) (Statistics New Zealand, 2019a), at first in 2002 through the intervention of the Asia New Zealand Foundation (ANZF)[1] and the respective city councils. (Dunedin's resident population in 2018 was 126,000 [Statistics New Zealand, 2019a].) Comparable public manifestations of these extensive top-down Diwali festivals, managed by collaborative relationships at different political locations and levels (Maloney, Smith & Stoker, 2000), have emerged in other parts of the national ethnoscape, ranging in size and exposure, but sharing the national significance of Diwali as a relatively new and public display of New Zealand's contemporary cultural milieu.

New Zealand hosts a rapidly growing population and unique cultural makeup of residents with Indian cultural heritage. The historically cultural Gujarati and Punjabi residents have more recently been joined by Indo-Fijians (especially since the coups from 1987, 2000 and 2006) and more recently the changes in the skilled migration category (since 2003) have resulted in attracting a growing number of international students and skilled migrants arriving from major Indian centres, as well as other global locations that host the Indian diaspora.

New Zealand's Indian Population

The currently available Census data of 2018, subject to potential errors, suggests that there has been an additional growth to 4.7 percent of the current total New Zealand population of 5 million people or approximately 230,000 people of Indian cultural origin compared to 178,000 in 2016 (MigrationStats, 2019; World Population Review, 2020). India is the largest homeland for many of the skilled migrants, repatriated family members and international students. "By 2013 ongoing immigration from India had made this the largest place of origin, although India still only accounts for about 40 percent of the population, with another 30 percent from Fiji. Other countries of the Indian diaspora, such as South Africa and Malaysia, stand out as significant birthplaces" (Friesen, 2015, p. 21).

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1 At the time called the Asia 2000 Foundation of New Zealand.

Eequib, Dorigo and de Raad's (2020) report analyses the economic contribution of New Zealand's Indian population: "As one measure of the economic contribution of NZ Indians, we assign a share of national income of the different components of the economy's income (income from labour or work and capital or ownership of businesses) to people of Indian ethnicity. We estimate this was $10b in 2019, largely made up of income earned from work, as well as profits of businesses owned by Indians…. This accounted for 3.3% of national GDP in 2019, up from 0.9% in 2001" (p. 25).

The New Zealand Indian community is concentrated in the largest urban centres with 71 percent of the total Indian population settled in Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington (Friesen, 2014, p. 143). A third of New Zealand's population of 5 million people live in Auckland (World Population Review, 2020). Auckland is ethnically diverse and the city's Indian community represents about 10 percent of Auckland's total population (Auckland Council, 2021).

Auckland's Indian population of over 160,000 is in stark contrast to the smaller city of Dunedin. The 2018 census notes the total percentage of the Asian population in Dunedin as 7.8 percent (9,840 people) of the city's total population, but does not identify cultural distinctions (e.g., Indian, Chinese, Japanese, etc) within the Asian category. Taking Dunedin's Indian community as 25 percent of the total Asian population, as per the national average, we can estimate the Indian population as being 2,467 (Statistics New Zealand, 2018) or 2 percent of Dunedin's total poluation.

Demographics

The majority of the New Zealand's Indian population are born overseas, and the majority of those born in New Zealand (65.7 percent) are children identified as under the age of 15 (Statistics New Zealand, 2019b). The unique Indian cultural make up includes a smaller proportion of those born in Fiji, identified in the Pacific Islands category in Table 1. English is spoken by 90.8 percent of the Indian population and 35.7 percent speak two or more languages (Statistics New Zealand, 2019b).

Table 2 identifies speakers from the ten major Indian language groups (over 1000 speakers) spoken by the Indian population. Linguistic affiliations from across the Indian subcontinent are represented with the majority of languages from the Indo-Aryan linguistic groups representing those of North Indian heritages and the smaller Dravidian linguistic group represents South Indian heritage (MigrationStats, 2019).

Both Auckland and Dunedin are home to universities that attract students and skilled migrants from India and across the Indian global diaspora. As identified by Booth, the majority of Indian residents in New Zealand are Hindi speakers and practice Hinduism. There has been an increase in Fiji-Hindi speakers, a significant rise in Panjabi speakers and Sikh community membership, and a growing number of Guajarati speakers (2018, pp. 280–281). The smaller South Indian communities with Tamil, Malayalam and Kannada roots are on the rise as well as Singhalese speakers from Sri Lanka. Cultural organisations, affiliated by language, gather in large community festivals such as Diwali, Holi, Eid, Guru Nanak, and Navaratri, and in smaller event settings such as concerts, plays, comedy nights, and social functions.

Table 1. New Zealand's Indian population by place of birth 2006–2018 (Statistics New Zealand, 2019b).

Birthplace	2006 (%)	2013 (%)	2018 (%)
New Zealand	23	23.5	23.8
Australia	0.4	0.3	0.3
Pacific Islands	28.8	27.5	21.1
United Kingdom and Ireland	0.7	0.7	0.6
Europe	0.1	0.1	0.1
North America	0.2	0.2	0.2
Asia	42.6	44.6	51.1
Middle East and Africa	4.3	3.1	2.6
Other	0	0	0

Table 2. Ten major language groups spoken by New Zealand's Indian community in 2018 (MigrationStats, 2019).

Linguistic Group	Language	Number of Speakers
Indo-Aryan	Hindi	69,471
Indo-Aryan	Panjabi	34,227
Indo-Aryan	Fiji-Hindi	26,805
Indo-Aryan	Gujarati	22,200
Dravidian	Tamil	10,107
Dravidian	Malayalam	9,024
Dravidian	Telegu	5,754
Indo-Aryan	Marathi	4,770
Indo-Aryan	Bengali	3,486
Dravidian	Kannada	1,692

Auckland has numerous cultural groups that represent a range of Indian ethnic and linguistic affiliations. Depending on the producer or organiser, events are presented in a variety of languages, including Hindi, Fiji-Hindi, Guajarati, Marathi, Panjabi, Sinhalese, Tamil, Malayalam, and/or English. Dunedin's Indian population has a strong South Indian cultural representation. The Dunedin Indian community is too small to support a temple. The Hindu Temple Society and the Dunedin Tamil Society (DTS) are active in the community and the University of Otago in Dunedin has functioning student associations that support cultural groups that might contribute cultural performances at the Diwali festivities. The size and homogenous nature of Dunedin's Indian population make the scale of community events easier to maintain community initiatives and leadership.

Diwali

In its diverse settings, Diwali is referred to as a *puja*, as found in homes and temples, which is a term from Sanskrit meaning to worship, not as a festival. However, in the diaspora setting, Diwali is increasing called a festival and open to celebration for all (Booth, 2015; Carnegie & Smith, 2006). In this way, Diwali has been transformed in locations such as New Zealand into an event whose focus is on ethnicity, and a showcase for the increasing gaze of the local non-Indian participants as well as out-of-town visitors (Wise, 2019; Wood, 2009).

In New Zealand, as in many other Indian diaspora settings, Diwali has been transformed from a social, family based, participatory event into an annual presentational festival that is produced publicly, especially in larger urban locations (including Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Hamilton, and Dunedin). Support for Diwali festivals in New Zealand has spread especially since the late twentieth century with the growth and diversity of the Indian diaspora. Differences in the urban location and demographic makeup of the Indian population have resulted in annual cultural festivals with major variations in size and scope. This has produced festivals with distinct governance structures that affect the organisational structure, participants, size and nature of the audience, and styles of performances (Figure 1). Of particular note are the ways Diwali has been festivalised through intervention, and characterised by ground-up and top-down approaches.

In 2019, New Zealand offered a plentiful choice of Diwali festivities, with events beginning Saturday 5 October and ending on Durga Puja, Saturday 26 October. In Auckland, Diwali events were presented around the city, and supported by local wards, community organisations, business associations and commercial enterprises. The four major Auckland Diwali festivities in 2019 – in comparison to the public Dunedin Diwali event that is the focus of this case study – were held in multiple locations attracting large audiences of a variety of cultural identities, community groups, performance genres, and business relationships. New Zealand's largest Diwali festivity, Auckland Diwali Festival (formally Auckland's Diwali Festival of Lights),[2] attracting an estimated

2 In its 18th year in 2019.

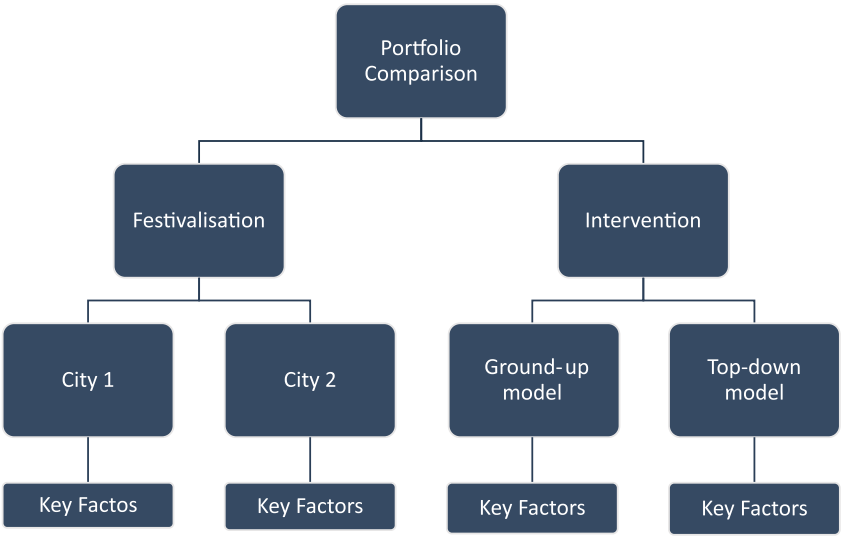

Figure 1: Festival and Intervention Comparison Model.

50,000 attendees over the weekend, is produced by Auckland Tourism, Event and Economic Development Limited (ATEED).[3] The free event was held in Aotea Square two weeks before the official date for Diwali and attracted a large and ethnically diverse crowd. The Auckland Diwali Festival is the largest of its kind, is hugely popular, and is produced by local council staff in consultation with longstanding Indian community relationships. The main stages offered the opportunity for Indian cultural dance and music academies to showcase their students. Until 2019, funding through ANZF's access to soft power support through the India Centre for Cultural Relations helped support performers and artists traveling from India.[4] This Diwali festivity can be compared to the community generated and ticketed Diwali festival event in Auckland, featuring the Bollywood sensation, Sidhu Moosewala. This event filled the 10,000-seat Vodafone Event Centre with Panjabi families paying up to NZD250 per seat to attend a show by a local Panjabi entrepreneur on the main night of the Diwali *puja*. On this same day, however, yet representing local demographics and a growing regional response to Diwali, a Diwali festival in Dunedin's Octagon was staged. Such vastly different event venues and production models help illustrate the complex notions of festivalisation, cultural representation, community objectives, and stakeholder relationships between local community, government authorities and international networks.

3 The organisation is the region's economic development agency and is controlled by Auckland Council.

4 During fieldwork, the crowds and stallholders spoken to did not seem to notice the change to festival content.

While building on prior study of Diwali festivities in New Zealand over the past 16 years, and with much event ethnography at various national and local Diwali celebrations, the research for this article has included new interviews that were undertaken in 2019 with key participants who have been pivotal in making the Dunedin Diwali event possible over the past 10 years or so. In this Dunedin context, we ask two main questions as a way of attempting to comprehend New Zealand's contemporary engagement with Diwali and how it is played out in a relatively small city in comparison to the large-scale events in the country's largest city, Auckland. How has Diwali become a form of festivalised culture? What role has intervention played in establishing the event? These are two clear spheres of meaning that help in comprehending Diwali's raison d'être in Dunedin. A study of each offers insight into how a regional and relatively small city population can create a Diwali celebration and turn it into a significant annual multicultural event.

Festivalisation

Most commonly, the idea of festivalisation "refers to the politics of big events and their political and economic consequences on the host environment…. Festivals and mega-events are increasingly being used as marketing tools by cities as well as by nations in order to promote themselves" (Booth, 2014, p. 26). The festivalisation of Diwali in New Zealand is at the heart of its celebration as a themed public event consumed by the broader community (Getz 2005, p. 21). Along with other Asian festivals such as the Chinese New Year and Lantern Festival, Diwali has been thrust into a public sphere in a "festivalscape" imbued with the idea of a "contact zone" (Pratt, 1991). As Mackley-Crump notes in connection with Pacific festivalisation in New Zealand, the idea of a festivalscape can help in comprehending "the cultural geographies of particular localities" (2012, p. 107). When looking at cultural festivals through a geographical lens, Cudny (2016) points out the importance of defining festivalisation in a cultural context. This model shifts the notion of festivalisation from the mega-event model of Roche (2011) to a cultural perspective that is central to our Diwali case study.

Within New Zealand's growing Indian ethnoscape in the 1990s, Diwali began to take on more of a public presence in Dunedin. While local organisations such as the Indian Cultural Society and other University of Otago affiliate societies, as well as community groups and individuals, would have private or family celebrations, Diwali soon began to be festivalised in the public domain. This is comparable to public and top-down organised festivals that celebrate the Chinese New Year, which, in Dunedin, have emerged as a result of the nation's growing Chinese population (Johnson, 2005). Even by the mid-1990s, as one informant noted, the emergence of publicly-displayed artwork at the time of Diwali was particularly noticeable: "I remember there was during Diwali one year ... the Trade Aid shop was in the Octagon at that time, and ... a group came together and created a rangoli, you know with ... coloured powders and things like that".

The inaugural ANZF Diwali events in 2002 included "sponsorship locally and from overseas: decorations were provided by the Hindu Endowment Board in Singapore, and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations in Delhi provided the Nagaland Performing Group and a rod-and-string puppet troupe from Karnataka"

(Johnson and Figgins, 2005). These Diwali events have continued and grown, liaising with council and community groups. The shift in management in Auckland as a "super city" in 2013 and the establishment of ATEED in 2011 created an event portfolio that included Auckland's Diwali. It should be emphasised that the ANZF Diwali Festivals in Auckland and Wellington were not the only Diwali events in these cities. The major difference between them, however, was that ANZF did not actively promote similar festivals outside of these two cities, and the Dunedin event had to rely primarily on other funding sources and interventions (discussed later).

Antchak and Pernecky (2017, p. 554) found when comparing Auckland, Wellington and Dunedin's event portfolios that they were designed with quite different levels of 'formality'. Dunedin's smaller size and limited community resources allowed for less directionality in the portfolio, and this created more opportunity for community input in comparison with the larger cities of Auckland and Wellington. "In Dunedin, a relatively passive rhythmicity of the city portfolio was described as the overreliance on annual events. Interviewee D1 explained that, in Dunedin many events were organised because "we have always done them". Such orientation lacks critical evaluation of event feasibility and relevance for current city objectives. Event planners clearly emphasised the need for strategic changes and a more proactive intervention of city authorities into the major events" (Antchak & Pernecky 2017, p. 558).

In 2019, Dunedin City Council implemented a five-year festival and event plan (Dunedin City Council, 2019), which reflected similar event strategies in Auckland and Wellington. In Dunedin, as a smaller regional urban centre that contrasts much with Auckland, public festivals such as Diwali are increasingly a part of the city's festivalisation of its key cultural assets, and a reflection of its increasingly multicultural ethnoscape. As noted by Marilyn Anderson (Dunedin City Council's community events co-ordinator) in response to planning for the 2017 Dunedin Diwali: "Organisers hoped to expand the Dunedin Diwali event out into a specially decorated Octagon, with an outdoor performance area and food stalls in the carriageway" (Harwood, 2017). Furthermore, the hosting of the event in the council-owned Dunedin Public Art Gallery, along with the Otago Museum, which receives council funding, helps show increasing local support for the public event.

Interventions

Since 1997, Diwali festivals have become not only public events that include performances of Indian culture, but also public demonstrations of the New Zealand government's acknowledgement of and support for New Zealand's Indian communities (Johnson, 2007; 2010). Generally, "Diwali festivals fall into two governance categories: those organised by local Indian community organisations and those organised by city councils and other government-sponsored agencies" (Booth, 2014, p. 140). As noted by Booth (2015; 2016), the Auckland Indian Association's Diwali was the first such major public festival in New Zealand, which was held at their Gandhi Centre in central Auckland in 1998, followed by the Waitakere Indian Association, in West Auckland in 2000. These Diwali festivals, and others that appeared later, continue today with

varying levels of local governmental or top-down support. Auckland Council[5] and various funding trusts support the Waitakere Diwali event, a festivity that focuses on Hindi language and Hindu cultural themes. Further, the Auckland Indian Association Diwali and the Auckland and Wellington Diwali events received annual funding through ANZF (from 2002 to 2018),[6] along with the (Chinese) Lantern Festival (since 2000).

Figure 2 tracks such top-down level governmental agency support for the Diwali and Lantern Festivals from 2010 to the end of that financial support in 2018. The respective local councils assumed the management role of the festivals, which now rely on their own sponsorship relationships and funding resources. The funding levels reflect the New Zealand government's interest in establishing economic growth in India and China that peaked in 2011/12. As a public festival in Dunedin, Diwali emerged in the early 2000s in a similar, yet much smaller, way to the top-down driven ANZF Diwali festivals produced in Auckland and Wellington. The 2002 Diwali Festival of Lights in Auckland was produced by Jennifer King, the cultural manager at ANZF. She also helped create the Lantern Festival, which continues to be extremely popular and receives support from the Chinese community, sponsors and government agencies.

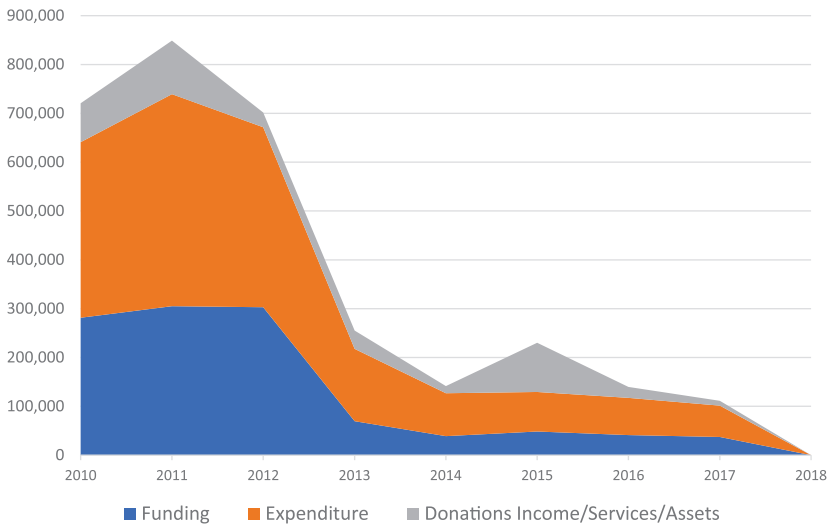

Figure 2: NZF Lantern and Diwali Festival Funding 2010–2018. Source: Asia New Zealand Foundation annual reports (Asia New Zealand Foundation 2009, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2017, 2019).

5 The Auckland Council was established in 2010 and replaced a number of smaller city councils.

6 The funding priorities of the Asia New Zealand Foundation were re-thought in 2018.

At the heart of Diwali in Dunedin is intervention. Local public Diwali celebrations have been based on ground-up intervention, as opposed to the top-down intervention that until 2018 dominated Auckland and Wellington events. However, with such a local approach, the role of individuals is determined by commitment and availability. In the early 2000s, a Dunedin organisation called IndiaNZ was driven by three local Indian women who were motivated to hold a public Diwali event. As one participant noted, "depending on who and what, what else is going on in their lives, ... they create things". Subsequently, for several years Dunedin was lit up with various Diwali celebrations that took the festival into a new public domain. However, as one participant noted:

> With ethnic communities and my experience in the short time ... with the DMEC [Dunedin Multi-Ethnic Council] is that very often ... ethnic communities are, don't necessarily stay, you know they, you have, for whatever reason people are moving and ... we had for a brief time someone who was very, she was very active in the Indian community and tried to organise things like Diwali and events like that ... but she left.

The festivalisation of Diwali in Dunedin in terms of a public celebration was consolidated in the early to mid 2000s by IndiaNZ, which emulated the Auckland and Wellington ANZF events, although on a much smaller scale and relying primarily on ground-up community support. Formed in 2005, the organisation IndiaNZ (Dunedin) ran the Dunedin public Diwali festival for several years from 2005 to 2011, although the organisation was short-lived due to one of its main figures falling ill. For the organisation's first two events, Diwali was held in the city's suburbs at Balmacewen Intermediate School (tickets cost $2) and included Indian fashion and food. As noted during fieldwork by one of the organisers, in 2003, about 12 local Indian families got together to celebrate Diwali with a potluck dinner, although, while the local Indian Cultural Society (affiliated to the University of Otago) had events in the late 1990s, there were no public Diwali in Dunedin from at least 1999 through to 2004.

At one of their early events in 2007, including a smaller set of performances over two hours at the Dunedin Public Library, the main celebration was staged in the Regent Theatre in the Octagon from 5pm to 8pm as "Diwali Mela" (Hindu Festivity), and included 21 items in the programme. To begin with, there was a ritualistic lighting of the lamp, an address by K. P. Ernest as India's High Commissioner to New Zealand, and a range of cultural performances from the local Indian community. Of importance was the visit to Dunedin for Diwali by the Kalanjali Folk and Tribal Dance Academy from Andhra Pradesh in Southern India, who were also performing at the Auckland and Wellington celebrations as put on by ANZF, but sponsored for Dunedin not by ANZF but by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, thus showing that Diwali in this southern location was primary an activity concerning local community groups. This was the first time that Dunedin had experienced visiting performers from India coming to Dunedin especially for the event. For this particular event, sponsorship was gained from a number of donors, including the High Commission for India, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Dunedin City Council, Creative Communities (Dunedin City), Caversham Foundation, and Community Trust of Otago.

In 2008, a similar celebration was held, this time in the Auditorium at the University of Otago College of Education. The event included the Nataraj Gosthi folk dance troupe from northeastern Assam in India, who were also visiting Auckland and Wellington for similar performances. As noted in a review of the celebration, the expenses needed were covered from institutional support and from generous locals: "The 'close-knit' Dunedin Indian community raised funds to cover the artists' costs, and was assisted by the Dunedin City Council, Community Trust of Otago and Creative Communities scheme" (Stevens, 2008).

For the 2009 celebration, Dunedin's Hutton Theatre at the Otago Museum was the location for a further aspect of the celebration with a series of performances by the Rajasthani Puppeteers, a visiting family from India performing Kathputli, a tradition of puppeteering that dates back 3000 years (Taylor, 2009). Also, from India, as part of the main event were performances by the Gujarati Saurashtra Lok Kala Kandra dance troupe. With an event at the University of Otago Childcare Association's full-time centre in the afternoon, their main public performance was in the late afternoon at the College of Education auditorium on 24 October.

The event in 2010 was fortunate also to feature visiting performers from India as reported in the Indian Newslink:

> Indianz Dunedin Event Organiser Nayan Padiyar said Diwali afforded an opportunity to share Indian culture with the rest of the city and transfer cultural traditions to the next generation. "The Festival of Lights has become one of the Dunedin Indian community's main annual cultural celebrations. Magician Jadugar and the folk dancers from Rajasthan will make a difference this year," she said. (Staff Reporter, 2010)

At the seventh public celebration in 2011, Dunedin-based dancer Swaroopa Unni was a performer at the event, which was held at the Church of Christ in the town centre with about 100 people in attendance. As noted in the *Otago Daily Times*: "Event organiser Nayan Padiyar said the day of games, dancing and food aimed to bring young, old and new members of the Indian community together in Dunedin 'and keep the culture alive, basically, for the children'. Their group would celebrate Diwali, Christmas and New Year's Eve this year as an 'extended family', she said" (Staff Reporter, 2011).

After the 2011 Dunedin Diwali there was a gap until the public festival re-emerged in a slightly different guise, with new ground-up supporters and organisation. Diwali entered the public sphere in Dunedin again, this time through the intervention of a recent Indian migrant and professional dancer to the city, Swaroopa Unni, along with a collaboration with Dunedin Public Art Gallery (DPAG). As noted by a key participant, "somebody needs to take, take on that coordinator role". Further, "I think it's partly because of Swaroopa that there's been more of the, this focus on Diwali". Moving to New Zealand in 2010, Swaroopa's involvement with Diwali came about soon after she started her Natyaloka School of Indian Dance in Dunedin in 2011. She notes that her involvement in Diwali in Dunedin was "by chance" because where she comes from in India the festival has never been a big part of her household or local community.

For her, "it was a huge surprise" to find Diwali as a pan-Indian identity celebration in New Zealand. She thought that Indian "New Zealanders have found Diwali to be that one thing that holds them together". "It was not part of me at all and suddenly it's part of me once I've come here but for me it's more like organising, bringing people together". "Some of the groups are performing for the first time after they've come to New Zealand … it's something they do here".

In 2015 a public Diwali was instigated once again through a collaboration between a recent Indian migrant to the city and the Visitor Programmes Co-ordinator at DPAG. In the first two years, the event was held at DPAG and attracted about 1000 people. It included a number of Indian and non-Indian performances, but maintained an Indian-themed objective. To date, this type of public Diwali celebration has run each year (except 2020), and with each one growing in terms of participants and audience numbers. By 2017, there were two further Indian women helping out, along with participation from the Dunedin City Council's community events coordinator and most recently with the help of the local Tamil Society. For this event, there were some cultural activities in DPAG and the performances were in the Upper Octagon. While oriented towards the local Indian community, which is reflected by the large contribution from local Indian performers, stall holders and attendees, the events do have a level of public engagement with the Dunedin community more broadly. In 2017, a large performance troupe came for other New Zealand Diwali celebrations, and the Dunedin event was able to link up with this visit. The visiting dance group from Maharashtra, Kalika Kala Kenra, took the main outdoor stage, and had flown to Dunedin with the help of ANZF, the Indian High Commission, and Air New Zealand (Staff Reporter, 2017). A large outdoor stage was set up in the Upper Octagon, which was a first for the celebration.

In terms of her intentions, Swaroopa noted in 2016 that: "In New Zealand, Diwali was more a celebration of Indian culture rather than any particular faith, she said. 'It celebrates diversity in Dunedin,' Mrs Unni said. The first public Dunedin celebration was last year and more people attended this year. The celebrations in Auckland and Wellington were 'huge' and she wanted more people to attend the free event in Dunedin. 'We hope it gets bigger and bigger and becomes more of a community celebration'" (McAvinue, 2016).

Cultural diversity is illustrated with the participation of O-Taiko, a local *taiko* (drumming) group performing mainly Japanese-inspired drumming and performed by mainly non-Japanese participants. In 2017, for example, O-Taiko collaborated with Swaroopa and her Natyaloka School of Indian Dance with a Bharatanatyam/*taiko* combination creating a unique cultural performance (Figure 3).

Two years later, O-Taiko again was invited to open the event in the Octagon, preceding 90 minutes of South Asian music, ritual and dance. The inclusivity expressed in the marketing of Dunedin's Diwali was summarised in the Facebook event notice for the celebration: "Everyone is welcome to this Diwali celebration!" (Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 2019). Such inclusivity was emphasised in the promotion of the event to the wider public, as the Dunedin City Council community events co-ordinator Marilyn Anderson noted in connection with the staged activities planned for the Upper Octagon: "We are aiming to encourage the wider Dunedin community to take part in and enjoy a wonderful cultural celebration" (Harwood, 2017).

Figure 3: O-Taiko performing with Natyaloka School of Indian Dance.
Photo by Louis Johnson, 2017.

By 2017, a further Diwali event was advertised in Dunedin, although this one, called Deepavali in the South Indian tradition, was hosted by DTS. The following year's DTS event, for example, was held at the Edgar Centre with about 150 members of the community and some non-Tamil speakers. The event offered a celebration that attracted local sponsorship and with "more than a dozen music and dance performances" (Mohammad, 2018). However, while holding their own Diwali celebration, DTS members also contributed to the public display in the Octagon.

The outdoor event in the Octagon was continued in 2018 and 2019 with what was becoming a typical mix of cultural performances, food and arts and crafts (Figure 4). In 2019, for example, one give-away postcard with a photo of dancers on one side and particulars about Diwali on the other noted:

> *Join us as the city comes alive with colours, lights and festivities to celebrate South Asian heritage in Dunedin.* Learn how to wrap a turban, drape a sari, or dance Bollywood style... Have mehendi [henna paste] painted on your hands, taste traditional Indian food, create colourful rangoli patterns, and enjoy live performances... Learn more about the Indian communities in Dunedin.

The programme for the event was representative of the local Indian community with the examples of cultural diversity (Table 3):

Figure 4: Diwali in the Octagon, 2019. Photo by Henry Johnson, 2019.

Table 3. Performance schedule for Dunedin Diwali 2019.

Performer	Time (pm)
O-Taiko [Japanese-inspired drumming]	3:30–3:40
Natyaloka [Indian dance school]	3:42–3:47
ODA Bollywood [Otago Dance Association]	3:48–3:53
Beats of South [Chenda Melam drum group]	3:55–4:03
Kids Bollywood (Shital)	4:05–4:10
RASA Bollywood [dance school]	4:11–4:15
DTS kids singing [Dunedin Tamil Society]	4:17–4:22
Kids Bollywood	4:23–4:28
Khamzin Belly dance	4:30–4:36
DTS adults singing	4:38–4:44
Kids Bollywood	4:45–4:50
DTS kids dance	4:50–4:55

The local Indian community was represented by performances of classical and popular culture. The DTS presented classical dance (Bharatanatyam) and singing from south India's Carnatic, Natyaloka performed Bharatanatyam and Mohiniyattam under the direction of its leader, Swaroopa Unni, and Chenda Melam drum group presented percussion traditions from Kerala. ODA and RASA presented Bollywood dance combined with hip-hop fusion, under the direction of Bollywood dance choreographer Shaleen Nandan. The cultural content has remained similar over the past years, confirming the diverse local community's commitment to celebrating Diwali as a culturally inclusive and Indian community grass roots event.

Conclusion

The emergence of public Diwali festivals in Dunedin reveals a connection to the notion of festivalisation as well as intervention. Just as many other New Zealand Diwali celebrations have become major public spectacles, and often within a top-down funding/sponsorship structure that reflects governmental and commercial economic agenda internationally, so too has Diwali in Dunedin emerged as a significant event for a comparatively smaller city and with a smaller Indian population to Auckland. With Diwali in Dunedin, intervention has not been in the form of top-down local commercial or national funding and resource support, but has primarily been from the ground up with key individuals driving the event as a celebration of local Indian culture, cultural diversity and community. The Dunedin event extends ideas from other Diwali celebrations in New Zealand to the local setting, and utilises local resources to make the event happen.

In Dunedin, Diwali is a mirror of the national festivalisation process. Diwali in Dunedin does not receive the same level of support or recognition as some other events, but its emerging success can be attributed to alternative forms of festivalisation and intervention that may be interpreted as a community driven response to New Zealand's larger Diwali events in a centre/periphery relationship. Dunedin in its regional setting strives through individual intervention to emulate the festival as found in larger centres and offers a similar semblance of celebrating New Zealand's Indian culture within a multicultural framework, placing the celebration of identity and diversity at the core.

Within council event portfolios, community festivals play various roles in the event hierarchy. In Auckland, Diwali is produced in multiple forms, all receiving top-down support as major or community events. With a large population and long-term established relationships with Council, local businesses and Indian media, the events that do not fit into the major event portfolio, as in Auckland Diwali, still receive significant support well above what would be considered from a ground-up perspective. In the Dunedin case study, grass roots events are not considered major community events (determined by audience size), therefore they receive less support. As illustrated in Figure 5, the event's interaction with the community serves a different function (ground up) and may enjoy a sense of autonomy that major events (top down) do not. As the strategic relationships remain within the community, there is the ability to control content and engage local support. With major events, the placement of decision making remains within government hands. Depending on intervention, the outcomes will determine participants, cultural content, sponsors/funding/resources, and media promotion.

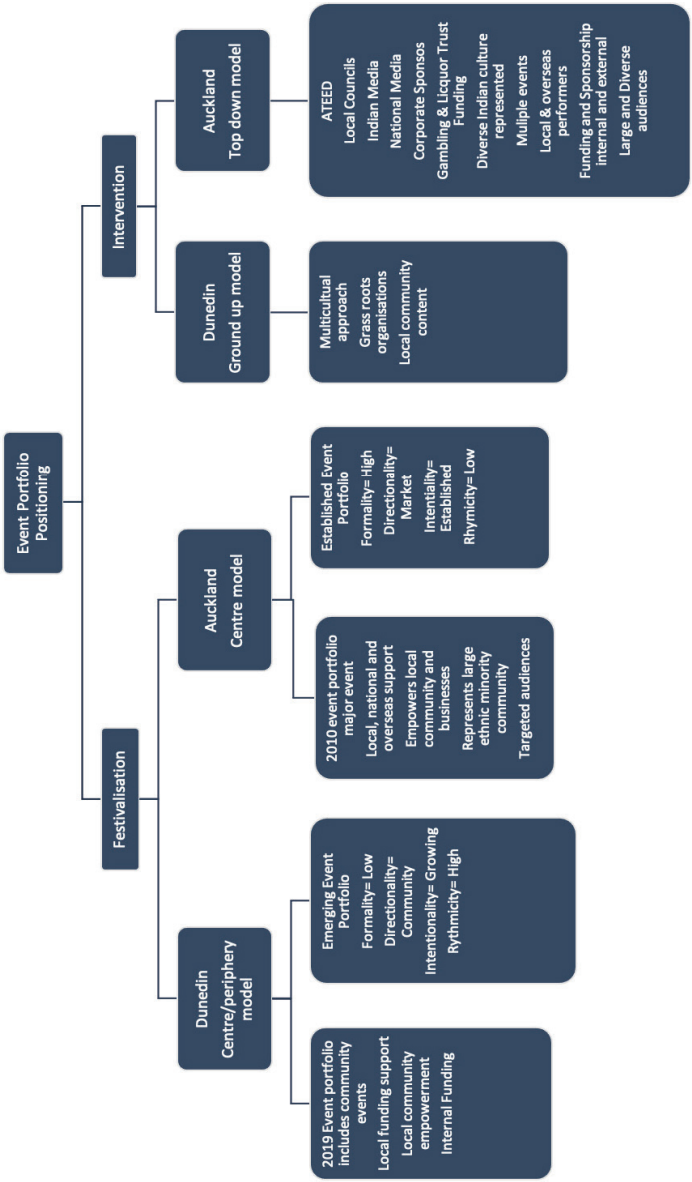

Figure 5: Auckland and Dunedin community event comparison from event portfolio perspectives, festivalisation and intervention.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study demonstrates contrasting interconnecting roles Diwali festivals play in the interventions and the festivalisation process in the cities of Dunedin and Auckland. Auckland represents an established event portfolio (Antchak & Pernecky, 2017), in contrast to Dunedin's emerging event portfolio as outlined in the recent *Dunedin Festival and Event Plan 2019–2023* (Dunedin City Council, 2019). The Dunedin plan indicates the growing intentionality of the formal role community events will play in the strategic planning of the city. The community focus of the event and its ability to change may be traded off by a higher level of government intervention and market initiatives as the portfolio matures. The top-down model, when applied, may make community empowerment more difficult as the fluidity is contrained by government policies. A limitation to our study and an area for further consideration would note cultural community responses to when the formalised festivalisation process intervenes and the low formality and community directionality give way to the top-down model. This intervention will change the cultural 'festivalscape', but will provide larger levels of funding, marketing and potential tourism income and impact small community players.

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PICTURING SOUND: MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, CHEE KUNG TONG AND PHOTOGRAPHY IN NEW ZEALAND IN THE 1920s

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Abstract

This article is a study of a photo of the Wellington Chee Kung Tong (Wellington Chinese Masonic Society) orchestra taken around 1925. As dominant themes, the photo especially signifies music and identity, and demands answers regarding how it might be interpreted about 100 years after its creation: How and why was the photo fashioned? What can a viewer learn about the subject matter of the photo? Attention is given to the detail of the musical instruments and their place within the image, which is the only known photo depicting members of the Chee Kung Tong and their instruments. The photo is significant for scholars across several fields of study, including music iconography, historical ethnomusicology and Chinese diaspora studies. Drawing on qualitative visual content analysis, this article interprets and discusses the musical elements of the photo as a way of contributing to knowledge about the instruments as an assemblage of meanings. The article is structured around the three dominant themes: (i) staging the image; (ii) uniforms; and (iii) musical instruments.

Introduction

In a scholarly publication addressing the convergence of sound and the still image (i.e., music and photography), Ribouillault comments that (in translation) "the permanence of the meeting between music and photography is surprising: this union is, in fact, contradictory because how can one evoke the notes, the sounds or the rhythms by means of a still image?" [my translation] (1996, 20). Through denotation and connotation, this type of paradoxical subject matter is interpreted according to the silent yet culturally resonant musical signifiers within the image, ranging from a musician in performance to a musical instrument as a marker of cultural identity.

One such union of sound and image that is especially pertinent in the history of the Chinese diaspora in Aotearoa New Zealand is found in the Alexander Turnbull Library (a division of the National Library of New Zealand [Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa]), which has in its photographic collection a staged studio photo catalogued by the Library as the "Wellington Chee Kung Tong Orchestra" (WCKTO),[1] which was

1 A list of abbreviations used in the text is provided at the end of the article.

taken around 1925 by the Hardie Shaw Studios in Willis Street, Wellington (Fig. 1).[2] This image, which is a monochrome group portrait featuring 14 men, has music and identity at its core, not through performance of music per se, but by association through visual props. Twelve of the men are sporting what appear to be Chinese group uniforms, with another two wearing 'western' suits. The men in the front row of three are holding instruments in an imaginative and non-performative way, and further instruments are positioned creatively on the floor in front of them. From such visual subject matter, one might postulate that the image represents a musical organization and that it is picturing sound and celebrating group identity. It is with this kind of evocation of sound within the image that Ribouillault discusses, one that is framed by the photographer, staged by the studio and those in the photo, and produced through technological means.

As dominant themes, the photo signifies music and identity, and demands answers regarding how it might be interpreted about 100 years after its creation: How and why was the photo fashioned? What can a viewer learn about the subject matter of the photo? Other questions concerning the photo are pertinent, but focus in this article is given to the musical instruments and their place within the image.

Figure 1: Photograph of the Wellington Chee Kung Tong Orchestra, taken ca. 1925 at Hardie Shaw Studios, Willis Street, Wellington (Ref.: 1/2-169302-F). Courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library (National Library of New Zealand).

2 Further details of the photo can be found at https://tiaki.natlib.govt.nz/#details=ecatalogue.301435, which provides acquisition information as: "Copy of a photographic print loaned to the Library by Allan Chun, 1990". See also: https://natlib.govt.nz/records/22336019.

The WCKTO image has many potential meanings. It is featured in the National Library of New Zealand's online catalogue, and has been reproduced in various contexts to signify the activities of the Chinese in Wellington in the early twentieth century (e.g., Li and Turner 2017, 87; Murphy and Wong 1991, np; *Wellingtonian* 2011; Wong 2003, 120). But the interpretation of its musical and identity connotations is contested as part of "a process of *translation*" (Hall 1997, 11), and in this article that translation takes on several dimensions: historical, cultural and social. With its original purpose complicated as a result of 100 years of cultural change, recontextualization and reproduction, the photo nowadays occupies a place of new historical importance. That is, while the original intention of the photo is debatable, although conjecture is possible through contextual and visual interpretation, the image has acquired a new raison d'être based on its cultural associations. The photo is, nevertheless, a visual record of an important group of people and their musical organization, and a celebration of the orchestra's existence within a sphere of Chinese diasporic identity in New Zealand in the 1920s.

The WCKTO photo is significant for scholars across several fields of study. In this article, I focus on its music iconography (e.g., Baldassarre 2008; Seebass 2014) and give emphasis to the musical instruments depicted within it, but also recognise the photo's relevance to New Zealand studies in historical ethnomusicology (e.g., Johnson 2010) and Chinese diaspora studies (e.g., Ip 1996; 2003; Ng 1993–1999; Shum 2007). Drawing on the analytical method of qualitative visual content analysis (Rose 2007; Schreier 2012), I interpret and discuss the musical elements of the photo as a way of contributing to knowledge about the instruments as an assemblage of meanings. The article also compares the instruments to extant instruments housed in the Doris Chung Collection in the Turnbull Library,[3] and identifies their general characteristics of instrument form and signification. For this particular study, and as the only known photo of Wellington's Chee Kung Tong (*zhì gōng táng* 致公堂) (CKT)[4] members with their instruments, albeit not in a performance setting, the discussion provides documentary evidence of an influential Chinese organization in Aotearoa in the 1920s and how music played an important role in its activities. My research into other spheres of CKT music, performance and instruments is ongoing and will be presented elsewhere.

Known in English as the Chinese Masonic Society, the history of the CKT in New Zealand has been outlined by Murphy and Wong (1991). The organization had a history in New Zealand from at least 1907 (Ng 1993–1999, vol. 3, 163), and became

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3 Doris Chung (1917–2017) was the wife of the last president of the Chee Kung Tong (Chinese Masonic Society) in New Zealand, Chung Dick Lee (Chung Chun-ying, 1903–1980). She donated to the National Library of New Zealand a large collection of the organization's artefacts, including banners, flags, divining sticks, candles, uniforms, musical instruments, printing blocks, and photographs. See: "Chung, Doris, 1917-2017: Collection relating to the Chee Kung Tong (Chinese Masonic Society) and Chinese in Wellington": https://natlib.govt.nz/records/23227386.

4 In order to maintain consistency with archival sources, I have included well-known transliterations of Chinese words, along with *pinyin* (official romanization) and traditional Chinese characters.

popular amongst the Cantonese (Guǎngdōng) Chinese who comprised the majority of the Chinese diaspora in New Zealand at the time (Murphy and Wong 1991; Ng 1993–1999). For Cantonese, the years 1840–1937 were "the age of mass migration" (Miles 2020, 90), especially to North America and Australasia. But the Chinese diaspora was diverse in terms of ethnicity and linguistic cultures, and "two clusters of neighboring counties in Guangdong's Pearl River delta were especially important in the rapidly expanding Cantonese diaspora, known among overseas Cantonese as the Three Counties (Sam Yap, M[andarin]. Sanyi [三邑]) and the Four Counties (See Yap, M. Siyi [四邑])" (Miles 2020, 103). While Chinese from Pānyú (in Sānyì) were predominant in New Zealand in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, migrants from Zēngchéng (also in Guǎngdōng) grew in number from this time (Chan 2007, 12). Within this diverse cultural milieu, secret societies were widespread amongst the Cantonese diaspora, and "in the Americas and Australasia, Four Counties Cantonese typically dominated [the Chee Kung Tong]" (Miles 2020, 120).

Several CKT (Masonic) branches were established around New Zealand in the early 1920s (Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch), but it is the Wellington branch (Wellington Chinese Masonic Society – WCMS) that forms the focus of this paper. As part of a transnational network, the CKT was a sworn brotherhood whose "members … positioned themselves as soldiers of the deposed Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) and readied themselves to wrest China from unfit Manchu rulers who governed as the Qing Dynasty (1644–1912)" (Cheung 2002, 40). The CKT had its roots in earlier Chinese secret organizations and linked internationally to some other Chinese diaspora groups (Ng 1993–1999, vol. 3, 165). By the early 1920s, Wellington was an important location of Chinese activity in New Zealand with an estimate of over 300 Chinese residing there (Ng 1993–1999, vol. 3, 165).

The CKT in Wellington submitted an application for registration to become an Incorporated Society in 1923, which was approved early 1924, with the likes of Chinese merchants, fruiterers and launderers signing the official documentation (Sedgwick 1982, 382). The WCMS was particularly active in the 1920s: it hosted national and international visitors ("Brothers & Sisters" 1922); established a 'Chinese band' (i.e., the WCMS orchestra) in 1923 ("Chinese Band Formed" 1923); and built a new headquarters (lodge) at 23 Frederick Street in 1925 (Wellington Chinese Masonic Society Building 2012), which was on the edge of the "Chinatown" that was centred on Haining Street (Shum 2007). Such events would have been ideal settings for performances by the WCMS orchestra, who would showcase a large number of musical instruments performed by players donning a group uniform and collectively displaying a sphere of WCMS identity. In this context, the WCMS "employed embodied and oral performance to inscribe an idealized memory of China in the space of their meeting halls" (Cheung 2002, 47). However, while the WCMS was particularly active around this time, its popularity later waned (Ng 1993–1999, vol. 3, 164). As an Incorporated Society, the WCMS was dissolved in 1979 (*New Zealand Gazette* 1979, 723).

This article is structured around the three dominant themes that emerged during analysis of the WCKTO photo: (i) staging the image; (ii) uniforms; and (iii) musical instruments. The aim of the article is to analyze the photo in order to provide insight into its context and the National Library of New Zealand's collection of WCMS musical

instruments. The politicised photo places people with instruments and offers a staged setting that helps exhibit a sphere of the Chinese diaspora in Wellington in the 1920s. As a studio photo, I examine the background of the photographer and studio, as well as analyze the staging of the image itself. There are, however, multifarious unanswered questions that result from the study, and further research will attempt to uncover more social and cultural spheres of knowledge pertaining to the WCMS and their musical presence in New Zealand.

Staging the Image

As a technological tool with a propensity toward production and reproducibility, photography "transformed the entire character of art" (Benjamin 2008, 28). A photo is a product of human agency with various domains of negotiation and connectivity, and studio portraiture exemplifies this by placing photography "out of the realm of aesthetic distinctions into that of social functions" (Benjamin 2008, 287). That is, "in our age there is no work of art that is looked at so closely as a photograph of oneself, one's closest relatives and friends, one's sweetheart" (Lichtwark 1907, 16, in Benjamin 2008, 287). In this section, I build on such notions and examine the WCKTO photo's raison d'être as group portraiture and the culturally relevant photographic conventions of the time.

By the 1920s, Robert John Hardie Shaw (1870–1922) was an experienced professional photographer. He had formerly worked for the Crown Studios on Cuba Street, Wellington. While working for Crown, Hardie Shaw took studio photographs of, for example, the All Blacks rugby team as well as scenic photos.[5] Considering his large number of studio portraits, many of which are accessible online through the National Library of New Zealand's catalogue, it seems this field of commercial photography was one of his specialist areas.

From around 1899 to 1903, the Hardie Shaw Studios were located at 3 Riddiford Street in Newtown, Wellington. From 1903 to 1927, their main studios were at 54 and 56 Willis Street, with 14 rooms "fitted with every requirement for modern Portraiture" ("Photos" 1903). From its beginnings, portraiture was at the core of Hardie Shaw's commercial branding. He also advertised his business as "The Progressive Photographers" with the "Largest Studios in the Colony" ("The Progressive Photographers" 1906), thereby aligning the business with photography as a contemporary art and as a leader in terms of the magnitude of its premises.

Hardie Shaw was in partnership with his sisters: Margaret Shaw (based at Willis Street) and Agnes Shaw (based at the Newtown studio) ("The late Mr. R. J. Hardie Shaw" 1922). Hardie Shaw died on 15 July 1922 after a long illness (Canterbury Photography 2021), and in 1927 the business was taken over by York Studios (Canterbury Photography 2021). Wong notes that the WCKTO photo was "taken at the opening of the group's headquarters" in 1925 (2003, 120), and, whether to mark this event or another, such as the formation of the orchestra in 1923, the photographer

5 See the National Library of New Zealand's photographic collection.

is likely to have been one of Hardie Shaw's sisters. As noted above, the early 1920s was particularly eventful for the WCMS, so the production of such an elaborate photo – a clear expression of the significance of the organization and its financial and social influence – helped celebrate the WCMS's achievements at this time.

Of importance in interpreting the WCKTO photo is that it required the intervention of the photographer's creative skills to help the silent image signify sound amongst its other meanings (Ribouillault 1996, 20). With the expertise of a professional photographer in staging the context, utlising photographic technology of the time, and developing the image into a print format, a blend of technological and creative skills were incorporated into the photo's production. There would also be agency from the members of the WCMS in terms of how they wanted to be portrayed from their own cultural perspective, and in a way that may have been different to that of the photographer. In this setting of cultural negotiation, while the photo's subject matter as a studio group portrait points to commercial intent, the studio space was very much part of the creative process that incorporated the conventions of the time to create an image that was a product of commercial photographic art.

The Hardie Shaw Studios were well-known for their size. As noted in one of their later advertisements: "We make a speciality of large groups, having the largest studio in the Dominion" ("Advertisements" 1917). It is almost certain that the photo was shot in the Hardie Shaw Studios because there are other photos in the Hardie Shaw catalogue that have an identical setting and a similar layout of props. For example, the photo of the Wellington Girls' College senior hockey team in the National Library of New Zealand depicts the same carpet as in the WCKTO photo (Ref.: PAColl-1296-1-01).[6] The staging of the hockey photo, which is dated around 1926 to 1930, also shows a striking similarity to the WCKTO photo regarding the staging of the props that were used to signify the photo's sporting connection. For the WCKTO photo, the inclusion of traditional Chinese musical instruments was important as a way of portraying the group affiliation of the men to music, while for the Wellington Girls' College, the purpose of the photo was to depict a particular sporting identity. This is signified in the picture with four of the students seated in the front row each holding a hockey stick and with two further hockey sticks laid out on the floor in front of the girl seated centrally in the row of five (four girls are standing in the back row). When comparing this photo with the WCKTO photo, there is symmetry in the holding of the props. For the girls, the sticks are placed in three groups: one each side and one in the middle. In the WCKTO photo, there is a flute at each end of the front row of men, and two string instruments in the middle of the front row, with each group of instruments pointing in the same direction (string instruments one way and wind instruments the other). Similar photos with props, carpet and backdrop are seen in other Hardie Shaw photos from the 1920s, including the Wellington Girls' College tennis team (Ref.: PAColl-1296-1-02) and the Wellington Girls' College basketball team (Ref.: PAColl-1296-1-03). Such comparison of similar group portraiture and use of props helps show how the WCKTO photo followed conventional studio practices of the time and, therefore, demonstrates the authority of the photographer in producing the image.

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6 See https://natlib.govt.nz/records/22592931.

As a staged image, the WCKTO photo shows 14 men in three rows, appearing as a large group of self-respecting Chinese musicians with a broad selection of their musical instruments. It would seem unlikely that the instruments were entirely props of the photo considering their number and the players' uniforms, and the photo is therefore a depiction of the men with their instruments and helps to signify their status as musicians within the WCMS. Considering the size of the group, their display of uniformity, and the number of various instrument types (discussed later), one might understandably assume that the musicians comprised highly skilled performers who had extensive knowledge of the traditional Chinese music of their homeland (e.g., Guǎngdōng). In such a setting, the WCKTO photo portrays a powerful representation of cultural identity focused on music within the WCMS.

With a dark backdrop, there are four men sitting cross-legged in the front row; five men seated on chairs in the middle row; and five men standing in the back row. The image is intended to depict the WCMS musicians with a degree of formality, but it does so without any intention of showing the musicians actually playing their instruments. Only the front row of men are holding instruments, but they are simply holding them as props to the photo, showing them to the viewer as emblems of their organizational musical identity. The two men holding flutes, one at each side of the front row, have the instruments held in their hands with no depiction of playing method. The same is for the two instrumentalists between them, both holding their stringed instruments in ways that are different from the actual playing position for these instruments.

The four men in the front row appear younger than many of the other men, and it is these men who are holding the instruments and have others placed on the floor in front of them. As well as the differentiation between the young men and the others, there seems to be further differentiation based on status and height. The middle row of men has the tallest of them placed in the centre, with the men on each side gradually getting smaller towards each end of the row. The man in the centre doesn't have his arms folded like the others in the row, but are placed on his thighs. (The man on the left of the back row too doesn't have his arms folded, but in this case it doesn't follow the symmetry of the other men in the photo.) As noted by Wong (2003, 120), the central figure is that of Chun Yee-Hop 陳宜合 (1870–1948), a fruitier born in Báishí Village 白石 in Zēngchéng County 增城, Guǎngdōng Province, China.[7] He arrived in Wellington in 1895 and was an associate member of the New Zealand Chinese Association in 1910. By the 1930s he was treasurer and later president of the WCMS. His central position in the photo, and with his unfolded arms, points to his different status within the group, already signifying a higher position within the organization at the time the photo was taken. As noted by Wong, Chun Yee-Hop would lead the orchestra, playing the *èrhú* 二胡 (two-string fiddle), which was "one of his more enjoyable duties" (2003, 120–121).[8]

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7 Guǎngdōng (Canton) had long been a significant province for New Zealand's Chinese diaspora (Ng 1993–1999), especially from around the Pearl River Delta region. Within this province there are various sub-cultures distinguished especially by linguistic diversity.

8 Such an instrument is not known in the collection. Instead, it may have been the *èrxián* 二弦 (found in the collection) of the *húqín* 胡琴 (two-string upright fiddle) family, which is the lead instrument in some music genres.

The back row offers a similar differentiation, but only with the tallest man who is placed in the centre and the two men in western suits and tie who are standing each side (discussed in the next section).

In the photo, looking straight at the camera, the subjects are depicted either as musicians or in a role of authority. Such positioning and differentiation was typical of group portraiture of the time (Claudy 1915; Hudgins 2010), and also in China where the Chinese portrait was at first a western construct "characterized by a rigid frontal view and level gaze" (Wu 2011, 6). The musical connection does not show the players in action playing music, nor in a performance venue, but showcases those present as subjects in an image that pictures music and identity. While the photo isn't one captured during contemporary ethnographic research, in the present era it offers a medium for historical ethnographic interpretation. The inclusion of instruments helps the image signify sound, and group identity is established through the wearing of uniforms and the formality of the male appearance. Unlike some other WCMS photos held in the National Library of New Zealand (e.g., Ref.: 1/2-168568-F; 1/2-169003-F), in the WCKTO photo there are no self-identifying banners or other markers depicting CKT symbols that are found in some other WCMS settings.

Uniforms

As well as existing as the only known photo of WCMS members with their instruments, the WCKTO photo also displays the uniforms worn by the musicians, which were made in Wellington ("Chinese Band Formed" 1923). As with many other spheres of group affiliation, musical and group identity are strengthened by the wearing of uniforms, as they are by other choices of visual appearance. That is, "the wearing of uniforms ... are good examples of the imposition of ideologically laden systems of self-presentation" (Jaffe 1995, 40). Uniforms, or cultural dress conventions, provide a means of signifying group affiliation. While the wearing of uniforms in some settings can create "a dazzling pageant" (Tynan and Godson 2019, 12), in the staged photographic studio setting, as with the WCKTO photo, a visual way of showcasing identity across several social and cultural spheres becomes apparent: musical expertise, WCMS affiliation and Chinese diaspora. A closer look at the WCKTO uniforms helps in understanding how the photo depicts such identities and their connection with sound.

In the photo, two of the men are wearing 'western' suits and are standing in the back row (one each side of a central taller figure), and 12 men are donning what appear to be a formal and traditional Chinese uniforms. In the back row, and occupying a hierarchical space of authority, the two men in suits might be officials of the organization (possibly not performing musicians in the orchestra), while those in formal costumes are presumed to be the performing members of the group. The two men in suits stand out in terms of difference. They are a minority in comparison to the men wearing uniforms, and the wearing of such attire, as least in China, had a challenging position in terms of dress code and associated meanings (Finnane 2008). At the time of the photo, the western suit was a contested emblem of attire. Associated with colonialism and politics (Finnane 2008, 178–180), it was an object of wearable culture that typified discipline yet at the same time signified "a sartorial embodiment of Western democracy" (Tynan

2019, 226; see also Li and Turner 2017). Such wearing of suits by WCMS members in New Zealand is known in other photos from the same era held by the National Library of New Zealand (e.g., Ref.: 1/2-168568-F; 1/2-169003-F), which help show transculturalism and appropriation in dress code, and, for the everyday occupations of WCMS members, the western suit was conceivably associated with "worldliness, progress, action, and financial success" (Finnane 2008, 180)

The uniforms worn by the other men in the photo are a different colour in comparison to the darker western suits. The Library's catalogue offers a description of the extant WCMS musicians' uniforms as follows: "Ten long sleeved dark blue coloured silk shirts with pockets and mother of pearl buttons" (Ref.: 90-246-24B), and "[a single] long sleeved black coloured silk robe with blue band and metal hooks at front of robe" (Ref.: 90-246-24A). Only the dark blue shirts are shown in the photo, although appearing as white in the monochrome image. The uniforms comprise such traditional shirts and trousers. The shirt is worn outside the trousers and extends to the thigh. The shirt has its top button fastened, and the collar, which is tieless, is of a stand-up type, known as a mandarin collar (*lìlǐng* 立領). The wearing of a stand-up collar was a well-known form of Chinese attire, from which the name mandarin collar is derived. The attire helps the group photo stand for China in the New Zealand setting. This would also be apparent during formal performances with the players donning the uniforms, thereby interconnecting with the instruments used by the group (all considered traditional Chinese instruments, as opposed to the inclusion of western instruments).

The wearing of such attire – western and Chinese – helps create identity for the musicians and for those listening in the WCMS setting. While much Chinese activity in New Zealand at the time adopted the procedures and customs of the cultural milieu, the staging of the subjects in the photo in traditional and western attire creates an image that signifies immense cultural meaning, and one that would strengthen a sense of Chinese diaspora identity in New Zealand.

Musical Instruments

There are a number of traditional Chinese musical instruments depicted in the WCKTO photo, either held in the players' hands, although none in authentic playing positions, or laid out on the floor in front of the group. For the WCKTO photo, as this article puts forward, the purpose of the image was to showcase the WCMS, their musicians and a number of their musical instruments. The image is about organizational, musical and diaspora identity. While a critical and analytical study of the instruments will help when comparing them with the physical instruments that are currently housed in the collection, and in comprehending aspects of material culture regarding performance practice and visual representation, "how much we can trust a picture over organological [i.e., musical instrument] detail and the accuracy of its representation of performance depends on many factors, of which the most obvious is the picture's purpose" (Seebass 2014).

Only the cross-legged men in the front row are holding instruments, although it is impossible to know if they were the actual players of these particular instruments, or if they played other instruments. The two flutes (one at each end) show no distinct signs of

performance practice, and the two stringed instrument in the centre are positioned in a way that mimics a playing style, although with the instruments positioned too far in front of the players to be in an authentic playing position. If the 12 men wearing the uniforms are indeed the mainstay of the performance group, but with only 11 instruments clearly visible in the photo, then either one of the men would not be performing or there are other instruments used that are not included in the photo. The archival collection of over 50 instruments and accessories shows that many more players would be possible, as would different combinations of instruments at any one time. The instruments chosen for photographic depiction may have been used together in ensemble performance, but they also help showcase a variety of instrument types used by the WCMS, and were possibly chosen as the best to be in the photo. A closer examination of the instruments offers further insight into their form, as well as helping to illustrate the importance of music for the Chinese community in Wellington.

The instruments laid on the floor in front of the players help emphasise the purpose of the photo in portraying a group of musicians. These are some of the musical instruments of the WCMS, but they are also props for the photographer. They are featured as objects that form part of the group's musical identity, but also bring to the foreground instruments that might offer an exotic visual presence for the photographer. The instruments on the floor are varied in their form and means of sound production, and, as described below, add a further layering of pictorial sound that helps consolidate the theme of music in the image.

Traditional Chinese musical instruments are sometimes known by various names, which are differentiated according to regional or linguistic difference. While many of the instruments under discussion are known to have been made in southern (Cantonese) China (i.e., Guǎngdōng and especially its capital city, Guǎngzhōu), as identified from distinct makers' labels on the instruments, and used by the historically predominant Cantonese Chinese community in New Zealand, even in this region of China there are linguistic differences that make an accurate identification of the terms used for the instruments in the 1920s in New Zealand particularly difficult. For these reasons, general Chinese terms (especially Mandarin) have mostly been used (with traditional Chinese characters), along with an English description based on the Hornbostel and Sachs (1961) musical instrument classification system.

Using terminology that describes specific instrument types or general classifications, from left to right (when viewing the photo), the instruments in front of the players are:

(i) *Sānxián* 三弦 (lute). This is a three-string fretless spike box lute. It has been placed on the ground with its playing side facing upward, which is characterised by a layer of snake-skin (python) covering the small sound box. In southern China, the strings are often plucked by the player's right-hand fingernails, with the binding of picks to the player's thumb and index finger another playing method elsewhere. While it is unclear if such plucking devices are shown in the photo, such small items might normally be kept separate to the instrument until it is played. There are two *sānxián* in the collection (Ref.: 90-246-M17), although it is unclear if this is one of those instruments.

(ii) *Luó* 鑼 (gong). There are two small gongs in the collection that look similar to the gong in the photo (Ref.: 90-246-M08). The gong in the photo does not appear to have the large crack as found on one of the gongs in the collection. A paddle-shape wooden beater for striking the gong is shown next to the instrument. A beater with a similar shape is found in the collection, along with several others (Ref.: 90-246-M29). The inclusion of the beater adds an element that helps depict aspects of performance practice, although, while placed in front of the gong, the beater is also resting on a pair of cymbals and the gong has the end of a bow standing in it, which might add visual confusion as to which instrument the intermediary devices actually belong. After it is struck, this small hand gong changes in pitch (either ascending or descending, but unknown for this instrument). Such instruments are often known today as *jīng xiǎoluó* 京小鑼 or *jīngluó* 京鑼.

(iii) *Bó* 鈸 (cymbals). A pair of hand cymbals are lying on the floor, which are positioned in a playing position with the inside plate of each cymbal partly covering the other plate. A small decorative tassel is attached to the centre of the boss on the outside of each cymbal. There are several cymbals in the collection, with one pair very similar in form to the pair in the photo (Ref.: 90-246-M27).

(iv) *Suǒnà* 嗩吶 (oboe). Two *suǒnà* are shown in the photo. The double reed used for the instrument is placed into the end of the thin pipe at one end, which is attached to a cord that is tied to the instrument. The two instruments are of a different length, which is typical of instrument form and ensemble function, although both have been partially inserted into their larger bowl end, which is a non-playing position, the one on the left more so than the one on the right. While the instrument on the right seems to be one of the two in the collection (Ref.: 90-246-M20), which have approximately the same dimensions, the much smaller instrument on the left is not known in the collection.

(v) *Suǒnà* 嗩吶 (oboe). See above.

(vi) *Luó* 鑼 (gong). A smaller gong to "(ii)" above is positioned next to the *suǒnà*. As with the earlier example, this gong is placed with its bowl opening facing upward. The gong is possibly one of the two types of such gongs in the collection (Ref.: 90-246-M11). Such a small gong is also known as *xiǎoluó* 小鑼. A wooden beater for striking the gong is resting on top of its rim, which is possibly one of the four beaters in the collection that have the same form (Ref.: 90-246-M31).

(vii) *Zhútíqín* 竹提琴 (lute). On the far right of the photo, there is variety of *húqin* 胡琴 (upright fiddle), with this one being a two-string spike tube (bamboo) fiddle and having a thin wooden sound table (as opposed to snakeskin as found on some other types of *húqin*). There are two *zhútíqín* in the collection (Ref.: 90-246-M14, M15), with the former catalogued with a bow, which helps depict the means of sound production.

With a carefully thought out symmetrical placement of the string instruments at each end, the wind and percussion instruments between them add a diversity of sonic

imagery that helps depict a range of instrument types. The instruments are laid out in front of the players in a process of ritual signification as the varied material objects that help stand for the group's musical identity.

The three lines of men are typical of group photos that aim to place people within a hierarchy. While all those present could have held an instrument, and even in a playing position, with this photo the lines of men offer a degree of difference, as discussed above. The placing of instruments with the men sitting cross-legged in the front row groups all the instruments next to the others on the floor, and, because the instruments are held by the men, the implication is that all of the men are the musicians with the instruments held as emblems of their group identity. This form of representation moves beyond the positioning of the instruments in an authentic playing position in that the instruments now showcase the musicians through association and as props that add a further layering of meaning to the image.

From left to right, the instruments that are held by the men are:

(i) *Dízi* 笛子 (flute). The bamboo side-blown flute on the left of the photo would normally have a paper membrane glued over one hole along its upper side in order to create a buzzing tone during performance. This membrane covered hole (*mókǒng* 膜孔) is the hole next to the blow hole. The flute in the picture appears to be longer than the two similar flutes in the collection (Ref.: 90-246-M25) and its current whereabouts is unknown. While the flutes are held by the players, which adds a sense of performance practice, the instruments are not in a playing position.

(ii) *Èrxián* 二弦 (lute). This type of *húqin* 胡琴 (see above) is a two-string upright spike tube (bamboo) fiddle with a snakeskin (python) sound table. The instrument in the photo seems to be one of the four instruments in the collection (Ref.: 90-246-M18). Of importance to the picture, as with the *zhútíqín* (see above), is that it has been photographed with its bow, which helps show how the instrument is played, although not in a normal playing position. There is a bow catalogued separately in the collection that is possibly the one belonging to this instrument (Ref.: 90-246-M23). For the *èrxián*, the bow is particularly long in comparison to the length of the instrument.

(iii) *Yuèqín* 月琴 (lute). This instrument, which is sometimes referred to in English as a "moon guitar", is housed in the collection (Ref.: 90-246-M13). The four-string necked box lute (with two courses/pairs of strings) is visually distinguished from the other instruments by the conspicuous and auspicious characters painted in black on the surface of its sound table, 群英楽 (*qúnyīnglè*: "group, hero, pleasure/music").[9] Such symbolic script on instruments was common practice of the time, and was an emblem of this group's musical identity. The *yuèqín* is played with a plectrum held in the player's right hand, although it is uncertain

9 Some of the other instruments and accessories in the collection have further examples of these and other auspicious characters painted on them.

whether or not the player is holding one in the photo. While the player's right hand is not in a playing position, their left-hand fingers are positioned over the strings in a typical playing manner.

(iv) *Zhídí* 直笛 (flute). The end-blown fipple flute on the far right of the photo appears to be one of the instruments from the collection (Ref.: 90-246-M22/M26). It differs from the *dízi* noted above in that it is end-blown, has a fipple (internal duct, which is on the side opposite the fingerholes), shorter, and has a dark varnish. The flute has a hole over which a thin membrane is placed.

With the positioning of the instruments in the photo, either held by the men or laid out in front of the group, the photographer has aimed to enhance the image with props, although in this case props that are part of the musical identity of the group. With such association, the photographer and the orchestra have achieved success in that the image has captured a material representation of sound through the visual signifiers of musical instruments (Ribouillault 1996, 25). For the musicians, the instruments represent musical performance as the core activity of the group.

Conclusion

This article has been a study of picturing sound: analyzing and interpreting the silent yet musical elements of a photo. Focusing on the only known photo that depicts members (musicians) of the WCMS in New Zealand with their instruments, the qualitative visual content analysis revealed much information about the musical aspects of the photo as an assemblage of meanings that represent an important cultural sphere of Wellington in the 1920s.

Of importance to the photo is music and identity. These are manifest in the three key themes identified for closer study: staging the image, uniforms and musical instruments. The photo depicts Chinese diasporic group affiliation and is fashioned as a result of a negotiation between members of the WCMS and the photographic studio. The group portraiture placed people within a frame of reference, one that epitomised collective identity albeit within a hierarchical setting. Identity was signified through posture, positioning, uniforms, and instruments.

The article focused especially on the iconography of the musical instruments depicted in the photo. Building on ideas offered by Ribouillault (1996, 20), who questioned how a photo can represent sound, the study showed how instruments were used as objects for the musicians, and how they were positioned as props in creative ways to enhance the musical imagery. A detailed analysis of the instruments revealed that some are extant in the collection of the National Library of New Zealand, while the whereabouts of others are not known. Pertaining to the contradiction of representing sound through a silent image, the article has shown how the instruments were arranged in order to help enhance the photo's objective of picturing sound and portraying cultural identity.

Lastly, the WCKTO photo captured an important moment in New Zealand's Chinese cultural history. The early 1920s were especially active amongst New Zealand's Cantonese Chinese diaspora, and particularly in Wellington as the nation's capital. This

era saw the consolidation of a Chinese community organization, the establishment of a large group of WCMS musicians with a considerable and diverse collection of musical instruments, the building of a new lodge, and ongoing local, national and international interaction. Each aspect contributed to a display of sound and distinctive cultural identity as exhibited in the WCKTO photo.

Abbreviations

CKT – Chee Kung Tong

WCKTO – Wellington Chee Kung Tong Orchestra

WCMS – Wellington Chinese Masonic Society

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BAMBOO IN THE CHINESE GARDEN

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Abstract

It seems inconceivable for a garden in China (or a Chinese garden elsewhere) not to feature bamboo, serving a variety of aesthetic, practical, and metaphoric purposes. This paper offers both a translation of a set of some of the most famous celebrations of the bamboo, in prose and poetry, from the *Book of Odes* (*Shijing* 詩經) down to the late imperial period, and a discussion of the role of this particular plant in the design and life of the Chinese garden and the levels of symbolic meaning it brings to these gardens.[1]

Introduction

In terms of affect, what is it that the bamboo lends to one's experience of a garden? I offer below something by way of an idiosyncratic florilegium that might help us re-enter the mind of an educated Chinese person who happened to live during the late imperial or early Republican period as he or she strolled through a lush Jiangnan garden, pausing occasionally to appreciate a particularly fine vista. Do these various texts (some remembered, others long-memorised) and the physical presence of the bamboo tug in opposite directions, the one inward the other outward? Or rather, is it the case that just as the bamboo screen or trellis may serve simultaneously to both cut off and to connect, so too is it true that the magic of the garden is such that it allows a duality of movement akin to the manner in which reading can at once both connect us with others (across both time and space) and separate us from them?

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1 This essay was originally intended for inclusion in a catalogue associated with an exhibition on the bamboo and its multifarious usages and representations that was to be curated in Hong Kong. Circumstances have prevented both the holding of the exhibition and, thus, the production of the catalogue. It was written at the height of the student protests against the brutal dismantling of a once unique way of life. It struck me powerfully as I worked on it that certain of the moral properties long associated with the bamboo were finding daily expression in the courage and integrity of the young people who had taken to the streets. I would like to thank the two anonymous readers of my essay for the care with which they have read it; in their different ways, their reports have served both (I trust) to sharpen the focus of my essay and (certainly) to demand of me a better understanding of what I had written. I thank also the co-editors of the journal, Rick Weiss and Paola Voci, for the capaciousness of their vision of the purposes of the journal. Belatedly, I was reminded of James Dyer Ball's remarkable entry on the bamboo in his *Things Chinese*; "China would not be the China we know, were the bamboo wanting," he begins. If I had turned first to this invaluable reference work, as I should have, I suspect that I would not have persisted with what follows here.

Look at those recesses in the banks of the K'e,
With their green bamboos, so fresh and luxuriant!
There is our elegant and accomplished prince,—
瞻彼淇奧綠竹猗猗有厞君子

"The Banks of the K'e," *Book of Odes*[2]

Amongst the category of plants,	植類之中
One there is called 'bamboo,'	有物曰竹
Not hard, not soft,	不剛不柔
Neither grass nor tree.	非草非木
They differ slightly in degrees of hollowness,	小異空實
But all alike have joints.	大同節目
Some flourish in sand and in water,	或茂沙水
Others rise from cliff and from soil.	或挺巖陸

Dai Kaizhi, "Manual on the Bamboo"[3]

On one occasion, when Wang Huizhi 王徽之 was housesitting another man's empty house, he ordered that bamboos be planted. Someone taxed him on the effort: "Since you're only to be living here for a short while, why bother having bamboos planted?" Wang whistled away and chanted poems for a good while; then, abruptly, pointing to the bamboos, he replied, "How could I possibly live a single day without these gentlemen?"

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2 "Qi ao" 淇奧 (Mao # 55), in the *Shijing* 詩經 [Book of Odes], for which, see James Legge (trans.), *The Chinese Classics: Volume IV: The She King, or The Book of Poetry* (1871; rpt. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), Vol. 4, p. 91. This poem is cited in both the "Great Learning" ("Daxue" 大學), one of the Four Books (*Sishu* 四書) of Confucianism, and during course of the naming of the various features of the most famous of literary gardens in China, Prospect Garden (*Daguan yuan* 大觀園) in the *Dream of the Red Chamber* (*Honglou meng* 紅樓夢), for which, see Chapter 17, David Hawkes (trans.), *The Story of the Stone: Volume 1: The Golden Days* (Penguin, 1973), p. 331. Hawkes's translation of the first two lines of the poem reads: "See in the nook where bends the Qi,/ The green bamboos, how graceful grown." Please note that unless otherwise noted, all further translations of the Chinese sources cited in this essay are by the author.

3 Dated around 460, Dai Kaizhi's 戴凱之, "Manual on the Bamboo" (*Zhu pu* 竹譜), a poetical treatment of the plant, with extensive authorial commentary, is the earliest Chinese botanical monograph. Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China: Volume 6: Biology and Biological Technology: Part 1: Botany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 377–394, provides an extensive treatment of this and subsequent Chinese treatments of the topic; Peter Valder, *The Garden Plants of China* (New South Wales: Florilegium, 1999), pp. 89–99 offers a brief and useful discussion of the place of bamboo in the gardens of China. Michael J. Hagerty, "Tai K'ai-chih's *Chu-p'u*: A Fifth Century Monograph of Bamboos Written in Rhyme with Commentary," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 11 (1948): 372–440, presents a complete translation of the monograph and an extensive discussion of it.

王子猷嘗暫寄人空宅住便令種竹或問暫住何煩爾王嘯詠良久直指竹曰何可一日無此君

Liu Yiqing, *A New Account of Tales of the World*[4]

Ruan Ji of Chenliu, Xi Kang of the Principality of Jiao, and Shan Tao of Henei were all about the same age, with Xi Kang being the youngest of the three. Joining them later on were Liu Ling of the Principality of Pei, Ruan Xian of Chenliu, Xiang Xiu of Henei, and Wang Rong of Langye. The seven of them would frequently gather within a bamboo grove, there to drink and carouse to their heart's content. And so it was that contemporaries labelled them the "Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove."

陳留阮籍譙國嵇康河內山濤三人年皆相比康年少亞預此契者沛國劉伶陳留阮咸河內向秀琅耶王戎七人常集於竹林之下肆意酣暢故世謂竹林七賢

Liu Yiqing, *A New Account of Tales of the World*[5]

Self-protectively it grows within the deep blue shade,	青冥亦自守
Pliant and weak it struggles to hold itself up.	軟弱強扶持
Bitter of taste, even the summer insects shun it,	味苦夏蟲避
Too low to the ground to earn the trust of spring bird.	叢卑春鳥疑
Unwanted for the gardens of palace or mansion,	軒墀曾不重
Neither does it utter a word of protest when harvested.	翦伐亦無辭
Only when fortunate enough to grow beside a hermit's hut,	幸近幽人屋
Do its frost-covered roots really begin to find purchase.	霜根結在茲

Du Fu, "Bitter Bamboo"[6]

Newly demoted, I'm badly out of sorts,	佐邑意不適
Closing my door, I let the autumnal grasses grow.	閉門秋草生
What better way to amuse my wanderer's nature,	何以娛野生
Than to plant a hundred-odd bamboo shoots.	種竹百餘莖
The hue that now plays across the surface of the creek,	見此溪上色

4 "Rendan" 任誕, in Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403–444), *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1982), Vol. 1, n.p.

5 "Rendan" 任誕, in Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403–444), *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1982), Vol. 1, n.p. For a complete translation of this work, including various tales about this group of men, both individually and collectively, see Richard B. Mather (trans.), *Shih-shuo Hsin-yü: A New Account of Tales of the World* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 2002). Mather translates the chapter title as "The Free and Unrestrained."

6 Du Fu 杜甫 (712–770), "Ku zhu" 苦竹, in Qian Qianyi 錢謙益 (1582–1664) (ed.), *Qian zhu Du shi* 錢注杜詩 [Poems of Du Fu Annotated by Qian Qianyi] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2009), Vol. 1, p. 352. In the sixth line of the poem, I accept the suggested alternative of 亦 for the 欲 found in the standard editions of the poetry of Du Fu.

Reminds me of feelings I had when living in the mountains. 憶得山中情
And when perchance official duties allow me the ease, 有時公事暇
I spend my days wandering up and down the row of stakes. 盡日繞欄行
Don't tell me that their roots are not yet firm, 勿言根未固
Or that they do not yet cast their shade about. 勿言陰未成
Already I feel that here within my courtyard, 已覺庭宇內
A lingering chillness has slowly begun to gather. 稍稍有餘清
Most of all, I love lying beneath my window, 最愛近窗臥
Listening to the music of the branches in the autumn breeze. 秋風枝有聲

Bai Juyi, "Bamboos, Newly Planted"[7]

Whereas one may eat a meal without meat, 可使食無肉
One cannot live at a place without bamboo. 不可居無竹
Without meat, one grows thin, 無肉令人瘦
Without bamboo, one becomes vulgar. 無竹令人俗
A thin man may yet become fat, 人瘦尚可肥
A vulgar man is quite beyond cure. 俗士不可醫

Su Shi, "Studio of the Green Culm of the Monk of Yuqian"[8]

In forest and in marsh one can linger long, for there is to be found a whispering grove of bamboo trees.

林皐延竚相緣竹樹蕭森

Ji Cheng, *The Craft of Gardens* (1635)[9]

Unwilling to flower, never parading meretricious beauty,
They cast their rustling shadows into the pool of one's inkstone.
Do not look down upon this spindly branch here, that leaf there,
For they live upon famous mountains and boast of their Seven Sages.

不肯開花不趁妍 蕭蕭影落硯池邊 一枝片葉休輕看 曾住名山傲七賢

Liu Rushi, "In Praise of the Bamboo"[10]

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7 Bai Juyi 白居易 (772–846), "Xin zai zhu" 新栽竹, in Gu Xuejie 顧學頡 (ed.), *Bai Juyi ji* 白居易集 [A Collection of the Writings of Bai Juyi] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988), Vol. 1, p. 168.

8 Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101), "Yuqian seng lüyunxuan" 於潛僧綠筠軒, in *Su Dongpo quanji* 蘇東坡全集 [A Complete Collection of the Writings of Su Shi] (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1986), Vol. 1, p. 83.

9 Ji Cheng 計成 (b. 1579), "Jie jing" 借景 [Borrowing Scenery], *Yuan ye* 園冶 (Beijing: Zhongguo jianzhu gongye chubanshe, 1981), p. 233.

10 Liu Rushi 柳如是 (1618–1664), "Yong zhu" 咏竹, in Liu Yanyuan 劉燕遠 (ed.), *Liu Rushi shici pingzhu* 柳如是詩詞評注 [Poems by Liu Rushi: Annotated] (Beijing: Beijing guji chubanshe, 2000), pp. 270–271. For a short English-language biography of Liu Rushi, see Arthur W. Hummel (ed.), *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period (1644–1912)* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1943), pp. 529–530.

Memorably, one particular engagement with bamboo may well have served to alter fundamentally the trajectory of late imperial Chinese thought. As the influential thinker Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472–1529) later told a friend, in 1492 whilst he was pursuing the injunction found in "The Great Learning" to "investigate things" (*gewu* 格物) in search of knowledge, he fell sick after having meditated on the principle (*li* 理) of the bamboo for seven days on end, day and night. His efforts, he realised, needed to focus inwards rather than outwards, taking as the object of his attention his own heart/mind (*xin* 心) rather than anything external and in the world around him such as a stand of bamboo.[11]

Chinese painters, by contrast, and garden designers too, many of whom had started life as painters, as did, notably, Ji Cheng, now the most celebrated of them, had long been accustomed to close and intense observation of bamboo without apparently ever having suffered any of the deleterious effects experienced by Wang Yangming. In the late imperial period, Shitao 石濤 (Zhu Ruoji 朱若極; 1642–1707), for instance, likened "…painting bamboos to conversing with a guest" (寫竹猶如對客談).[12] On a leaf from an album entitled "Wilderness Colours" ("Yese" 野色), dated sometime between 1697–1700, whilst the artist was living in Yangzhou, he depicts a swaying branch of bamboo, adding the colophon:

> Battered leaves and spare branches, best drawn from life,
> Some brushed high, others below, all as if in a fit of passion.
> One must sit facing the bamboo for a full ten years, with cup in hand,
> Before your clump will begin to rustle the moment it leaves your brush.
>
> 敗葉疏枝貴寫生高之下之若惟情只須對竹十年飲筆倒根叢自有聲[13]

Zheng Xie 鄭燮 (1693–1765), better known by his sobriquet Zheng Banqiao 鄭板橋, also a denizen of Yangzhou but at a later date, too, appeared to have been afflicted by a particular obsession for the plant. The colophon he added to a painting entitled "Bamboo and Rock" ("Zhu shi tu" 竹石圖), executed in the very last year of his life, provides the following inventory of the sensory dimensions of the bamboo's ubiquitous presence in the gardens of China.

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11 See Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 689.

12 For which, see Li Wancai 李萬才, *Shitao* 石濤 (Changchun: Jilin meishu chubanshe, 1996), p. 248.

13 See Marilyn Fu and Wen Fong, *The Wilderness Colors of Tao-chi* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1973), n.p. The full tile of the album appears to have been *An Album of Mountains, Rivers, Vegetables, Fruits, Flowers and Plants* (山水蔬果花卉册). Richard Strassberg (trans.), *Enlightening Remarks on Painting by Shih-T'ao* (Pasadena: Pacific Asian Museum, 1989), pp. 52–53, offers an insightful discussion of this leaf from the album. On Shitao, see both Jonathan Spence, "A Painter's Circle," *Chinese Roundabout: Essays in History and Culture* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 992), pp. 109–123; and Jonathan Hay, *Shitao: Painting and Modernity in Early Qing China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

A thatched studio just ten-*hu*-wide; a single square Heaven's Well courtyard. A tall bamboo or two; a solitary stone bamboo shoot some several *chi* high. A spot not large; nor an expenditure too great. But here it is that music is to be heard whenever a zephyr gets up or the rain begins to fall;[14] shadows dance under the light of either passing sun or rising moon; passions surge when waxing lyrical or in one's cups; and a companion is forever to be found, whether one is idle or in a funk. This is not just a case of me loving the bamboo and the rocks, for they too, for their part, love me. Men there are who spend tens of thousands on building a fine garden, only to find that, travelling here and there on official business, they die without ever having been able to return home to enjoy its delights. For men such as myself who, by contrast, can only dream of visiting the famous mountains and great rivers if at all then very infrequently, what is better than a single room with a miniature vista, replete with emotion and with taste and which, over the passage of time, will constantly renew itself? Facing this scene, and having crafted such a realm, no difficulty is to be encountered when one either "rolls it up and withdraws into it in order to hide away in mysteriousness," or "unrolls it and thus extends oneself throughout the Six Realms of Heaven and Earth and all Four Quarters."

Fourth month of the *yiyou* year (1765) of the reign of the Qianlong emperor, painted by Zheng Xie (Banqiao).

十笏茅齋一方天井修竹數竿石筍數尺其地無多其費亦無多也而風中雨中有聲日中月中有影詩中酒中有情閒中悶中有伴非唯我愛竹石即竹石亦愛我也彼千金萬金造園亭或遊宦四方終其身不能歸享而吾輩欲遊名山大川又一時不得即往何如一室小景有情有味歷久彌新乎對此畫構此境何難斂之則退藏於密亦復放之可彌六合也乾隆乙酉清和月板橋鄭燮畫[15]

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14 Perhaps the best evocation of the music of the bamboo in wind and rain is found in the early Ming scholar Zhang Yu's 張羽 (1333–1385) "Record of the Pavilion Deep Among Bamboos" ("Zhu shen ting ji" 竹深亭記), as discussed (and in part, translated) in Stanislaus Fung, "Word and Garden in Chinese Essays of the Ming Dynasty: Notes on Matters of Approach," *Interfaces: Image, Texte Langage*, No. 11–12 (1997): 77–90. For an annotated version of Zhang Yu's original, see Yang Jiansheng 楊鑒生 and Zhao Houjun 趙厚均 (eds.), *Zhongguo lidai yuanlin tu wen jingxuan* 中國歷代園林圖文精選 [A Selection of Chinese Gardens Down Through the Ages in Text and Illustration] (Shanghai: Tongji daxue chubanshe, 2005), Vol. 3, pp. 220–221.

15 For which, see *Zheng Banqiao ji* 鄭板橋集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1962), pp. 168–169. The internal quotations come from the beginning of Zhu Xi's 朱熹 (1130–1200) commentary to the "Doctrine of the Mean" ("Zhongyong" 中庸), for which, see *Sishu zhangju jizhu* 四書章句集注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), p. 17. As Daniel Gardner points out, later traditions read Zhu Xi's commentary as constituting part of the classic itself, for which, see his *The Four Book: The Basic Teachings of the Later Confucian Tradition* (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 2007), p. 107. In another colophon, Zheng Banqiao details his method as a painter of bamboo. "My home includes a two-bayed

In his practice as a painter of bamboo, Zheng Banqiao occasionally admits the early influence of Shitao ("In painting bamboo, I once modelled myself on Shitao,/ Of late, this old brush of mine has begun to turn of its own accord" 畫竹曾學石濤近來老筆轉蕭蕭);[16] more distantly, both men alike frequently engaged intensively with the most authoritative discussion of the art of painting bamboo, that conducted between Su Shi 蘇軾 (Dongpo 東坡; 1037–1101) and his distant older cousin Wen Tong 文同 (Yuke 與可; 1019–1079).[17] Wen Tong's paintings and calligraphy bulked large in the art collection that Su Shi gathered around him, and in his account of Wen Tong's studio, "Record of the Hall of the Ink Gentleman" ("Mojun tang ji" 墨君堂記), Su Shi says of him that although everyone under heaven calls the bamboo worthy, "Only Yuke truly knows this gentleman in a profound way, understands why it is that he is worthy" (然與可獨能得君之深而知君之所以賢).[18] The conversation between the two men about

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15. – *ctd.* thatched studio, to the south of which I had bamboos planted. When the first thickets of the summer months begin to cast their green shadow, I have a small bed placed in the studio, affording me the most pleasing manner of staying cool. During the autumn and winter, I have a bamboo trellis built surrounding the studio, but leaving the two ends of the trellis empty, into which space I install horizontal window frames. These frames are then papered over evenly with thin, pure white paper. As the room heats up, as a result of the gentle zephyr and the warm sun, the freezing flies beat drum-like on the paper windows as they try to make their way inside. Every now and then, I catch sight of the disorderly shadow cast by a branch or other of the bamboo, this approximating in my mind, surely, a 'Natural Painting.' Whenever I paint bamboo, I follow no master, but obtain my images from their shadows cast on my whitewashed walls or paper windows in the light of the day or under the rays of the moon (余家有茅屋二間南面種竹夏日新篁初放綠陰照人置一小榻其中甚涼適也秋冬之際取圍屏骨子斷去兩頭橫安以為窗櫺用勻薄潔白之紙糊之風和日暖凍蠅觸窗紙上冬冬作小鼓聲於時一片竹影零亂豈非天然畫乎凡吾畫竹無所師承多得於紙窗粉壁日光月影中耳), for which, see *Zheng Banqiao ji*, p. 154.

16 See Zhou Jiyin 周積寅, *Zheng Banqiao* 鄭板橋 (Changchun: Jilin meishu chubanshe), p. 160. In a short essay entitled "Jin Qiutian Asks Me for a Painting" ("Jin Qiutian suo hua" 靳秋田索畫), Zheng Banqiao offers the following comparison between himself and Shitao in terms of the art of painting bamboos: "Shitao was a master of painting, in a myriad of genres, orchids and bamboos being only supernumerary to his art. I, by contrast, specialise in painting orchids and bamboo, and for more than fifty years now I have painted no other thing apart from orchids and bamboo. He devotes himself to broadness, whereas I devote myself to specialisation, and how could it be thought that specialisation is inferior to broadness?" (石濤善畫蓋有萬種蘭竹其餘事也板橋專畫蘭竹五十餘年不畫他物彼務博我務專安見專之不如博乎), for which, see *Zheng Banqiao ji*, p. 165.

17 Shitao, for instance, pays Wen Tong a somewhat back-handed complement when he entitles a long horizontal scroll depicting bamboo "Surpassing Yuke" ("Gaohu Yuke" 高呼與可), for which see Richard Strassberg (trans.), *Enlightening Remarks on Painting by Shih-T'ao*, pp. 43–44 (and Fig. 6), whilst Zheng Xie's colophons to his bamboo paintings make frequent mention of Wen Tong, and in a letter discussing the history of bamboo painting ("In Reply to My Brother Wen, From the Guesthouse in Yizhen" 儀真客邸覆文弟) he labels Wen Tong the "Sagely Master" (*Shengshou* 聖手) of the genre, for which, see Zhou Jiyin, *Zheng Banqiao*, p. 158.

18 *Su Dongpo quanji*, Vol. 1, p. 381. For a complete translation of this essay, see Ronald C. Egan, *Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shi* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 287.

ink bamboo or *mozhu* 墨竹 (conducted by means of "Poems on Paintings," colophons, essays and so on) lasted almost thirty years, having continued long after the older man's death whenever Su Shi had occasion to view an ink bamboo (*mozhu* 墨竹) by him.[19] To Su Shi's mind, Wen Tong and his bamboos became indistinguishable, the one from the other, particularly in terms of their moral character. Su captures this understanding in the first of a set of poems entitled "Three Poems Written on the Painting of Bamboo by Yuke Owned by Chao Buzhi" ("Shu Chao Buzhi suocang Yuke hua zhu sanshou" 書晁補之所藏與可畫竹三首):

Whenever Yuke paints a bamboo,	與可畫竹時
He sees the bamboo but never himself.	見竹不見人
Not only does he never see himself,	豈獨不見人
His body and the bamboo merge into one,	其身與竹化
Producing an endless array of pure newness.	無窮出清新
This age of ours is without its Master Zhuang,	莊周世無有
And so who now understands this level of afflatus?	誰知此凝神[20]

19 There existed also a tradition of red bamboo (*zhuzhu* 朱竹) that has been variously attributed. In his book *Anecdotes About Painting from the Studio of Bitter Practice* (*Xikuzhai huaxu* 習苦齋畫絮), the Qing painter Dai Xi 戴熙 (1801–1860) relates a story about an occasion when, after having painted a red bamboo, Su Shi is taxed with the question: "How could the world possibly contain red bamboos?", to which his reply was: "And how could the world possibly contain ink bamboos?" For this anecdote, and the reproduction of red bamboo painted in 1945 by Ye Congqi 葉恕奇 (b. 1904), see Ye Yang 葉揚, *Splendours of Brush and Ink* (*Hanmo fengliu* 翰墨風流) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2014), Illustration 29.

20 *Su Dongpo quanji*, Vol. 1, p. 229. For an alternative translation of this poem, and an extensive discussion of Su Shi's understanding of the nature of the "Literati Painting" (*wenren hua* 文人畫) tradition that he was developing, see Susan Bush, *The Chinese Literati on Painting: Su Shih (1037–1101) to Tung Ch'i-ch'ang (1555–1636)* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012), p. 41. As one of the anonymous reviewers of this essay has pointed out, "afflatus" is a rather forced translation for Su Shi's *ningshen* 凝神. The *locus classicus* for the expression, in the "Mastering Life" chapter of the *Book of Master Zhuang*, suggests a concentration of the spirit rather than an externally generated inspiration. It occurs in a conversation between Confucius and a hunchback catching cicadas. When asked how he is able to do so with such ease, he replies (in Burton Watson's translation: "I have a way…For the first five or six months I practice balancing two balls on top of each other on the end of a pole and, if they don't fall off, I know I will lose very few cicadas. Then I balance three balls and, if they don't fall off, I know I'll lose only one cicada in ten. Then I balance five balls and, if they don't fall off, I know it will be as easy as grabbing them with my hand. I hold my body like a stiff tree trunk and use my arm like an old dry limb. No matter how huge heaven and earth, or how numerous the ten thousand things, I'm aware of nothing but cicada wings. Not wavering, not tipping, not letting any of the other ten thousand things take the place of those cicada wings—how can I help but succeed?" At this point, Confucius turns to his disciples to say: "He keeps his will undivided and concentrates his spirit—that would serve to describe our hunchback gentleman here, would it not?" See Burton Watson (trans.), *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), pp. 199–200. This anonymous reviewer was particularly insightful about the ambivalent nature of the bamboo; if it represents steadfastness of the self in the face of adversity, it also offers extinction of that self through (as with Wen Tong) total identification with it, and just as it both nourishes the body and offers tools for other forms of nourishment, so too does it both rustle and resound as wind passes through it, whilst it can be fashioned in a variety of manmade instruments.

As it so happens, the most famous written record of the exchange between Su Shi and Wen Tong on the topic of the painting of bamboo, an essay entitled "Record of Wen Tong's Painting of the Bent Bamboos of the Valley of the Tall Bamboos" ("Wen Yuke hua yundanggu yan zhu ji" 文與可畫篔簹谷偃竹記), is included as a colophon to Shitao's painting in homage to Wen Tong that is referred to above. It is in this essay that, famously, Su Shi argues that "Anyone painting bamboo must have a completed bamboo already in his chest" (故畫竹必先得成竹於胸中) before they take up their brush.[21] And as it happened, also, this essay then lent its name to a late Ming dynasty garden in which the obsession with bamboo achieves something of its apotheosis. In 1601, having with great difficulty extracted himself from office and finding himself ill and back at home in Gongan 公安 in Huguang, the late Ming dynasty scholar Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道 (1568–1610) built himself a beautiful garden which he named his Studio of the Billowing Willows (Liulang guan 柳浪館).[22] His devoted younger brother, Yuan Zhongdao 袁中道 (1570–1624), proceeded to build himself a garden in order to be close by, Yuan Hongdao naming this garden the Valley of the Tall Bamboo (Yundang gu 篔簹谷). Yuan Zhongdao wrote the following account of the creation of this garden and the beauty of the bamboos it enclosed:

"A Record of the Valley of the Tall Bamboos"

> The Valley of the Tall Bamboos is about thirty *mu* in circumference and was completely covered in fine bamboo. Just within the gate a rectangular patch of land ten *zhang* long and half as wide has been cleared of bamboo. Here, at the entrance, I have had Banksia roses trained to form a hedge and stones from Brocade River placed at intervals of several *zhang*, shaded by plantains. Two sweet olive trees grow here, both of which are thick of trunk. When in flower, their fragrance pervades the air as far as a good ten *li* away. There, too, stand a couple of gardenia trees, along with both a yellow and a white flowering apricot tree. A pavilion bears the inscription: "Assorted Blossoms." A chamber is sited besides the grove and is named: "Gallery of the Flowering Apricot." A bamboo fence surrounds the whole and beyond this fence, to both front and back, left and right, there is found

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21 For a translation of this essay, see Susan Bush, *The Chinese Literati on Painting: Su Shih (1037–1101) to Tung Ch'i-ch'ang (1555–1636)*, p. 37. Verisimilitude was not always the desideratum when depicting bamboo. We are told that on one occasion late at night, when working under candlelight, the Yuan dynasty artist Ni Zan 倪瓚 (1301–1374), another man obsessed with the plant, was very pleased with a painting of a bamboo that he had completed. Upon awaking the next morning and viewing his painting, he discovered that it "doesn't look at all like a bamboo" (全不似竹). With a laugh, he declared: "No easy task, achieving something that doesn't look at all like the subject depicted!" (全不似處不容易到耳), for which, see Shen Hao 沈顥, *Notes on Painters* (*Huazhu* 畫麈), in Huang Binhong 黃賓虹 and Deng Shi 鄧實 (eds.), *Meishu congshu* 美術叢書 (Yangzhou: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1986), Vol. 1, p. 318.

22 On the tortuous process whereby Yuan Hongdao managed to extract himself from office, see Duncan Campbell, "The Epistolary World of a Reluctant 17th Century Chinese Magistrate: Yuan Hongdao in Suzhou," *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, 4, 1 (June, 2002): 159–193.

nothing apart from bamboo. To the west of the fence, behind the "Grove of Assorted Blossoms," a path winds its way through the bamboo for some fifty paces or so. Here, too, a rectangular area has been cleared of bamboo, some thirty *zhang* in length and a third as wide. Here I have had built a three-bay pavilion, named: "Pure Greenness." Behind this is sited a hall, also of three-bays, bearing the name: "Sheathed Dragon." Behind this again there is a small chamber for quiet repose. A wall surrounds this in turn and again, beyond the wall to both front and back, left and right, there is found nothing but bamboo. To the west, behind the "Pure Greenness Pavilion," yet another rectangular patch of land, some ten *zhang* long and half as wide, has been cleared of bamboo. Four thick trunked yellow oranges have been planted here. At year's end, these trees produce several catties of fruit of exceptional sweetness and quality. A pavilion called "Joy of the Orange" stands there, this too being surrounded by a bamboo fence. Bamboo alone grows both to the front and back of the fence, and to its left and right.

The upright man loves the bamboo, but none, I'd venture, has planted as many thousand as have I. The rustle of their leaves is forever in my ears, the sight of their colour always before my eyes, their scent assails my nose constantly and the taste of their shoots lingers long in my mouth. I feel the green chill of their shade upon my body and my mood is affected by their gentle soughing, for nobody can compare with me in my enjoyment of the bamboo. I eat and sleep surrounded by them.

I bought this land from Master Wang in exchange for several hundred *mu* of rich and fertile field and I designed the garden with my brother Hongdao. Within a couple of years, it has become the fine garden of today. It was Hongdao, too, who gave my garden its present name: "Valley of the Tall Bamboo."

篔簹谷週遭可三十畝皆美竹門以內芟去竹一方縱可十丈橫半之前以木香編籬植錦川石數丈者一芭蕉覆之有木樨二株皆合抱開時香聞十餘里蒼蔔黃白梅各二株有亭顏曰雜華林旁有室曰梅花廊總以竹籬絡之而籬外之前後左右皆竹也於籬之西雜華林之後有竹徑百武又芟去竹一方縱可三十丈橫三之一有亭三楹顏曰淨綠後有堂三楹名曰籜龍其後為燕居小室總以牆絡之而牆外之前後左右皆竹也於牆之西淨綠亭之後又芟去竹一方縱可十丈橫半之種黃柑四株皆合抱歲下柑實數石甘美異他柑有亭曰橘樂亦以籬絡之而籬之前後左右皆竹也竹為清士所愛然未有植之幾數萬箇如予竹之多者予耳常聆其聲目常攬其色鼻常嗅其香口常食其筍身常親其冷翠意常領其瀟遠則天下之受享此竹亦未有如予若飲食衣服纖毫不相離者予既以腴田數百畝易之王氏稍與中郎相視點綴數年間遂成佳圃而中郎總名之曰篔簹谷云[23]

23 "Yundang gu ji" 篔簹谷記, in Qian Bocheng 錢伯城 (ed.), *Kexuezhai ji* 珂雪齋集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1989), Vol. 2, p. 546. This variety of bamboo is thin skinned, has long internodes, and grows up to thirty feet tall. It is commonly found growing along waterways. My friend Pania Yanjie Mu alerts me to the use of the Water Bamboo (*shuizhu* 水竹) (Phyllostachys heteroclada Oliver) for hydrological purposes in southern China, planted in valleys and along embankments as a way of protecting the topsoil and helping to turn wetlands into cultivable fields. When pressed, the Water Bamboo also produced a fragrant oil that was used in certain cosmetics, whilst, when ground, it was used for medicinal purposes.

China is home to some 620 varieties of bamboo (in Mandarin, *zhu* 竹; *Bambuseae*),[24] more than half of the varieties that have so far been identified, and the bamboo bulks large in the vegetative matter of most Chinese gardens, as it does also in the poems, paintings, and essays produced in those gardens. Very frequently, the bamboo features in the names of the gardens, and in the names of the structures or scenes within those gardens.[25] "Nothing could be more deeply characteristic of the Chinese scene than they," Joseph Needham claims in his discussion of Dai Kaizhi's monograph on the plant, "or more prominent in Chinese art and technology through the ages."[26] "Bamboo is an essential component of any Chinese garden," Peter Valder argues: as fence or railing (*zhuli* 竹籬 or *bali* 笆籬) or trellis (*zhuping*

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24 Of bamboo, *Hobson-Jobson* says: "This word, one of the commonest in Anglo-Indian daily use, and thoroughly naturalised in English, is of exceedingly obscure origin," for which, see Henry Yule and A.C Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson* (1886; rept. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 75. As a radical (*bushou* 部首) (No. 118 in the listing established in the *Kangxi Dictionary* (*Kangxi zidian* 康熙字典) of 1716), apart from occurring as part of the range of objects mentioned below, delightfully, it is also a component part of the Chinese character for "laughter" or "smile" (*xiao* 笑), explained etymologically as depicting a person doubled over in laughter. Does the character also capture something of the joyful rustle of bamboo in a breeze? Describing Tao Qian 陶潛 (ca. 365–427) in his "Matching Tao Yuanming's 'Drinking Wine': Third of Twenty Poems" ("He Tao Yuanming yin jiu ershishou qi san" 和陶淵明飲酒二十首其三), Su Shi writes: "Only Yuanming remained pure and authentic,/ Chatting and chortling his way through life./ Like bamboo buffeted by the wind,/ His every leaf set aquiver as it brushes by./ With equanimity he faced all his ups and downs.,/ And his poems wrote themselves whenever he had a cup in hand" (淵明獨清真談笑得此生身如受風竹掩冉眾葉驚俯仰個有態得酒詩自成).

25 Bamboo Garden (*Zhuyuan* 竹園) in Peking, once owned by the prominent Ming official Zhou Jing 周經 (1440–1510), is an example. A party held in this garden in 1499, on the occasion of Zhou's sixtieth birthday and at which he was joined by nine equally prominent friends, was immortalised in a series of woodblock illustrations of the event produced by the calligrapher Wu Kuan 吳寬 (1436–1504) and entitled "Scenes of a Birthday Gathering in Bamboo Garden" ("Zhuyuan shouji tu" 竹園壽集圖), with the birds drawn by Lü Ji 呂紀 and the human figures by Lü Wenying 呂文英. This title was later reproduced in the 1560s under the title *Gatherings in Two Gardens* (*Er yuan ji* 二園集), a copy of which is held in the Library on Congress, Washington D.C. and an electronic version of which is available online at the World Digital Library (https://www.wdl.org/en/item/296/). The Bamboo Garden hotel in present-day Peking, not far from the Drum Tower (鼓樓), was said to have once belonged to the important late-Qing dynasty reformer Sheng Xuanhuai 盛宣懷 (1844–1916); later on, during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), it became the residence of Kang Sheng 康生 (ca. 1898–1975), sometime chief of internal Communist Party intelligence and security and a man who, over the course of his post-49 career, amassed (through appropriation) an extraordinary collection of paintings, calligraphy, and antiques, especially inkstones. He was posthumously disgraced. The important Ming dynasty scholar Fang Xiaoru 方孝孺 (1357–1402), for instance, executed by the Yongle emperor (1360–1424; r. 1402–1424) for refusing to draft a rescript legitimising the emperor's usurpation of the throne, named his studio the "Studio for Forming Friendships with the Green Culms" (*Youyunxuan* 友筠軒).

26 Joseph Needham, *Science & Civilisation in China: Volume 6: Biology and Biological Technology: Part I: Botany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 377. Needham also discusses an important later Chinese monograph on the bamboo, Li Kan's 李衎 (1245–1320) *Detailed Manual of the Bamboo* (*Zhu pu xianglu* 竹譜詳錄), in which the distinction between the two types of rhizomes (*zhugen erzhong* 竹根二種), the spreading (*san* 散) and the clumping (*cong* 叢), is both established and depicted, for which, see, pp. 387–388.

竹屏) bamboo serves to divide and to screen,[27] as poles they provide the scaffolding for the structures of the garden, when worked, they serve to supply the tools of the garden (rakes and brooms, stakes, rainhats, walking sticks, fishing poles, fish traps, baskets, bridges, and so on), the tools of the study and bedroom (brushes, brush pots and holders, wrist rests, fans, blinds, various items of furniture and types of musical instrument,[28] floor mats, book trunks, bookmarks or index-labels, bamboo (or Dutch) wives (*zhufuren* 竹夫人), paper, combs),[29] and both the tools of the

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27 On which, see Jung Woo-Jin, "Changes in the uses and meanings of the bamboo screen (*zhuping:* 竹屏) in traditional Chinese gardens," *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes: An International Quarterly* (2014). Making use of some available pictorial evidence, Jung suggests that by the late Ming period the use and meaning of the bamboo screen had shifted from function to focus, from being a means to screen off a section of one's garden and create a sense of aloofness, to an object of conspicuous display and attention.

28 "The sound of the bamboo overflows like water," states the "Record of Music" ("Yue ji" 樂記) chapter of the *Book of Rites* (*Li ji* 禮記), "overflowing it establishes assembly, and assembly in turn serves to bring together the multitudes" (竹聲濫濫以立會會以聚眾). Famously, when the calligrapher and musician Cai Yong 蔡邕 (132–192) was fleeing the chaos of the collapse of the Han dynasty, he happened to look up at the bamboo rafters of the inn that he was putting up in and spotted a piece of bamboo that he had fashioned into a transverse flute (*di* 笛), the sound of which was unparalleled. In an item in the "Contempt and Insults" (輕詆) chapter of the *Shishuo xinyu*, we are told that this flute, then in the possession of Sun Chuo 孫綽 (fl. 330–365), was broken when he allowed one of his female dancers to use it as a prop, to the very great consternation of the calligrapher (and father of Wang Huizhi) Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (309–ca. 365), for which, see Richard B. Mather (trans.), *Shih-shuo Hsin-yü: A New Account of Tales of the World*, p. 471. When questioning Ziqi of Southwall about the "Piping of Heaven" (*tianlai* 天籟) in the "Discussion on Making All Things Equal" ("Qiwu lun" 齊物論) chapter of the *Book of Master Zhuang*, Yancheng Ziyou suggests that the "…piping of man is merely the sound of bamboo bound together" (人籟則比竹是已), for which, see *Daode zhen jing: Nanhua zhen jing* 道德真經南華真經 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1993), p. 33. In his commentary, Guo Xiang 郭象 (252–312) suggests that this refers to the sound of "…panpipes and flutes and suchlike things" (簫管之類).

29 Such objects were often of exquisite design. In his *Dream Memories*, the late-Ming essayist and historian Zhang Dai 張岱 (1597–?1684) tells of one particular fashioner of such things: "Pu Zhongqian of Nanjing is a man both ancient of appearance and ancient of heart; 'deferential and seemingly with no ability,' the ingenuity of his workmanship is such however as to partake of the genius of nature itself. Of his bamboo objects, his brooms or his brushes, it may be said that in his hands, with a slice or two of his knife, the smallest piece of bamboo immediately commands a price of a *tael* or so of silver. And yet, what brings him most pleasure is when he can produce some marvellous object from a twisted and contorted piece of bamboo without a single slice of his knife—it is hard to understand why it is that having passed through his hands, with a scrape here or a polish there, his products become worth so very much. His reputation spread and any object carrying his name became immediately extremely expensive, the livelihoods of several dozen of the shopkeepers along Three Mountains Street 三山街 almost entirely dependent upon his art. Meanwhile, Pu Zhongqian himself remained, quite contentedly, dirt poor. Sitting in the house of a friend, if a fine piece of bamboo or rhinoceros horn happened to catch his eye, he would grab it and set to work upon it. If the product of his labours happened not to please him overmuch however, he would refuse to allow it to fall into the hands of another, however important they might be and however much he was offered for it," for which, see "Pu Zhongqian's Carvings" ("Pu Zhongqian diaoke" 濮仲謙雕刻) in Xia Xianchun 夏咸淳 and Cheng Weirong 程維榮 (eds.), *Taoan mengyi: Xihu mengxun* 陶庵夢憶：西湖夢尋 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2001), p. 20.

kitchen (chopsticks,[30] steamers, sieves, hampers, kindling and charcoal) and a vital ingredient of Chinese cuisine. The Qing dynasty connoisseur Li Yu 李漁 (1610–1680), for instance, declared bamboo shoots to be "the best of all the vegetables" (*shushi diyi pin ye* 蔬食第一品也).[31]

As captured most outstandingly in the various texts cited at the start of this essay, chronologically arranged,[32] the Chinese engagement with the bamboo down through the ages has also been a profoundly intellectual and emotional one; the bamboo plays a vital role in the powerful but restricted and highly moralised plant-based symbolic language and its associated iconography that the gardens of China sought to embody, what Jonathan Hay calls the "…established iconography of moral achievement in the form of imagery of plants, flowers, fruit, and vegetables."[33] Like bamboo buffeted by

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30 Both the classical (*zhu* 箸 and *zhu* 筯) and modern (*kuaizi* 筷子) Chinese words for chopsticks contain the bamboo radical. On the chopstick, see Q. Edward Wang, *Chopsticks: A Cultural and Culinary History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

31 *Occasional Notes of Idle Emotions* (*Xianqing ouji* 閒情偶寄) (Taipei: Chang'an chubanshe, 1979), p. 255. The early Jesuit missionaries to China made note of the prevalence of bamboo in Chinese gardens (and its "very pleasant aspect"), as well as the variety of its usage ("…mats, cabinets, little vases, combs"). In his *Novus atlas Sinensis* (1655), Martino Martini remarks on the culinary use of the shoots which: "…are eaten with meat, like turnips or cardoons and cooked artichokes; when marinated in vinegar, they can be preserved throughout the year as a condiment or companion for foods that are tasty and refined," for which, see Bianca Maria Rinaldi, *The "Chinese Garden in Good Taste: Jesuits and Europe's Knowledge of Chinese Flora and Art of the Garden in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (München: Martin Meidenbauer, 2006), p. 110. The Yuan brothers' associate Jiang Yingke 江盈科 (1553–1605) named the garden that he established in Chang'an in 1599 the "Pavilion of the Two Gentlemen" (*Liang junzi ting* 兩君子亭). In his account of this garden, he lists the varieties of both bamboo and lotus that it contains, these two plants (of the "innumerable categories of plants and trees" [*fu caomu zhi bu bu ke shuji* 夫草木之部不可數計]) being the only ones worthy of being accorded the epithet "gentlemen," making note of both the various physical usages to which the plants can be put, and the extent to which "…their virtues can be compared to those of the gentleman" (*qi bi de yu junzi er* 其比德於君子爾), for which, see his "Record of the Pavilion of the Two Gentlemen" ("Liang junzi ting ji" 兩君子亭記), in Huang Rensheng 黃仁生 (ed.), *Jiang Yingke ji* 江盈科集 (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1997), Vol. 1, pp. 368–370.

32 In life, of course, the jumble of one's memory serves to scramble the chronology of text recalled to mind, and to fuse the meaning of these texts to personal memories of person and place.

33 Jonathan Hay, *Shitao: Painting and Modernity in Early Qing* China, p. 182. Hay makes the point that for all Shitao's inventiveness in other ways as a painter, with respect to this plant-based symbolic system, his practice proved consistent throughout his life. An early treatment of the topic is Alfred Koehn, "Chinese Flower Symbolism," *Monumenta Nipponica*, 8 (1952): 121–146. In a review of Jessica Rawson, *The Lotus and the Dragon*, David L. McMullen talks about how "remarkably small" the repertory was in the Chinese case: "To the lotus, peony, bamboo, pine, and prunus should be added the peach, the chrysanthemum and the orchid. In the literary tradition, these flowers provided the topics for countless compositions in many genres over many centuries. They were indeed symbols; their appeal was many sided, and not, like typical flower symbols in the Western tradition, based on a simple one to one correlation with a single virtue or moral value. Meaning was read into their habitats, their shape, and from the season of the year in which they flowered or were most conspicuous. Their ability to withstand the weather, their medicinal properties and the meaning of characters homophonous with their names were also given significance. Their

the wind, in the face of powerful adversaries the gentleman may bend but he does not break; his modesty can be likened to the bamboo's hollow heart (*xuxin* 虛心), his integrity to its joints (*jie* 節), and his humility to the fact that the leaves of the bamboo droop downwards as if bowing in respect.[34] In association with the pine (*song*

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33. – *ctd.* appeal as auspicious symbols was reaffirmed time and again by their use in given names…," for which, see *Modern Asian Studies*, 21 (1987): 198–200. In the chapter on the gardens of China, "The Chinese Garden and the collaboration of the Arts," in his *A World of Gardens* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012), pp. 202–220, John Dixon Hunt discusses the extent to which "…gardens, both real and 'on the ground' and imaginary in poem or painting, were always mediated: texts were fundamental in designing and understanding gardens, and mediatization of cultural traditions was essential" (pp. 202–203). This applies equally to the plants growing within these gardens. For a melancholic view of the extent to which this symbolic system is still at play (or not) in contemporary China, see John Minford, "The Chinese Garden: Death of a Symbol," in Stanislaus Fung and John Makeham (eds.), *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (1998): 257–268.

34 In his *Mirror of Flowers* (*Huajing* 花鏡), preface dated 1688, Chen Haozi 陳淏子 says of the bamboo that: "The attribution of meaning to this plant on the part of the ancients proved uniquely detailed and one notes that the excellence of the bamboo is be found in its modesty and its profound sense of integrity, in the extent to which, in both character and physical form, it is both tough and resolute, such that it does not wilt whenever it encounters either dew or snow but rather remains luxuriant throughout all four seasons, never wanton in its beauty but appreciated alike by both common and refined" (古人取義獨詳按竹之妙虛心密節性體堅剛值霜雪而不凋歷四時而常茂頗無夭艷雅俗共賞), for which, see *Huajing* (Beijing: Nongye chubanshe, 1985), p. 239. Here, Chen Haozi perhaps has the Tang poet Bo Juyi 白居易 (772-846) in mind; in his "Record of Raising Bamboo" ("Yang zhu ji" 養竹記), Bai provides the following enumeration of the virtues of the bamboo: "The bamboo appears wise and worthy. How so? Its roots are firm, and being firm it establishes its virtue, such that, upon seeing such roots, the gentleman thinks immediately of establishing some good that is permanent; its nature is staunch, and being staunch it takes its stand, such that seeing that its nature is such, the gentleman thinks immediately of being impartial and above bias; its heart is hollow, and being hollow it may embody the Way, such that seeing that its heart is thus, the gentleman thinks immediately that he should be modest and receptive; its joints are steadfast, and being steadfast it can maintain its will, such that, upon seeing its joints, the gentleman thinks immediately of striving valiantly to be moral and correct. Such is the case, whatever are the vicissitudes of life. It is for reasons such as these that very many gentlemen plant bamboos, as adornments for their courtyards" (竹似賢何哉竹本固固以樹德君子見其本則思善建不拔者竹性直直以立身君子見其性則思中立不倚者竹心空空以體道君子見其心則思應用虛受者竹節貞貞以立志君子見其節則思砥礪名行夷險一致者夫如是故君子大多樹之為庭實焉), for which, see Gu Xuejie 顧學頡 (ed.), *Bai Juyi ji* 白居易集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju chubanshe, 1988), Vol. 3, pp. 936–937. Later, Su Shi, in his "Record of the Hall of the Ink Gentleman," was to write of his friend Wen Tong that like the bamboo: "He flourishes in propitious circumstances without ever becoming arrogant, whereas in less than propitious circumstances he withers away without ever losing his dignity; when in a group, he never leans on those beside him, but when standing alone he is never fearful" (得志遂茂而不驕不得志瘁瘠而不辱群居不倚獨立不懼), for which, see *Su Dongpo quanji*, Vol. 1, p. 381. When she entered into the male domain of painting bamboos, the Yuan dynasty artist Guan Daosheng 管道昇 (1262–1319) seems to have been aware of the extent to which she was transgressing, for which, see Marsha Weidner *et al.* (eds.), *Views from Jade Terrace: Chinese Women Artists, 1300–1912* (New York: Indianapolis Museum of Art and Rizzoli, 1988), p. 67. She is sometimes traditionally attributed with the development of painting bamboos with red ink (朱筆畫竹), although this is elsewhere attributed to Su Shi, for which, see Yu Jianhua 俞劍華 (ed.), *Zhongguo hualun leibian* 中國畫論類編 (Beijing: Renmin meishu

松) and the *prunus mume* or flowering apricot (*mei* 梅), bamboo's steadfastness in the face of adversity saw it labelled, in poetry, since the Tang dynasty, and depicted in painting since the Song, as one of the "Three Friends of the Winter" (*suihan sanyou* 歲寒三友). Somewhat more prosaically, either placed in a vase alongside or depicted together with a spring of flowering apricot, the bamboo symbolised a husband and wife. For traditionally educated Chinese, these understandings of the moral and aesthetic properties of the bamboo, either simply present in a garden as a component of its plantings, or explicitly conjured up by means of name or quotation, serve as a form of mental or remembered paratext that lends meaning to whatever garden it is that they might find themselves within.[35] A late and much cited expression of this dimension of the gardens of late imperial China is found in the novel *The Dream of the Red Chamber/ The Story of the Stone* where, faced with the taxing task of conjuring into existence through the naming of its features the garden built to commemorate his daughter's brief return to her parental home, having become a concubine to the Emperor, the woefully inadequate patriarch of the Jia family, Jia Zheng 賈政, declares: "All those prospects and pavilions—even the rocks and trees and flowers will seem somehow incomplete without that touch of poetry which only the written word can lend a scene" (若大景緻若干亭榭無字標題也覺寥落無趣任有花柳山水也斷不能生色).[36] In a resonant treatment of the play of cultural memory in the experience of the gardens of China, Stanislaus Fung

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34. – *ctd.* chubanshe, 1986), Vol. 2, p. 1189. In a poem discussing the techniques required of an artist seeking to depict the bamboo, Guan's husband Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫 (1254–1322) writes: "They need to understand that painting and calligraphy are actually one and the same thing" (須知書畫本來同), for which, see Yu Jianhua (ed.), *Zhongguo hualun leibian*, Vol. 2, p. 1063.

35 If it is the paratext that "…enables a text to become a book," as Gerard Genette has argued, then one could say that the various paratexts, both present and recalled, enable a plot of land to become a garden. On paratexts, see Gerard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation,* Jane E. Lewin (trans.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). "More than a boundary or a sealed border," Genette suggests, "the paratext is, rather, a threshold, or—a word Borges used apropos of a preface—a 'vestibule' that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back" (pp. 1–2). The architectural metaphor is significant; Genette's discussion of the various functions of the epigraph (pp. 156–160) seem particularly useful in thinking about the role of text (and remembered text) in the manner in which in China gardens sought to generate legible meaning.

36 David Hawkes (trans.), *The Story of the Stone: Volume 1: The Golden Days* (Penguin, 1973), pp. 324–325; *Hongloumeng (sanjia pingben)* 紅樓夢（三家評本） (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1988), Vol. 1, p. 249. Working on his translation of Chapter 17 ("The inspection of the new garden becomes a test of talent/ And Rong-guo House makes itself ready for an important visitor") during the spring of 1971, David Hawkes appears to have recourse to Osvald Sirén's *Gardens of China*, Andrew Boyd's *Chinese Architecture*, and Gin Djih Sü's *Chinese Architecture, Past and Contemporary*, for which, see David Hawkes, *The Story of the Stone: A Translator's Notebooks* (Hong Kong: Centre for Literature and Translation, Lingnan University, 2000) p. 15. On the role of the garden in the novel, see Dore J. Levy, "The Garden and Garden Culture in *The Story of the Stone*," in Andrew Schonebaum and Tina Lu (eds.), *Approaches to Teaching* *The Story of the Stone* *(Dream of the Red Chamber)* (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2012), pp. 115–132; in the same volume, pp. 91–94, see also Charlotte Furth's discussion of the nature of this fictional garden. For an illustrated catalogue of the role of plants in the novel, see Pan Fujun 潘富俊, *Hongloumeng zhiwu tujian* 紅樓夢植物圖鑑 (Taipei: Maotouying chubanshe, 2004).

identifies two levels at which this dimension can be understood, the first constituting an established body of exemplary texts, and the other the extent to which the quoted texts may become "loosened from their original contexts" and the garden visitor be "… allowed to shuttle between prescription, suggestion, and evocation."[37] "From the late Ming dynasty onward, these two layers of cultural memory operated together. The first maintains the specificity of historical orientation as allusion to exemplary events and personages that are integral to discourse on gardens. The second opened the tradition of 'things said' to the scenarios of self-cultivation and social distinction. The crux is not simply remembering 'who said what,' but tuning oneself to a tradition and making one's way in a world of commodified knowledges in a social setting" (p. 132). In these terms, and thinking now finally of the bamboo that may be both physically present and conjured up in one's mind as one makes one's way through a garden, one's outward movement is accompanied by an inward movement of recall and imagination. It is this movement that serves to reanimate the exemplary moments of intense engagement with bamboo captured for all time in texts such as those cited above. This is a twinned process that mirrors, in a remarkable way, the apparent paradox captured in the quotation that Zheng Banqiao employs to explicate the process of viewing a painting, whereby one "rolls it up and withdraws into it in order to hide away in mysteriousness" (斂之則退藏於密) as one also (亦復) "unrolls it and thus extends oneself throughout the Six Realms of Heaven and Earth and all Four Quarters" (放之可彌六合). It is a twinned process that also mirrors the underlying conceit of the late imperial Chinese garden—the extent to which it is both metaphorical condensation (the manner in which the garden is a miniaturised cosmos) and metonymical extension (the manner in which the garden itself partakes of the grandeur of that cosmos).

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37 Stanislaus Fung, "The Language of Cultural Memory in Chinese Gardens," in Tony Atkin and Joseph Rykwert (eds.), *Structure & Meaning in Human Settlements* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2005), pp. 123–134.

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POETRY AND THE LITERACY OF IMPERIAL WOMEN IN THE MING DYNASTY

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Abstract

In recent years, scholars have identified a dramatic increase in the number of collections of poetry published by Chinese gentry women and courtesans from the late 16th century onwards. They have also highlighted the high levels of literacy of imperial women poets of the Tang and Song dynasties. A handful of poems can confidently be attributed to imperial women and women officials of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). Considered sequentially, these poems provide a stimulating counterpoint to historical and didactic texts and access to the thoughts, emotions and voices of women of the imperial family and imperial household in complex historical and cultural contexts from the 14th to the early 16th century.

Keywords: women's literacy, Ming dynasty, poetry, history

Scholars have long debated hypotheses about the numbers of women and men who were literate in late imperial China. (See Rawski, 1979; Mote, 1999; Elman, 2000; Meyer-Fong 2007). Their work has been based in part on evidence that in elite and sub-elite circles, literate women used their skills for a range of practical purposes, including keeping household records and accounts in family businesses and educating their children. Rapid increases in women's literacy from the late 16th century onwards, especially among the populations of the wealthy cities of the Jiangnan region, but also in metropolitan Beijing and in Guangdong have been noted. The evidence for this includes the increase in the numbers of books published and sold, the number of books specifically intended for an audience of women and biographical narratives of women who educated their sons and daughters.

When women pursued literary interests of their own, they were likely to choose the medium of poetry. Much of the recent scholarship on women's literacy focusses on poetry written by courtesans and gentry women from the late 16th century onwards. Their work was published in collections that numbered more than three thousand (See Chang, 1997, p. 147; Chang and Saussy, 1999; Elman, 2000, pp. 239–241; Brokaw and Chow, 2005; Meyer-Fong, 2007; Fong, 2008, 2012; Kinney, 2012). A handful of poems attributed to imperial women and women who worked in the service agencies of the imperial household in the early and middle years of the Ming dynasty have been included in anthologies in Chinese and in English (See Xie, 1916; Shen, 1989; Chang and Saussy, 1997; Idema and Grant, 2004). These anthologies are in turn based on earlier Chinese anthologies, including one dated around 1626 and another compiled by

Zhu Yizun in 1705 (See Chang, 1997). A few more poems by women were included in the official history of the Ming dynasty. The poems that are available today reflect the special characteristics of their authors' individual social and political positions in the palace and invite exploration in the context of the history of the women of the imperial family and imperial household of the Ming dynasty.

Most of what we know about Ming imperial women and women in the imperial household can be found in historical texts. Biographies of imperial women in the official history, arranged chronologically from the beginning of the dynasty until the end, are the most complete textual accounts we have of events in their lives (Zhang *et al.* (eds.) 1736, Mingshi, hereafter MS; Soullière, 2016a). Unofficial accounts written during the late Ming and Qing periods supplement the official record (See for example, Shen, 1619; Liu, ca. 1641; Mao, early Qing). Collections of biographies of exemplary women and didactic instructions for the education of women were compiled in the early, middle and late Ming periods. The material record contributes stimulating new understandings to the study of women's lives and literacy.

In the Ming Confucian discourse about imperial women, some of the best-known poems from the Classic of Poetry, compiled around the eighth century BCE, occupied an important place. These poems were cited again and again in the didactic texts used in women's education and it was widely accepted that some of the poems in the *Classic of Poetry* were written by women (Chang, 1997). Only a handful of poems are attributed to the women of the Ming palace, but the attributions of those we do have are likely to be reliable and their approximate dates known. Considered sequentially, a selection of these poems provides a stimulating counterpoint to historical and didactic texts and access to the thoughts, emotions and voices of women who lived in the imperial family and imperial household in complex and rapidly changing historical and cultural contexts between the late 14th century and the second decade of the16th century.

The literacy of imperial women in dynasties before the Ming

From earliest historic times, there were positions at Chinese royal and imperial courts for literate women officials. The titles of these positions included *the red brush* (tóng guǎn 彤管) and *the woman historian* or *instructress* (nǚshǐ 女史). From the Han dynasty onwards, the prescription of the ranks and positions of women officials and the duties they were expected to perform were described in the official histories. Literacy enabled women to perform innumerable complex tasks in the palace. These included keeping records of the lives of the women who served the court, recording the dates when women "attended the emperor" and the subsequent births of children, providing women in the imperial household with instruction on virtuous conduct, authorising the use of goods and services within the palace, educating other women and children and facilitating written communication between the palace and the outside world.

There is evidence that some women who held senior positions in imperial families were highly literate. For example, Empress Wu of the Tang dynasty and Shang Guan Wan'er, a senior woman official who served her, were renowned for their skills in poetry and calligraphy (See Idema and Grant (eds.) 2004, pp. 61–72). Empress Yang of the Song dynasty was a noted poet and calligrapher and connoisseur of painting. During the

Song, highly literate women officials prepared drafts of the emperor's correspondence, including final drafts that were circulated in their own fine calligraphy, which closely resembled the emperor's (See Lee, 2010, chapters 2 and 4). A few poems in Chinese by consorts who served the Yuan Emperors Wuzong and Shundi are also available (Shen, 1989, pp. 431–442).

Women's literacy in the Ming imperial household

Like the Song and earlier dynasties, the Ming dynasty maintained a large bureaucracy staffed by women within the imperial household. Two hundred and eighty-three positions for literate women were prescribed in the treatise on official positions in the official history. These women are referred to generically as "women officials" (nǚ guān 女官) (See MS ch. 74, pp. 1827–1829; Soullière, 1987, pp. 246–257; Hsieh, 2000, pp.70–71). Recruitment of women for these positions was carried out with the express requirement that they should be literate and able to do mathematical calculations. Further training was provided for them once they had entered the palace. Despite the highly specified prescriptions of the responsibilities of these women in the official history, other textual references to their activities are scarce and sometimes contradictory.

Provision was made for the education of imperial women at successive Ming courts. Records from the reigns of Ming Taizu and the Yongle Emperor show that, under the influence of the Confucian officials who served the court, a text called *Elementary Learning* (Xiǎo xué 小學), written by the Song Neo-Confucian philosopher, Zhu Xi, (1130–1200) was prescribed as a primer to be used in the primary education of both boys and girls. (MS, 113, p. 3506; *Nei Xun*, 1405, preface). Liu Ruoyu records that towards the end of the dynasty, the education of girls and young women in the imperial palace often began with the study of prose texts from a primer-level curriculum. This curriculum included the *Thousand Character Classic* (千字文 Qiān zì wén), the *Hundred Family Surnames* (百家姓 Bǎi jiā xìng) and the *Classic of Filial Piety* (孝經 Xiào jīng). Women then studied the *Admonitions for Women* by Ban Zhao of the Han dynasty, the *Instructions for Women* by the Jiajing Emperor's mother and classic texts including the *Book of Rites*, the *Classic of Poetry*, the *Great Learning*, the *Doctrine of the Mean* and the *Analects*. Women who mastered these works received the title "women graduates" and were eligible for appointment as Bearers of the Seal in the Office of Palace Attendance or in one of the six services (Liu Ruoyu, ca. 1641, ch. 16 pp. 56 a and b; Soullière, 1987; Soullière, 2014, p. 40; Jang, 2008, pp. 144–145). Throughout the Ming, girls and women were encouraged to listen to the recitation of didactic texts and to learn to read them themselves. These texts were designed to shape their thinking about themselves and their place as women in the family.

Poetry is the genre in which texts associated with imperial women are most likely to have been written by the women themselves. Imbued with personal and emotional content and details of the life of the court, their poems provide unique insights into women's thoughts, observations and emotions. A close reading of some of these poems has much to contribute to understandings of their literacy and their lives in rapidly changing historical and cultural contexts from the reign of Ming Taizu until the end of the reign of the Zhengde Emperor in 1521.

Literate women at the court of Ming Taizu, the Hongwu Emperor, r. 1368–1398

The Ming dynasty sprang from a rebellion fueled by millenarian religious doctrines and deep popular discontent after decades of famine, pestilence, warfare and deteriorating relationships between Han Chinese scholar-officials and the Mongol rulers of the Yuan dynasty whom they served. As a youth, Zhu Yuanzhang, who became the first emperor of the Ming dynasty, lost most of his family to starvation and disease, began training as a monk and then threw in his lot with one of the rebel leaders. There is good evidence that during his astonishing ascent from penury to become the founder of a new Chinese dynasty, he acquired a level of literacy sufficient to read court documents, draft imperial rescripts and write documents of many kinds, including letters (See Mote, 1999, p. 578–579).

The family of the girl who became the first empress of the Ming dynasty was so poor that they had to give her away to be brought up in the household of Guo Zixing, a military leader whose base was in present-day Anhui Province. Married to Zhu Yuanzhang in 1352, she would become the Filial, Compassionate, Exalted Empress Ma, the first empress of the Ming dynasty. Her biography in the official history is peppered with references to the ways that her literacy contributed to the development of the nascent Ming state. It states that in the early years of turmoil before the founding of the dynasty, "whenever the (future) emperor had books or documents to be read and recorded, he ordered the (future) empress to look after them. If he suddenly needed to see one of these documents, she immediately located it and gave it to him. She never made a mistake" (MS 113, p. 3508; Soullière, 2016b, p. 29).

Because of political exigencies in the reigns of Ming Taizu and the Yongle Emperor, Empress Ma's literacy came to be framed, not just in terms of practicalities, but also as an echo of multiple historical and literary precedents. Allusions to the classics in early Ming texts added to the authority and legitimacy of the emerging dynastic institutions. The empress' biography reports that she "loved the *Classic of Poetry* and the *Classic of Documents*". In popular belief, reading these classic texts was thought to lead to the improvement of family fortunes and career advancement. Her biography states that from the founding of the dynasty until her death, Empress Ma engaged with high culture concepts of literacy, leading the women of the court in the practice of reading didactic texts. She is said to have often recited Zhu Xi's *Elementary Learning*, and to have exhorted the emperor to put its teachings into practice (MS 113, p. 3506; Soullière, 2016b, p. 30).

In the portrait of Empress Ma (Fig. 1), we see her as she was often remembered and portrayed, a kindly woman of simple tastes, whose virtuous words and deeds had helped to found an empire. Her biography states that she asked the women officials to instruct the women of the palace about the lives of the virtuous empresses of the past. To facilitate this project, in 1368, Ming Taizu ordered the officials of the Hanlin Academy to compile didactic works for women. The books they produced drew on Confucian traditions, including the *Classic of Poetry*, a text which dates from nearly a millennium before the Common Era. These books were a key facet of the Ming dynasty's claims to be the legitimate successors of Tang and Song and their messages were reiterated and renewed over the course of the Ming. At the same time, literate women were recruited and trained to serve as officials in the complex, multi-level service organizations

Figure 1: *The Filial, Compassionate, Exalted Empress Ma*, National Palace Museum, Taipei, ink and colours on silk 1065 mm. x 748 mm. Masterpieces of Chinese Portrait Painting in the National Palace Museum, p. 39.

within the imperial household. Empress Ma is thought to have personally welcomed a highly literate widow into the palace. Lady Fan was a native of Qingjiang in present day Hubei Province and the daughter of an eminent Yuan dynasty literatus called Fan Peng. Empress Ma rewarded Lady Fan for her services with the title of Lady (fūrén 夫人) and later gave permission for her to return home to her native place (Shen, 1989, p. 443). In the early years of the Ming dynasty, literacy was a celebrated attribute and skill of the empress, the imperial consorts and the other women who staffed the "six palaces", served the emperor and the imperium and were potential mothers of princes and princesses (MS 113, pp. 3505–3508).

One of the didactic works for women prepared by the Hanlin Academicians was called the *Household Instructions* (内訓 NèiXùn, 1405). This text is associated both with Empress Ma and with the Humane, Filial and Cultured Empress Xu, principal wife of the Yongle Emperor (See Soullière, 2016a). Its twenty chapters are filled with advice and admonitions for women with frequent reference to the authority of classic Confucian texts. Two poems from the *Classic of Poetry* are cited and glossed in the *Household Instructions*. We are on solid ground when we assume that both poems were

well known to the women of the Ming imperial palace. These poems had attracted Han dynasty interpretations that linked them to rationales for maximising the number of sons born to emperors through the provision of multiple consorts. These were the interpretations that were dominant nearly two millennia later during the Ming.

The two poems celebrate the idea of imperial women whose virtuous conduct contributed to the legitimacy of a dynastic ruler and the orderly governance of his household. The expectations of the virtues of imperial women were so high as to be frequently unattainable. However, at the same time, the discourse in which these expectations were embedded provided opportunities for able women to benefit from the association of their activities with the highest articulated goals of the imperial family, the dynasty and the state (See Soullière, 1992).

Little Stars 小星

小星	Xiǎo xīng	Little Stars
嘒彼小星	Huìbǐ xiǎo xīng	Sparkling, the little stars
三五在東	Sānwǔ zài dōng	Three or five in the East.
肅肅宵征	Sùsù xiāo zhēng	Solemnly, we go at night.
夙夜在公	Sù yè zài gong	Morning and night we work.
是命不同	Shì mìng bù tōng	Truly, fates are unequal.
嘒彼小星	Huìbǐ xiǎo xīng	Sparkling, the little stars
維參與昴	Wéi cān yú mǎo	And there are Orion and the Pleiades.
肅肅宵征	Sùsù xiāo zhēng	Solemnly, we go at night.
抱衾與裯	Bǎo qīn yú chou	We carry coverlets and sheets.
是命不猶	Shì mìng bù yóu	Truly, fates are unequal.

(*Classic of Poetry* II: X, ca. 8th C. BCE; Legge, 1871, Book II, Ode X, p. 31; Nei Xun, 1405, ch. 13 p. 15a).

Little Stars is a *shi* 詩 poem with just ten lines, each of four characters. Three of the lines are repeated, reinforcing its message. The poem refers to the experiences of low-ranking servants of the household whose responsibilities included looking after the bedchamber. They are only Little Stars, while the status of those they serve is like that of the great constellations that dominate the night sky. In later commentaries, accepted in the Ming, the poem was interpreted as a hymn to the humility of lesser consorts who accepted humiliating conditions in their service to the ruler and never sought to challenge the position of the other women who outranked them in the palace hierarchy. It was celebrated as a paean to the suppression of jealousy among the women of the palace.

Locusts

Locusts, from the *Classic of Poetry*, is also quoted in the *Household Instructions*. This poem came to be associated with Taisi 太 似, the youngest of the three founding mothers of the Zhou royal house. In accounts of Taisi, history and myth are closely interwoven. She was the wife of King Wen, and the mother of King Wu and the Duke of Zhou. Historical accounts of her life are included in Sima Qian's Records of the

Grand Historian and Liu Xiang's Biographies of Virtuous Women. There, we learn that she came from an aristocratic lineage that linked her to the Great King Yu, the mythical figure who quelled the floods and controlled the rivers. Both Sima Qian and Liu Xiang record the dramatic reception that King Wen gave her on their wedding day, when a massed flotilla of boats spanned the Wei River to welcome her. Both accounts also note that she treated his mother and grandmother with exemplary filial piety and that she educated her ten sons. Two of these sons, the future King Wu and the Duke of Zhou, came to be associated with a golden age of good governance at the beginning of the Zhou dynasty.

During the early Han period, a *Little Preface* was written to accompany the *Songs of Zhou and the South* and the *Songs of Shao and the South,* the section of the *Classic of Poetry* where this poem is found. In the Little Preface, an additional layer of meaning was added to the poem. It was interpreted as an expression of Taisi's virtuous tolerance, restraint and lack of jealousy. Her acceptance of King Wen's secondary consorts was said to have ensured that many sons were born to their royal house. Although the earliest accounts of Taisi attribute exceptional fecundity to her personally, the later interpretation stuck fast and became one of the central virtues for which Taisi was praised in subsequent centuries, including the Ming.

Locusts shares many qualities with other poems in the *Classic of Poetry*, including its hypnotic rhythms and close connection with the natural world. It challenges modern sensibilities with its graphic images of strings of insect spawn and the startlingly direct and brutal parallels that it suggests between the prolific spawning of insects and human reproduction. Brimming with onomatopoeia, the sounds of the poem imitate the thrumming of the wings of innumerable locusts as they swarm, mate and give birth to a new generation. The multiple repetitions, probable internal rhymes and regular three-three-seven beat give it a raw, rhythmic power, like an incantation or a magic spell.

The Hànyǔpīnyīn transliteration of the modern standard Chinese pronunciations of the characters below gives a sense of the poem's sounds. The readings would have been significantly different in the classical Chinese of the time of the poem's origin.

Locusts 螽斯

螽斯羽詵詵兮	Zhōng sī yǔ shēnshēn xī	Locusts' wings, throng, throng.
宜爾子孫振振兮	Yí ěr zǐ sūn zhènzhèn xī	It is right that sons and grandsons come in swarms.
螽斯羽薨薨兮	Zhōngsī yǔ hōnghōng xī	Locusts' wings, whir, whir.
宜爾子孫繩繩兮	Yí ěr zǐsūn shéngshéng xī	It is right that sons and grandsons come in strings.
螽斯羽揖揖兮	Zhōngsī yǔ jíjí xī	Locusts' wings, cluster, cluster.
宜爾子孫蟄蟄兮	Yí ěr zǐsūn zhézhé xī	It is right that sons and grandsons come in swarms.

Classic of Poetry ca. 8th C. BCE, Book I, Ode V, Maoshi 4; *Household Instructions*, 1405, ch. 13 p. 15a.

In the *Household Instructions* of 1405 and in other Ming didactic works intended for the education of women, the poems *Little Stars* and *Locusts* appear again and again. In every case, they are interpreted as hymns to women's virtuous suppression of jealousy. The same concept appears in the Ming official history, where Empress Ma is praised for having exemplified this paradigmatic virtue (MS 113, p. 3508; Soullière, 2016b, p. 33).

A song for Empress Ma

The official history records that when Empress Ma died in 1382, the women officials wrote a poem in her memory. This poem was included in her biography in the official history and was probably intended to be chanted or sung.

Song for Empress Ma

我后聖慈	Wǒ hòu shèng cí	Our empress, wise and compassionate
化行家邦	Huàxíng jiā bāng	Transformed family and state,
撫我育我	Fǔ wǒ yù wǒ	Comforted us, taught us.
懷德難忘	Huái dé nán wàng	The moral power she cherished will be hard to forget.
懷德難忘	Huái dé nán wàng	The moral power she cherished will be hard to forget,
於萬斯年	Yú wàn sī nián	Even in ten thousand years.
毖彼下泉	Bì bǐ xià quán	A spring pouring down.
悠悠蒼天	Yōu yōu cāng tiān	Oh, distant blue Heaven!

(MS 113, p. 3508; Soullière, 2016b, p. 34)

The song has a simple structure of eight lines, each four characters long. Its simple form and repetitions are reminiscent of poems in the *Classic of Poetry*. Most of the poem is written in colloquial language, but it contains several allusions to the Classics. The reference to cherishing moral power in lines four and five is probably an allusion to the *Analects* of Confucius (Lunyu, 4: 11), which states that, "The cultivated person cherishes moral power. The small person cherishes land". The suggestion that, like a Confucian official, an empress can be a cultivated person who cherishes moral power is noteworthy. The penultimate line, "like a spring pouring down" is a quotation from Ode 14, Quánshuǐ 泉水 from Book 3, The *Odes of Pei* in the *Classic of Poetry*. This poem refers to a young woman's desire to return to her family home to see her parents again after her marriage. Later commentators used the references to marriage to connect the poem to the roles of imperial women. The final line of the song, "Oh, distant blue heaven" is taken from Book 6, Ode 1, *Shǔlí* 黍離. The original is a lament to heaven at the untimely loss of a leader (See Legge, v. 4, book 6: I, p. 110).

In the poem for Empress Ma, the lines borrowed from the two classic poems have positive associations with the natural world, with the bubbling waters of a life-giving spring and with the blue sky overhead. They are inserted into the poem without much

of a segue to connect them to the previous lines, giving the reader the impression of a certain lack of sophistication on the part of the poets. The poem is delivered in the generic voices of the women officials. It is a simple, effective vehicle for the expression of the grief of the women in the palace. Its message draws attention to the importance of the classic texts that underpin the legitimacy of the dynasty and the importance of the place of the empress in the assertion of the dynasty's claims to legitimate rule. It affirms the unity of the empress' moral power and the power of the imperial family and the state in the second decade of the dynasty's rule.

A poem from the Xuande reign: 1426–1436

Just over four decades after the death of Empress Ma, Ming Taizu's great-grandson ascended the throne as the Xuande Emperor. During the ten years of his reign, high culture activities of many kinds flourished. The Emperor himself was a painter of note and material objects of great refinement including paintings, ceramics and bronzes, were produced. The painting in underglaze blue on a fine ceramic vase (Fig. 2) dated to the Xuande reign depicts beautifully dressed and coiffed women engaged in elegant pastimes including reading books, studying paintings, playing weiqi chess and playing the stringed instrument called the guqin. Literacy was an integral part of each of these pastimes at a court that was already far removed from the rough and ready culture of the 14th century court of Ming Taizu.

Figure 2: Xuande or Zhengtong (1426–1449) porcelain wine jar with underglaze blue decoration, h. 344 mm, d. 221 mm. Jingdezhen, Jiangxi Province, Shanghai Museum, after Clunas and Harrison-Hall, 2014, Fig. 165.

Consort Guo's lament for her own life

A poignant narrative from the Xuande reign tells of a woman known as Consort Guo (1400–1428). She was a native of Fengyang, the ancestral seat of the Ming house in present-day Anhui Province. Her grandfather was Guo Ying, Marquis of Wuding, (1335–1403), one of Ming Taizu's closest military associates. Consort Guo is likely to have been selected for service in the palace because of her literary skills. It is possible that she began her career as a woman official and received the title of Consort posthumously. The ill-fated Consort Guo fell ill only twenty days after entering the palace. When she knew that death was imminent, she wrote a lyric poem (cí 辭) in the Chu style as a lament for herself (zì āi 自哀). Her poem expresses her profound sorrow as she faces an untimely death. She uses a conventional simile, comparing life to a dream, then startles and saddens the reader by stating that death will be an awakening. She pictures her death as a return to her family and writes of her shame at having failed in her filial obligations. The rewards they received for her service to the court would have ended with her death. And of course, she has also failed to bear a son to the emperor, an accomplishment that would have improved her own fortunes and those of her family. Her deeply personal lament carries a powerful emotional charge and conveys an overwhelming sense of failure and despair.

Consort Guo Ai's Lamentation for herself c. 1426–1436

修短有數兮	Xiūduǎn yǒu shù xī	Long or short, lifespans are fated.
不足較也	Bù zú jiào yě	It's no use to compare them.
生而如夢兮	Shēng ér rú mèng xī	Life is like a dream.
死則覺也	Sǐ zé jué yě	Death, an awakening.
先吾親而歸兮	Xiān wú qīn ér guī xī	I will go first and return to my family,
慚予之失孝也	Cán yú zhī shī xiào yě	Ashamed of my failure to be filial.
心悽悽而不能已兮	xīn qī qī ér bù néng yǐ xī	My heart aches and this cannot end.
是則可悼也	Shì zé kě dào yě	Truly, this is cause for lamentation.

(Lady Guo, MS, 113, p. 3515; Xie, 1916, p. 11)

Lady Wang, Director in the Fabric Service 司綵王氏

A poem from the hand of a woman official who served in the household bureaucracy during the Xuande reign has also been preserved. Her surname was Wang and she came from Nanhai, a place name that in Ming texts usually refers to Guangdong. She held a position ranked 6a in the Office of Fabrics. Her poem begins with a reference to

the beautiful women who were drawn to the imperial palace. The jewelled flowers in the first line may be interpreted as referring both to the beautiful young women who entered the palace and to the jewelled ornaments encrusted with pearls and gemstones that they wore in their hair and on their crowns. The frozen fragrance of the single tree in the second line may be intended to contrast the purity and loneliness of one woman, perhaps the poet herself or perhaps another lady, with the more elaborately dressed and ornamented ladies who customarily enjoyed the emperor's company. The last two lines refer to the success of one woman, probably the woman whom the poet has represented with the image of the lone tree, in attracting the attention of the emperor. The final image, the sound of the jade flute that pierces the moonlight, lends itself to an erotic interpretation, a rare reference to sexual desire from a woman in the Ming imperial household. For those familiar with recent events in the Ming palace, the image of the jade flute also conjures up the spirit of the beautiful Lady Kwōn, a Korean consort who had charmed the ageing Yongle Emperor with her music and who had died tragically in 1410, aged just nineteen, the probable victim of murderous competition among the women of his household.

瓊花移入大明宮	Qiónghuā yí rù dà Míng gōng	Jewelled flowers enter the Great Ming Palace.
一樹凝香移晚風	Yī shù níng xiāng yí wǎn fēng	A single tree's frozen fragrance draws the evening breeze.
贏得君王留步輦	Yíng de jūnwáng liú bùniǎn	She succeeds in getting the ruler to pause his palanquin.
玉簫吹徹月明中	Yù xiāo chuī chè yuè míng zhōng	The sound of a jade flute pierces the moonlight.

(Lady Wang, Director of the Fabric Service, fl. 1426–1436; Xie, 1916, 3.2 p. 11; Wang Chongwu, 1948, p. 168)

The Zhengtong reign: 1436–1450 The Grand Empress Dowager Zhang farewells Huang Weide

The Accomplished, Filial, Luminous Empress Dowager Zhang, the mother of the Xuande Emperor, was for many decades the most senior woman in the imperial family. In her portrait (Fig. 3), we see her depicted in the court regalia that she would have worn on the most formal occasions. The magnificent clothing, jewelry, crown and elaborate make-up that were the prerogatives of an empress dowager near the end of the first hundred years of the Ming dynasty provide a dramatic contrast to the simplicity ascribed to Empress Ma at the time of the founding.

A poem from Empress Dowager Zhang's hand shows how, like other members of the ruling elite, she used her literacy for cultivating relationships within the social networks that supported the court. She wrote this poem to mark the retirement of Huang Weide, a senior official who had held the position of Keeper of the Seals, (Sībǎo 司寶), in the imperial household. After many years of service, Mme Huang was at last allowed

Figure 3: Anonymous court painter, *Chengxiaozhao Empress Zhang* (d. 1442), album leaf, ink and colours on silk, 655 x 515 mm, National Palace Museum, Taipei, after Clunas and Harrison-Hall, 2014, p. 59.

to retire and return to her family in Nanhai, Guangdong. The poem is undated, but the authority with which the poet speaks and her sense of fellowship with the ageing subject of the poem make it likely that it should be dated towards the end of Empress Dowager Zhang's tenure as the most senior woman in the imperial household, perhaps between 1435 and her death in 1442. It movingly conveys the intimacy of the relationship between the Dowager Empress and her loyal and trusted official. Empress Dowager Zhang expresses gratitude for Mme. Huang's many years of service to the imperial family and celebrates her retirement at the age of seventy-four. This is a shī poem, composed of twenty-two lines, each of seven characters, with many of the lines arranged as pairs or couplets. The style of the poem is simple and straightforward, almost conversational. In the page from the facsimile edition of Zhu Yizun's 1705 collection of Ming Dynasty Poems reproduced below (Fig. 4), the poem is preceded by an abbreviated version of

the biography of Empress Dowager Zhang. Reading the two texts together affords an opportunity to consider the nature of the primary sources and the expressive richness of poetry as a counterpoint to the formality of an historical account. The biography reads,

> The Empress' surname was Zhang and she came from Yongcheng County. She was the daughter of the Earl of Pengcheng, Zhang Qi. In the 28th year of the Hongwu reign, she was appointed consort to the heir to the Princedom of Yan. In the second year of the Yongle reign, she was appointed principal consort to the Heir Apparent. In the twenty-second year of the Yongle reign, when [Zhu Gaozhi, who became] Emperor Renzong, ascended the throne, she was invested as Empress. In the seventh year of the Zhengtong reign, she died. She was buried together with Emperor Renzong in his imperial tomb, Xianling. Her posthumous title was, 'Sincere, Filial, Respectful, Solemn, Illuminator of Virtue, Expansively Humane, Obedient to Heaven, Expositor of the Sages, Luminous Empress'.

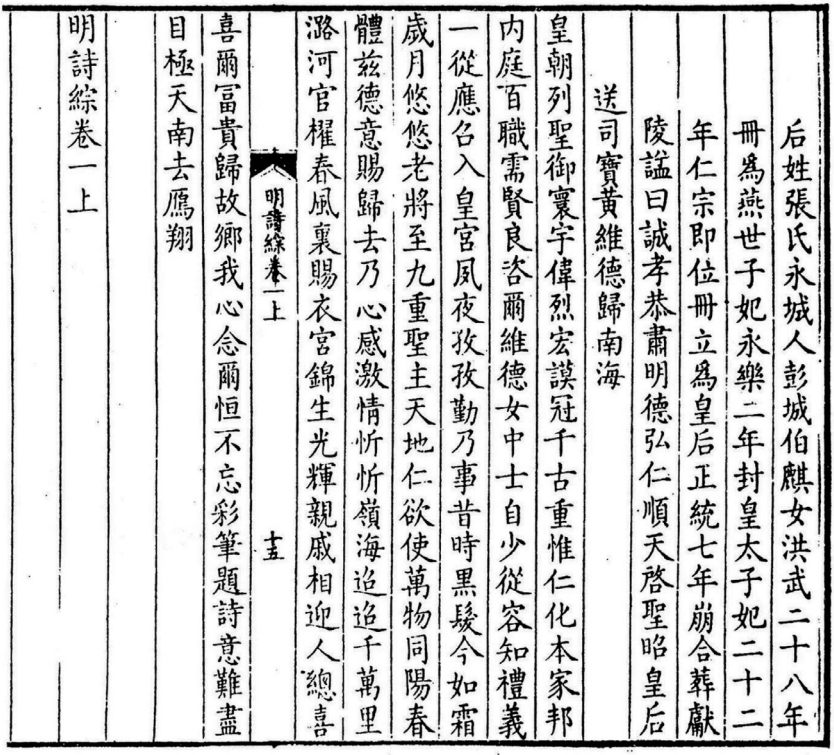
后姓張氏永城人彭城伯麒女洪武二十八年
冊爲燕世子妃永樂二年封皇太子妃二十二
年仁宗即位冊立爲皇后正統七年崩合葬獻
陵謚曰誠孝恭肅明德弘仁順天啓聖昭皇后
送司寶黃維德歸南海
皇朝列聖御寰宇偉烈宏謨冠千古重惟仁化本家邦
內庭百職需賢良咨爾維德女中士自少從容知禮義
一從應名入皇宮夙夜孜孜勤乃事昔時黑髮今如霜
歲月悠悠老將至九重聖主天地仁欲使萬物同陽春
體茲德意賜歸去乃心感激情忻忻嶺海迢迢千萬里
潞河官櫂春風裏賜衣宮錦生光輝親戚相迎人總喜
明詩綜卷一上 十五
喜爾富貴歸故鄉我心念爾恒不忘彩筆題詩意難盡
目極天南去鴈翔
明詩綜卷一上

Figure 4: *Cheng Xiaozhao Empress Zhang, Seeing off Keeper of the Seal, Huang Weide on her return to Nanhai*, ca. 1435–1442, after Zhu Yizun (1705 ch.1, shang, p. 15a).

Seeing off Keeper of the Seals, Huang Weide, on her return to Nanhai

The sages of our imperial dynasty serve the world,
Far-reaching models surpassing the ancients.
With humaneness alone, they transform family and state.
In the inner palace a hundred duties require virtue and goodness.
Ah, Weide, a scholar among women,
From youth you followed the knowledge of ritual and propriety.
From the time you obeyed the edict and entered the imperial palace
Morning and evening you applied yourself to your duties.
Your black hair of former days is now like frost.
The years and months have brought you to old age.
The sages of the nine divisions of the celestial sphere control Heaven,
Earth and Humaneness,
Wishing to make all things one in the springtime of yang.
In consideration of your virtue, we have granted your wish to return home.
Hearts will be roused with feelings of delight
On mountains and seas 10,000 li distant.
On the Lu River, you will row in a light spring breeze.
We have granted you robes of palace brocade to make you radiant.
Your family will welcome you, everyone delighted,
Delighted that you have come home, wealthy and honoured.
In my heart, I will keep you and will not forget.
As I take up my brush to make this poem, it is hard to express what is in
my heart.
As far as the eye can see, in the southern sky, wild geese soar.

Poetry and the culture of the court and the imperial family in the Chenghua reign: 1465–1488

Sixty years after Empress Dowager Zhang wrote her poem for Huang Weide, the ability to read, write and recite poetry played an important role in the careers of two women who sprang from humble backgrounds. One became the mother and the other the grandmother of an emperor. The dynasty's *Ancestral Instructions* had ordered that the wives of the princes should be recruited from "good families" (liángjiā 良家）and not from the families of the elite. The commoner women who entered the imperial family in accordance with this criterion often came from families who belonged to the lower to middle ranks of the military (See Soullière, 1988, p.23). During the Chenghua reign, Lady Ji, the mother of the of Hongzhi Emperor, was captured during warfare in Southwest China, taken into the palace and raised by a eunuch who taught her to read, write and recite poetry. She attracted the emperor's favour through her literary accomplishments and bore a son who later reigned as the Hongzhi Emperor. In the same reign, another consort, Lady Shao, came from a family so poor that her father had to sell her. Her purchaser was the eunuch intendant in Hangzhou. As the protégé of this eunuch, she learned to read and write out hundreds of Tang dynasty poems. She came to the attention of the Chenghua Emperor because of her skill in reciting the poems.

She bore him three sons and decades later the eldest son of her eldest son ascended the throne as the Jiajing Emperor. Their eunuch guardians had equipped these two women with the good manners, pleasant speaking voices, mastery of the conventions of the court and familiarity with a corpus of poetry that were key to their success in the Chenghua reign (See MS 113, pp. 3521–3524; Mao, early Qing, ch. 3 pp. 9b–10a).

Poetry in the Hongzhi reign: 1487–1506 Shen Qionglian

By the dynasty's middle century, the literary sophistication of the women in the imperial household had again increased dramatically. Poetry retained its place alongside music, calligraphy and painting as one of the pleasant pastimes with which the members of the court occupied their leisure hours. The work of one highly literate woman official called Shen Qionglian (沈瓊蓮 fl. 1487–1506) stands out. A small number of her poems are available for study and they provide glimpses of the lives of the women who lived in the palace in the Hongzhi reign and the role that poetry played in families that aspired to upward mobility for their sons and daughters. She was born into a family of scholars from Wucheng County in present-day Zhejiang, who educated their daughters alongside their sons. She was recruited at the age of thirteen to enter the palace as a woman official (Xie, 1916, ch. 2, p. 12).

Shen Qionglian's skills first came to the attention of the Hongzhi emperor when she won a palace poetry competition. Her winning entry contained a clever pun, linking the word for "gecko" which the emperor chose as the theme, to its homophone, "defending the palace" shǒu gōng 守宮. She was promoted to the rank of woman scholar (nǚxuéshì 女學士) and held that rank until her death (Xie, 1916, p.11–12; Chang and Saussy, 1999, pp. 165–167). This title designates a senior rank among the women officials of the palace, and it is one that is not listed in the formally prescribed structures for the Six Services in the official history. This is evidence, scarce in other kinds of sources, of the titles that women officials held in the middle period of the dynasty. Unofficial historian, Shen Defu, provides another indication of the titles that were used when he notes that when women first entered one of the six services, they were given the title woman graduate (nǚ xiùcái 女秀才) (Shen, 1619, suppl. ch. 1 pp. 805–806).

Two of Shen Qionglian's poems achieved special renown. The first is addressed to her older brother and the second to her younger brother. In addition to highlighting the literary education and close relationships the three siblings shared in the family home where they grew up, both poems are rich in details of the roles of women officials in the operation of the imperial household. The first line of the poem dedicated to her older brother refers to stars and constellations, a possible allusion to the *Little Stars* poem in the *Classic of Poetry*. This poem is filled with images of beautiful objects including the distant towers of the palace buildings, the palace music, the mythical phoenix and the bluejay. The Bluejay Pavilion was a palace in a pleasure park built for the Han dynasty Emperor Wu. The setting of the poem indicates a scenario where the emperor is departing by carriage from the six palaces of the women's quarters at dawn, having spent the night there. Rows of beautifully arrayed women officials line his path. The women officials of the bedchamber, one of the six services staffed by women, light

fragrant sandalwood in braziers as the emperor returns to his own residence and the outer court. A senior consort, whom Shen designates with the title Lady of Luminous Deportment (Zhāoyí 昭儀), first used in the Han dynasty, leads the way as the emperor is carried along in procession.

奇兄		To my elder brother
疎明星斗夜闌珊	Shū míng xīng dǒu yè lán shān	Bright stars and constellations grow distant as night fades like tinkling jade.
玉貌花容列女官	Yùmào huārōng liè nǚguān	Like jade, like flowers, the women officials stand arrayed.
風遞鳳凰天樂近	Fēng dì fèng huáng tiān yuè jìn	Wind carries the heavenly phoenix music closer.
雪殘鴆鵲曉樓寒	Xué cán zhīquè xiǎo lóu hán	Snow dims the Bluejay Pavilion in the dawn cold.
昭儀引駕臨丹扆	Zhāoyì yǐn jià lín dān yǐ	The Lady of Luminous Deportment leads the imperial carriage towards the crimson screens.
尚寢熏盧熱紫檀	Shàngqǐn xūn lú rè zǐtán	Women Officials of the Bedchamber light sandalwood in braziers.
肅肅六宮懸象魏	Sùsù liùgōng xuán xiàngwèi.	In formal order, the six palaces stand in the distance.
春風前殿想鳴鑾	Chūnfēng qiándiàn xiǎng míng luàn	In the spring breeze the front halls await the sound of carriage bells.

(Sheng Qionglian, fl. 1487–1506; Xie, 1916, 6, p. 12; Wan Liu in Chang and Saussy (eds.) 1999, p. 165–166)

A second poem is addressed to Shen Qionglian's younger brother. It contains further details of the duties of women officials, duties that Shen herself may have performed within the palace. The wording of the poem suggests that these duties included greeting the Empress when she arrived at the Blue Chain-patterned gate within the palace for the start of the formal part of her day. In the evenings, Shen's job was to take documents to the Hall of Purple Tenuity, an elegant euphemism for the Central Drafting Office (Zhōngshū gé) in the Grand Secretariat, the Inner Court office that managed imperial correspondence (See Chang and Saussy, 1999, p. 167). In this poem, Shen Qionglian acknowledges her personal sorrow that time is passing her by. Silver candles gutter and burn out. Year after year, jade hairpins, symbols of her femininity, break and still she has had no opportunity to return home to see her family. This poem ends on a hopeful note, with the wish that her younger brother may pass the imperial examinations and that together they may be useful to the emperor and the state. The reference in the last line to offering court robes to the mountain dragon may be an allusion to the Sericulture

Ceremony, where the empress and the women officials made silk to be used in the emperor's garments. Despite the hopes expressed in this poem, there is no record of whether Shen Qionglian was ever allowed to see her beloved brothers again.

送弟溥試春官	Sòng dì pǔ shì chūn guān	To my younger brother at the spring examinations
少小離家侍禁闈	Shǎo xiǎo lí jiā shì jìn wéi	Since I left home when young to serve in the inner palace
人間天上兩依稀	Rénjiān tiān shàng liáng yī xī	The human world and the heavens have seemed insubstantial.
朝迎鳳輦趨青瑣	Zhào yíng fèng niǎn qū qīngsuǒ	In the mornings I greet the phoenix palanquin at the Blue Chain-patterned gate.
夕捧鸞書入紫微	Xì pěng luán shū rù zǐ wéi	In the evenings I carry imperial documents to the Hall of Purple Tenuity
銀燭燒殘空有夢	Yīn zhú shāo cān kōng yǒu mèng	Silver candles burn out and there are dreams in the emptiness.
玉釵敲斷未成歸	Yù chāi qiāo duàn wéi chéng guī	Jade hairpins break and still I have not succeeded in returning home.
年年望汝登金藉	Niánnián wàng rǔ dēng jīn jí	Each year I hope that you will enter the golden lists.
同補山龍上袞衣	Tóng bǔ shānlóng shàng gǔn yī	Together, we could support the mountain dragon, offering court robes.

(Sheng Qionglian, fl. 1487–1506; Xie, 1916, 6, p. 12; Wan Liu in Chang and Saussy (eds.) 1999, p. 166–167)

In the middle years of the Ming, the ability to write sophisticated poems such as the two cited above won kudos for this woman official within the palace and fame in the wider world. This fame was not without its risks, however. Kang-I Sun Chang has noted that gentry women anthologists often ranked women poets according to their virtue and that, for fear of social scandal, many women poets burned or attempted to burn their own work (See Chang, 1997, p. 169). For the women of the Ming palace, the celebration of virtue was even more important than for gentry women. Secrets were closely guarded and fame carried with it a great risk of scandal. One reason for the scarcity of poems by Ming imperial women may be that, like their gentry counterparts, they destroyed their own work. An activity more likely to win general approbation was educating the imperial children. In another poem, Shen Qionglian mentions that the women officials taught the classics to the young princes before they began their formal studies (Shen, ca. 1488–1505, in Xie, 1916, p. 12). Her literary oeuvre provides us with a rare insider's view of the life of a woman official of the Ming court in the middle century of the dynasty.

The Zhengde reign: 1506–1522 Consort Wang's poem

The only surviving son of the Hongzhi Emperor ascended the throne as the Zhengde Emperor after his father's death in 1505. His refusal to conform to his officials' view of his role and his insistence on travelling about the realm for pleasure, military exploits and adventure are legendary. Despite his evident preference for the company of women who held no official positions at the court, one imperial woman who had a conventional title travelled with him on the tour of the south that he undertook in 1520. She was known as Consort Wang (王妃) and she has left a literary record of one of the experiences they shared. Like the emperor, she was a native of the north, born and raised in Beijing. While the emperor was based at Nanjing, she accompanied him on a visit to hot springs near Suzhou. During this visit, she wrote a poem in seven-character regulated verse (七言絕句). The emperor was said to have been so pleased with her poem that he had it carved onto a rock at the hot springs. In her poem, Lady Wang contrasts the cold and austere landscapes of their native north with the clear hot springs of their southern sojourn. She expresses a longing for the sorrows of the human world to be washed away by the billowing waters of the springs. In her vision, the surging pulse that flows through life's events fails to liberate the mind or to wash away the uncleanness of the world. The poem conveys an overwhelming impression of desolation, loss, and the futility of efforts to wash the world clean.

塞外風霜凍異常	Sàiwài fēng shuāng dòng yì cháng	Beyond the borders, the exceptional chill of wind and frost.
水池何事曠如湯	Shuǐ chí hé shì kuàng rú tāng?	How could watery pools be as clear as hotsprings?
溶溶一脈流今古	Róngróng yī mài liú jīn gǔ	Surging and billowing, a pulse flows through present and past,
不為人間洗冷腸	Bù wéi rénjiàn xī léng cháng	Not cleansing the cold bowels of the human world.

(Lady Wang, fl. ca. 1520, in Xie, 1916, ch. 2, p. 12)

Lady Wang and indeed the emperor himself might have preferred to remain near the hot springs in the warmer climes of the South, but he decided to return to Beijing to celebrate the victory of the imperial armies over his kinsman, the rebellious Prince of Ning. He broke his journey to go fishing and while fishing alone, his small boat capsized. Although his attendants were able to save his life, he was stricken with an illness. He and his party continued on their journey back to Beijing, but his condition deteriorated and he died a few months later. There is no record of the fate of Lady Wang.

Reflections

Evidence to support arguments for the numbers of women who were literate in the Ming palace and in Ming society may continue to be elusive. However, the evidence from the early and middle periods of the dynasty shows that, like women in the wider society, Ming imperial women used their literacy for multiple purposes. At the beginning of the dynasty, Empress Ma's practical ability to keep written records played an important part in the transformation of a small rebel household into a dynasty that ruled an empire. The celebration of her paradigmatic words and deeds was an important facet of the claims of legitimacy made by Ming Taizu and the Yongle Emperor. The poems provide information on the operation of the complex bureaucracy staffed by highly literate women officials with prescribed ranks and duties that served the Ming court. These women officials worked closely with senior imperial women and with the emperor and their responsibilities included keeping family and household records, the seals and tallies that authorised the use of goods and services, the education of women and children and communication between the palace and the outside world. The biographical material that accompanies the poems identifies the native places of the poets, contributing to our understanding of the regions where women's literacy was fostered. Our poets came from Qingjiang in present-day Hubei; Fengyang in Anhui; Yongcheng in the Huai River basin near the border with Anhui; Nanjing, the southern capital in the heart of the Jiangnan region; Wucheng County in Zhejiang; Guangdong and Beijing.

When women read, wrote and recited poetry, their success contributed to progress in their careers. In some cases, it helped them to win the favour of the emperor and membership in the imperial family. Through poetry, women fostered and developed social networks that included members of their own natal families and other women inside and outside the imperial palace. They used their skills within a coterie of educated women and they educated other women, the young princes and probably also the princesses. Poetry became a vehicle for the expression of emotions that are usually absent from the other kinds of records of their lives that are available to us today. In their own authentic voices, women write of their grief, despair, desire, benevolent fellow-feeling, loneliness, hope and ambition.

The two poems and their commentaries from the *Classic of Poetry*, repeatedly cited in the dynasty's early years, celebrated ancient paradigms of the submission of women to the needs of the dynasty and the state. These themes were echoed in the simple *shi* poem written by the women officials to celebrate the virtue of Empress Ma and to imbue her memory with moral and political power. In this early poem, the expression of emotion was subsumed beneath an overarching theme of service to the imperial family and the state.

Poems from the Xuande reign sound a new note, showing the development of increasing sophistication in style, formal complexity, and ideation. Two women who held modest ranks in the imperial household voiced emotions including despair at the brevity of life, memories of the sad fate of one young consort and dreams that life in the palace might lead to transcendent happiness. Empress Dowager Zhang's poem, of

similar date, expresses her joy as she rewards a woman official who has served her well over many years. It is no accident that this most upbeat of the poems comes from the hand of a woman whose position at the top of the hierarchy of the imperial family and the imperial household was dramatically more secure than those of most of the other women who lived in the imperial palace during the Ming. Of the poets we have considered, only she had been the principal wife of an emperor and the mother and grandmother of his successors.

Shen Qionglian's poems from the Hongzhi reign are significantly more complex in form than those composed in the early Ming. They display an easy familiarity with the specialised language and conventions of a sophisticated imperial court. Her lexical choices denote the titles, ranks and duties of imperial consorts and women officials, and the mythical birds, the palace buildings and the rituals that symbolised the imperium. Her allusions to the names of Han dynasty palace buildings and consorts' titles display her familiarity with the history of imperial courts. Set amongst this profusion of images, Shen provides a carefully nuanced view of her own position in relation to her natal family, the dynasty and the state. Though she acknowledges her duty to the imperium, her reflections on her own position and experiences shine through as the dominant themes of her poems. Finally, Consort Wang's poem from the end of the Zhengde era powerfully evokes human observations of the natural world, but the emotion she expresses is despair, unmitigated by hope that the institutions of the imperial family and the state might bring order to the world. The Zhengde Emperor's decision to immortalise her poem by having it inscribed on stone implies that he may have shared her views.

Consideration of the poetry of Ming imperial women and women in the imperial household has much to add to the history of literate women in late imperial China. Literacy was the principal criterion for the recruitment of women officials and women had further educational opportunities within the palace. Literacy prepared women for hundreds of roles in the large, bureaucratic institutions of the imperial household. It enabled some of them to attract the attention of the emperor, bear children and join the imperial family. Women's poems provide perspectives on their lives that augment those found in other kinds of textual and material sources. During the 14th and 15th centuries and the first decades of the 16th, as empresses, dowager empresses, consorts and officials, the women poets of the Ming palace forged vital links in the chain of writing women who over centuries laid the foundations for the high levels of literacy of Chinese women in the present day.

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DECOLONISING SIKKIMESE BHUTIA LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION: THE JOURNEY FROM COLONIAL REPRESENTATION TO REVIVAL AND RECLAMATION

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Abstract

Sikkimese Bhutia language is spoken by around 30,000 people in the contemporary northeast Indian state of Sikkim. Historically, the cultural and linguistic ties between Tibet and Sikkim led Western scholars to frame Sikkimese Bhutia as a gateway language for studying Tibetan. In the twentieth century, linguists represented it as an endangered language. However, the rise of the Internet in Sikkim has fostered alternative forms of cultural production, where Sikkimese Bhutia has been revived and reclaimed in Sikkimese communities, as Sikkimese Bhutia writers and scholars have rejected colonial and Tibetan models and embraced local approaches to the making of decolonised identities.

Keywords: Sikkimese Bhutia language, language reclamation, language education, cultural production, Internet culture, Sikkim, Himalayas, India

Introduction

In 2017, the film *Bya-kay* (English: *Bringing a Hen*) marked an exciting moment for movie lovers in the eastern Himalayan Indian state of Sikkim. It was the latest in a spate of locally produced films,[1] and was seen as especially significant by members of the Sikkimese Bhutia, or Lhopo, ethnic group.[2] This was because *Bya-kay* was

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1 *Bya-kay* was released following the success of the film *Dhokbu* (dir. Dawa Lepcha) in 2017, which featured Lepcha and English dialogue, and following the success of a number of Nepali- and Hindi-language films made in the state.

2 This article focuses on the Sikkimese Bhutia language, which is also known as Lhoked, Lho skad, Denjongke, Denjongkay, and Sikkimese. In this article, we use the term 'Sikkimese Bhutia' to refer to this language since all of these terms have their own problems: Denjongke and Sikkimese, for example, suggest that this language is the predominant language of Sikkim, and does not acknowledge the other languages of Sikkim as equally legitimate and worthy of the title. Lhoked (or as it is rendered in the popular Tibetan Wylie transliteration system, Lho skad) means 'Southern language,' and while many contemporary Bhutias prefer this term, Bhutia is more widely used in official government discourse. We add 'Sikkimese' to differentiate the form of Bhutia spoken in Sikkim from one of the other ethnic

the first film ever produced entirely in Sikkimese Bhutia, or Lhokey, language. The cast were composed of students and faculty from the Department of Bhutia at Sikkim University in Gangtok, and the director, writer and producer, Bhaichung Tsichudarpo, had long been an active writer, teacher and promulgator of Sikkimese Bhutia language and cultural materials including calendars, music and books. The plot of the film represented a nostalgic look at life in rural Sikkim in the 1960s, and was centered around a Sikkimese Bhutia family's preparation for the birth of a new child. The tone of *Bya-kay* was eclectic; it featured painstaking attention to detail in the presentation of rituals related to hospitality and birth, and details around food preparation, family hierarchy, and local healing traditions. The film also featured entertaining religious and romantic songs that appeared abruptly between otherwise serious scenes that earnestly presented historical rural Sikkimese Bhutia life as it was imagined by the director. In the prologue that appeared in Sikkimese Bhutia and English, Tsichudarpo presented his motivation, stating that the film was intended to counteract "the erosion of identity" currently experienced by Sikkimese Bhutia youth in Sikkim, and that the film was intended to "take out younger generation back to the past where our root [*sic*] lies."[3]

This anxiety around the cultural loss wrought by modernity was shared in online discussions on social media and Youtube that accompanied the release of the film. These discussions were overwhelmingly positive and supportive, as many commentators noted their desire to learn to speak Sikkimese Bhutia better.[4] In this way, the director's motivation to inspire the use of Sikkimese Bhutia language was realised. But also present in the film were messages about behaviour, etiquette, and morality as Tsichudarpo imagined it in a historical context. *Bya-kay* then was not just about presenting Sikkimese Bhutia language and culture, but also about how to perform it correctly.

The close connection between presenting and performing Sikkimese Bhutia language and culture has developed as part of broader cultural revitalisation movements in Sikkim since the 1990s,[5] and especially in response to studies by linguists that have written of Sikkimese Bhutia as a "moribund"[6] or "endangered" language.[7] Sikkimese Bhutia, also known as Lhokey (*Lho skad*, the Southern language) or Sikkimese, is a language spoken in Sikkim and in the northern border regions of West Bengal by an

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2. – *ctd.* groups known as Bhutia, or Bhotiya, elsewhere in the Himalayas. Therefore for clarity and accessibility, this article refers to this language as Sikkimese Bhutia. For Sikkimese Bhutia words, we use a phoneticised version of the word, rather than the Tibetan transliteration system of Wylie that does always not represent pronunciation in Sikkim, and additionally does not represent how Sikkimese Bhutia terms are spelt in the Tibetan alphabet. See Yliniemi 2019, 1–5 for a summary on discussions of terminology.

3 *Bya-kay* 2017.

4 *Bya-kay* 2017.

5 Balikci 2008.

6 van Driem 2007, 312.

7 Turin 2014, 384; Yliniemi 2019, 12–14.

estimated 25–30,000 people.[8] The language has strong historical and linguistic ties to different Tibetan languages. As with many other parts of the Himalayas, Sikkim was historically influenced by Buddhism derived from the Tibetan plateau, and much of the historical literature was in classical Tibetan, along with other languages including Lepcha, the distinctive language of the Indigenous Lepcha ethnic community, and Devanagari, which was used by some of the historical communities that are today often grouped together as Nepalis. Buddhism had been an important in the foundations of the Sikkimese state under the Bhutia-led Namgyal dynasty in the seventeenth century.[9]

In the nineteenth century, the kingdom of Sikkim became part of the British Empire's realm of influence in the Himalayas, which led to the introduction of new systems of governance and education in new languages.[10] In 1975, Sikkim was absorbed into the Republic of India, which led to further changes. Contemporary Sikkim is a multiethnic and multilingual state,[11] and since 1977, when the Sikkim Official Language Act was passed,[12] government schools have offered a number of Sikkim's eleven official languages as part of their regular curriculum.[13] As part of the implementation of local languages into the school curriculum, a written orthography was developed for Sikkimese Bhutia language, and a group of Bhutia language teachers developed a curriculum for teaching Sikkimese Bhutia language in schools. As well as promoting a standard orthography, the authors of these materials were also concerned with promoting a local identity that included cultural as well as linguistic fluency. As linguistic anthropologist Mark Turin has observed, students learning local languages in Sikkim are not necessarily "being taught the language in order to use it …. Rather, through the prism of language, they are learning mostly heritage, culture, history, and ancestry. In fact, these students are 'learning belonging', because the utility of such languages to young Sikkimese is now as markers of belonging rather than as vernaculars for daily use."[14]

However, in the last decade, the rise of the Internet has led to the emergence of more non-official revitalisation efforts that are definitely focused on encouraging vernacular language use and have led to expanded notions of who speaks Sikkimese Bhutia. In this article, we will explore the process through which these new revitalisation efforts have emerged, and thereby challenge legacies of colonialism present in historical materials and linguistic discussions of Sikkimese Bhutia. In more recent materials produced in Sikkimese Bhutia, Sikkimese Bhutia writers, musicians, filmmakers, and activists have put forward their visions of cultural fluency and morality by students, and other

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8 Yliniemi 2019, 6.

9 Mullard 2011.

10 McKay 2007; Rai 2015; Jha 1985.

11 Turin 2014, 388.

12 Sikkim Official Language Act 1977.

13 The official language of Sikkim is English, and Nepali and Hindi are also widely used. Other government recognised languages include Lepcha, Bhutia, Gurung, Limboo, Manger, Mukhia, Newari, Rai, Sherpa and Tamang.

14 Turin 2014, 389.

audiences, not only in how to speak like a Sikkimese Bhutia, but also how to behave like a Sikkimese Bhutia. This is a move towards encouraging the use of Sikkimese Bhutia as a daily vernacular, *as well as* a "marker of belonging" noted by Turin, is an example of the decolonisation of languages in this multilingual region, and demonstrates the vitality of Sikkimese Bhutia cultural production.

The Sikkimese Bhutia language has only recently been the subject of detailed study, with the release of linguist Juha Ylienimi's detailed study of Sikkimese Bhutia grammar.[15] In this article we will demonstrate three distinct phases in the development of modern Sikkimese Bhutia cultural production. Initially, colonial attempts to study Sikkimese Bhutia framed it as only worthy of study as a gateway language for studying Tibetan. In the second phase, connections between Sikkimese Bhutia and Tibetan were used in the creation of Sikkimese Bhutia learning materials in the 1970s. As the language became the focus of studies by non-Sikkimese linguists who branded it as "endangered," local communities also began to brand it as dying, declining, or economically irrelevant. However, these discourses have also helped to inspire its revival, or more pointedly, reclamation. The study of Sikkimese Bhutia language by linguistic scholars[16] has accompanied a resurgence in publicly produced language materials and language learning initiatives that complicate representations of Sikkimese Bhutia as endangered, as local scholars worked to present Sikkimese Bhutia as a modern language. In the third phrase, over the last decade the widespread use of the Internet has complicated these notions of modernity and led to a decolonisation of language materials as Sikkimese Bhutia writers and scholars have moved away from colonial, Tibetan, and linguistic models, and embraced local approaches to the making of identity. There is therefore a spectrum of movement between reclamation, revitalisation, and decolonisation.

Miami scholar of Indigenous linguistics Wesley Leonard has differentiated between language reclamation and revitalisation. He has stated that revitalisation "is a process focused on language itself wherein the goals and measures of a given effort revolve around variables such as the number of speakers,"[17] while reclamation is a "larger effort by a community to claim its right to speak a language and to set associated goals in response to community needs and perspectives."[18] The development of Sikkimese Bhutia cultural production between the 1970s and 2010s reflects a movement between revitalisation to reclamation in the production of different types of materials produced over time. In the 2010s, with the arrival of multiple Internet platforms there has been a decolonial approach that center community agents and concerns, rather than a "top-down" state-driven initiatives.[19] In Māori anthropologist Linda Tuhiwai Smith's groundbreaking book *Decolonising Metholodologies,* she has discussed how decolonisation takes place when "indigenous peoples become the researchers and not merely the researched…"

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15 Ylienimi 2019.

16 Yliniemi 2019; Turin 2014; Lee *et. al.* 2018; Lee *et. al.* 2019.

17 Leonard 2017, 19,

18 Leonard 2012, 359.

19 Leonard 2017, 19.

and questions are framed according to local concerns.[20] Language and education are important elements of life that are dominated by colonial policy in the Himalayan region, and even with the departure of the British, new national regimes have perpetuated hegemonic ideologies in the support of the nation, leading to layers of coloniality.[21] The representation of Sikkimese Bhutia as endangered or dying is a representation of how these hegemonies represent local cultures. More recent developments indicate the arrival of decolonised approaches to the production of Sikkimese Bhutia language materials, and this article has been inspired by research into other Himalayan languages that have traced similar trajectories.[22] In particularly, in Prem Bahadur Phyak's study of language regimes in Nepal, he discussed how decolonisation "is not a reversal of colonial language ideologies, but rather is, first about engaging in critical analysis of the construction, reductions, and impacts of those ideologies, and then the creation of new ideologies which address linguistic oppression and discrimination at the local level. Decolonisation liberates language policy actors from their own ideological domestication and supports their agency, advocacy, and activism towards creating space for grassroots multilingualism in education and other public spheres."[23]

Our study has taken place over almost two decades and is a collaboration from different perspectives: co-author Kalzang Dorjee is a native speaker of Sikkimese Bhutia and studies the cultural history of Sikkim; and co-author Amy has studied Sikkimese Bhutia as a second language since 2004. We have both together and separately collected materials and undertaken interviews with Sikkimese Bhutia teachers, scholars, language activists, and speakers on the topic of Sikkimese Bhutia since 2004. We have also engaged critically with Sikkimese Bhutia language materials including colonial manuals, textbooks, dictionaries, newspapers, radio shows, plays, the novel *Richhi* (Tsichudarpo 1996 [2003]), social media discussions, Youtube videos, and the film *Bya-kay*. An analysis of material produced over time demonstrates important transitions in the Sikkimese Bhutia public sphere. This examination will contribute to studies of the historical legacies of colonialism and local language use in the Himalayas, and will also engage with discussions around language revitalisation and reclamation work in India[24] and elsewhere.[25]

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20 Smith 1999, 193.

21 Anthropologist Carole McGranahan has discussed how Tibet has had different waves of colonisation by the British and Chinese successive governments in McGranahan 2007. This is also the case in the eastern Himalayas, as Sikkim has moved from being a British protectorate to being absorbed into India in 1975.

22 See for example Sherpa 2019 and Tso 2019. The development of Sikkimese Bhutia language movements cannot be understood as separate from similar types of revival and decolonial movements in Sikkim and the Eastern Himalayan region. The development and promotion of Lepcha language learning materials has been very influential on Sikkimese Bhutia and other communities. For reasons of length, this article does not contain a detailed discussion of this influence, but please see Lepcha forthcoming and Lepcha 2013 for excellent discussions of Lepcha language.

23 Phyak 2016, 31.

24 Gohain 2012; Mitchell 2009.

25 Leonard 2012, 2017; Hinton, Huss and Roche 2018.

Phase 1: Colonial Representations of Sikkimese Bhutia Language

The development of Sikkimese Bhutia cultural production in Sikkim has been accompanied by the development of other local language publics. These have been studied by anthropologists and geographers as exemplars of the ethnic politics present in Sikkim and India more generally, and used to examine local perspectives on themes that include democracy, ethnicity, identity, and secularism.[26] Sikkimese Bhutia language and literature has been relatively understudied in this explosion of interest. It is currently featured in a handful of ethnographies[27] and has been documented by several linguistics scholars.[28] While these studies have all provided rich considerations of how Sikkimese Bhutia language materials present the past in the creation of identity, less focus has been placed on the colonial histories of Sikkimese Bhutia language, and what these tell us about the multiplicity and complexity of Sikkimese Bhutia identities as they are presented in these materials.

Bya-kay presented an important moment in Sikkimese Bhutia cultural production for its visual as well as linguistic representation of Sikkimese Bhutia culture and language. It was the latest in a long series of experiments that connected local languages with new technologies. At the time when Sikkim had only recently been absorbed into India, local languages were being reconceptualised according to Indian state taxonomies. Among these State taxonomies were the allocation of Scheduled Tribe (ST) status, which guaranteed certain rights to specific ethnic communities.[29] The negotiation of who is recognised as a Tribe, as opposed to some other category, remains a heavily politicised process in Sikkim.[30] The promotion of language use is part of the way different ethnic groups receive ST status. However, in the case of Lepcha and Sikkimese Bhutia communities, both have been recognised as Indigenous since the colonial period, when colonial scholars began studying these languages.

The recognition of the Sikkimese Bhutia and Lepcha as "tribals", in opposition to the blanket identity of Nepali, dated back to the British administration in the nineteenth century. The Sikkimese Bhutia were originally represented as Bhotia in early materials, which connected groups throughout the Himalayas to Tibet, as the term Bhotia was derived from 'Bod', the Tibetan name for Tibet, and like other communities, Sikkimese Bhutias were held to have migrated from Tibet. This categorisation by British authorities reflected their interest at the time in Tibet as a central political and cultural force in the Himalayas. Art historian Clare Harris has examined how, as a result of this interest, hill peoples from Sikkim and the adjoining areas of Kalimpong and Darjeeling were often represented as debauched or inferior versions of "authentic" Tibetans.[31] Kalimpong

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26 Arora 2006, 2007; Balikci 2008; Bentley 2007; Chettri 2017; Gergan 2014; Shneiderman 2015; Vandenhelsken 2011, 2020.

27 Arora 2007; Balikci 2008; Steinmann 2003/2004; Vandenhelsken 2011.

28 Yliniemi 2019; Turin 2014.

29 For more on this process, see Middleton 2015.

30 Chettri 2017; Arora 2007; Vandenhelsken 2011.

31 Harris 2012, 90–102.

and Darjeeling, important tourist and market centers,[32] became centres for the study of Tibet, where colonial officers and European explorers made use of local scholarly labour with rare acknowledgement.[33] For this reason, the study of Sikkimese Bhutia language was also dismissed. The first detailed publication related to Sikkimese Bhutia language was *Manual of the Sikkim Bhutia Language or Denjong Ke* was written by Graham Sandberg (1851/2–1905), a British clergyman who spent decades in India and who developed a strong interest in Tibet and linguistics.[34] In a note to the reader at the beginning of the book, Sandberg's attitude towards Sikkimese Bhutia – as a step to learning Tibetan – was made clear. He wrote,

> The writer of these pages has often wondered why those who spend so many months yearly at Darjiling [*sic*] never seem to take the slightest interest in the language spoken by the bulk of the population there. They may not be aware that the uncouth-sounding chatter of the Bhutias about the place is in reality a dialect of one of the great literary languages of Asia. It differs in many particulars from Tibet but on examination will be found full of interest, and by no means so barborous a speech as is supposed. To acquire the Sikkim dialect might form a preliminary step to the study of Tibetan tongue, which has been so long and strangely neglected.[35]

Sandberg's manual remains informative for its representation of Sikkimese Bhutia as it was spoken at the time, as well due to its representation of colonial Anglo-Bhutia relations, especially in Darjeeling. Colloquial exercises include chapters such as "Engaging Coolies,"[36] and the "Lord's Prayer in De'n-Jong Ke."[37] But more than these particularities, the book represents the beginning of the circulation of colonial myths about Sikkimese Bhutia language, and specifically, the notion that it was merely a "dialect" of Tibetan, and not a language worthy of learning for the sake of its own merits.

The idea that Sikkimese Bhutias were nothing more than a type of Tibetan continued to circulate in materials produced by, and for, colonial knowledge networks. In the widely cited *Gazetteer of Sikkim*, in an overview of Sikkimese history the author H.H. Risley emphasised how "the Rajas of Sikhim were brought within the attraction of a civilisation far higher than their own…. Small wonder then, that their continual effort was to show themselves to be thorough Tibetans; that the Tibetan language came into use at their court, and that their chief advisers were drawn from Tibetan monasteries."[38]

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32 Sharma 2016.

33 Martin 2016.

34 Sandberg 1888 [1895].

35 Sandberg 1888 [1895], 7.

36 Sandberg 1888 [1895], 78.

37 Sandberg 1888 [1895], 9.

38 Risley 1894, ii–iii.

Recent scholarship on colonial representations of Lepcha communities has noted the detrimental impact that stereotypes about Lepchas being "shy, timid and slow" have had on State policy toward and treatment of Lepcha communities, and also on self-representation.[39] Sikkimese Bhutias were represented in colonial scholarship as Tibetans, with little consideration of their distinctive culture or language. Some of this representation was understandable, given the presence of classical Tibetan as the language of administration and statecraft; and the significance of the monasteries for the education for lay and monastic students before the advent of British schooling.[40] There was no distinctive category of Sikkimese Bhutia literature, and as with pre-modern Tibetan literary cultures, much of the literature that was produced was religious in nature.[41] However, the categorisation of Sikkimese Bhutia language as no more than a dialect of Tibetan was also misleading, due to the strength of oral traditions in Sikkimese Bhutia communities that used distinctive vocabulary and grammar from Tibetan language.

Phase 2: The Emergence of Local Narratives of Sikkimese Bhutia Language Cultural Production

Apart from Sandberg's volume, there were no other Sikkimese Bhutia language materials produced until the 1960s, when homegrown materials began to emerge in concert with government initiatives in both the Kingdom of Sikkim and in independent India. In 1962, All India Radio began to broadcast a Sikkimese Bhutia language program from its station in Kurseong, north Bengal. Its host, Yabchung Kazi, a Sikkimese Bhutia man from the Tharkapa family of Tashiding, West Sikkim, was given the charge of creating Sikkimese Bhutia language material that fitted with other AIR vernacular language programming: to be entertaining, but also informative in a way that would inculcate positive perceptions of India and Indian nationalism.[42] The timing was important, as following border disagreements between India and China in the 1960s, India was increasingly concerned about consolidating Sikkim's status as independent of China. These concerns contributed directly to the absorption of Sikkim in India in 1975. Within Sikkim, the King and his government were similarly concerned with promoting local culture as a way to proclaim Sikkim's independence.[43] As radio technology spread throughout the hills, vernacular programs in languages of the hills were seen by the Indian state as important way to reach local communities with government-approved materials, but were also seen by the Sikkimese government as advantageous for promoting local language use. AIR also had another motive for Kazi's show: they hoped it would function to counter Tibetan-language propaganda being broadcast from stations in Chinese-occupied Tibet over the border from Gangtok.[44]

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39 Gergan 2014.

40 Dewan 2012.

41 Jabb 2015.

42 Baruah 1983.

43 Hiltz 2003.

44 Kazi 2010.

Kazi imbued his daily one-hour show with creativity that far surpassed the brief given to him by AIR. In assembling his show, he traveled through rural Sikkim, interviewing and recording local people talking about a wide range of topics, including agriculture, traditional knowledge, and the weather. He gathered songs and music, and also wrote new songs, skits, and stories as well. In an interview, Kazi recalled that at the time there was not always Bhutia vocabulary available for news events and new technologies, so he also had to create new words.[45] The popularity of this show during the 1960s was represented in *Bya-kay*, where the father of the house was seen listening to Kazi's radio show.[46]

While Yabchung Kazi's show undoubtedly had an impact on spoken Sikkimese Bhutia language, written Sikkimese Bhutia language did not develop until 1977, with the passing of the Official Sikkim Language Act that was part of a set of legislation intended to fold Sikkim into the Indian nation. The responsibility to develop Bhutia language materials fell to Norden Tshering, the Inspector of Schools and former school teacher.[47] He began the process of developing an orthographic system for Sikkimese Bhutia language. He retained the Tibetan alphabet, as was the case in many other Himalayan states such as Bhutan and Ladakh where classical Tibetan had been the language of statecraft. As noted by linguist Bradford Lynn Chamberlain, the decision by state authorities to use classical Tibetan script to write "modern" languages in "multiscriptal environments" such as in Sikkim "is driven by forces that are ideological or practical in nature… Ideological focuses include acceptability and identity. Practical forces include accessibility and economics."[48] The ideological reasons in the case of Sikkim was that all of the Sikkimese Bhutia teachers involved in the creation of language materials came from Buddhist backgrounds where they had used classical Tibetan language, but this also represented the continuation of legacies from the British colonial period. The practical reason for retaining the Tibetan alphabet was that its use was already widespread among Sikkimese Bhutias, as monasteries had historically been the centres of education for lay and monastic students of all genders.[49] Teachers for this new curriculum were recruited from Sikkimese Bhutia communities, and especially from among young people who had passed Class 10 who had knowledge of Tibetan script. They were trained in Gangtok by Department of Education officials, and many members of this first generation of Bhutia language teachers are still active teachers.

These officials included Norden Tshering, who designed the first Sikkimese Bhutia language curriculum for government schools for Classes One through Eight with the orthography he had developed. In the 1980s, Palden Lachungpa adapted

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45 Kazi 2010.

46 *Bya-kay* 2017.

47 Takchungdarpa 2010.

48 Chamberlain 2008, 121. Bhutan provides an interesting case study to compare with Sikkim, as Bhutan also adopted a modified Tibetan alphabet in the creation of a national script for the national language of Dzongkha. See Nado 1982, van Driem 1994 and Phuntsho 2013: 53 for discussions of these developments.

49 Dewan 2012.

Tibetan textbook materials into Sikkimese Bhutia.[50] In 1984, Norden Tshering worked with Pema Rinzin Takchungdarpa, another schoolteacher who had been educated at Pemayangtse Monastery, to produce materials for Classes Nine through Twelve. With the implementation of the new government school system and universal education, very few students completed high school during this time period, and so for many years, these materials circulated without the need for higher levels or non-curricular materials.

Aside from school textbook materials, the only popular materials published in Sikkimese Bhutia language were newspapers. The first was the *Sikkim Herald* that continues to be produced by the Department of Information and Public Relations by the Government of Sikkim. The second, *Current Sikkim* (*Dato'i Denjong*) was published from 1993 until 2008.[51]

Phase 2 continued: Continuing and Contesting Legacies of Colonialism – The Theme of Decline in Linguistic Representations of Sikkimese Bhutia

The 1990s saw a lively cultural revitalisation effort among Sikkimese Bhutias in Sikkim, which has been discussed by anthropologist Anna Balikci in her in-depth ethnography of a northern Sikkimese village.[52] These efforts also feature in other anthropological studies that appeared based on this period by Vibha Arora, Brigitte Steinman, and Mélanie Vandenhelsken.[53] Language education was part of these efforts, and in 2000, the curriculum for undergraduate degrees in Bhutia was released. This revitalisation took place following decades of colonial impact on educational structures in Sikkim. At the end of the nineteenth century, many elite Sikkimese Bhutia families began to send their children to missionary schools in Kalimpong and Darjeeling to gain an English language education.[54] Non-monastic schools began to open in Sikkim that also taught in English. After Sikkim became part of India in 1975, many private schools run by missionaries also opened in Sikkim. Educating young people in English medium institutions was seen as necessary for them to gain skills to participate in the new economy. Since the 1980s, education, urbanisation, and the multilingual nature of Sikkimese society has led Sikkimese Bhutia to become a diglossic language.[55] In contemporary Sikkim it is very common for even fluent Sikkimese Bhutia speakers to code switch with the other dominant languages of English and Nepali.

Linguistic anthropologist Mark Turin led a Linguistic Survey of Sikkim from 2004 that provided important insight into contemporary language use in Sikkim by surveying

50 Ylineimi 2019, 10.

51 Yleinemi 2019, 11.

52 Balikci 2008.

53 Arora 2007; Steinman 2003/2004; Vandenhelsken 2011.

54 Dewan 2012; McKay 2007.

55 Maconi 2008.

over 17,000 students and teachers.[56] This Survey was built on the legacy of colonial categories related to language and ethnicity, but it had important conclusions that have been influential in the formation of state patronage of language education initiatives. Among the respondents on Turin's survey, seven percent of those surveyed responded that they could speak Sikkimese Bhutia, and ten percent responded that Sikkimese Bhutia was their mother tongue.[57] Turin highlighted this discrepancy, connecting it to the socio-economic status of Sikkimese Bhutia since the 1960s and urbanisation, and also to the politicisation of "linguistic belonging" for "tribal" communities.[58]

Contemporary discussions in Sikkim regarding the position of Sikkimese Bhutia language are inflected by class status,[59] since middle and upper class Sikkimese Bhutias express more anxiety about endangerment and cultural loss, while rural Sikkimese Bhutias often retain high levels of fluency and language knowledge. In interviews we carried out with Sikkimese Bhutia speakers, we noted an apparent internalisation of ideas circulated initially by Sandberg, including that Bhutia is a "dialect" of Tibetan and that Tibetan is a more "authentic" language in which to learn the study of Buddhism. The issue of vernacular, non-elite access to Buddhism and use of Sikkimese Bhutia in non-religious contexts has not been discussed as widely within Sikkim, though several prominent linguists have classified Sikkimese as "vulnerable" and "endangered."[60] These classifications have impacted Sikkimese Bhutia conceptions of their language health and continued colonial legacies. However, they have also been important for mobilising state and private resources for language revification, and added impetus for contemporary young people to participate in learning initiatives and communities.

Phase 2 continued: Representations of Sikkimese Bhutia as a Modern Language

In response to these changes, non-official Sikkimese Bhutia language materials started to circulate in late 1990s. This saw the development of an actual public sphere outside of school curriculum, where Sikkimese Bhutias who could not read or write Sikkimese Bhutia language, or who had not undertaken the curriculum, also participated in cultural production by reclaiming language learning and use. Linguistic anthropologist Wesley Leonard has discussed how Native American moves towards reclaiming and eventually decolonising language use has been "a process which entailed identifying and resisting the imposition of Western values and knowledge systems that contribute to the subjugation of Indigenous peoples."[61] In the Sikkimese context, Western values and knowledge systems were promulgated during the colonial period, and had continued after Sikkim became part of India as Sikkimese Bhutias were categorised as

56 Turin 2014, 382.

57 Turin 2014, 384.

58 Turin 2014, 385–386.

59 Turin 2014, 393.

60 Turin 2014, 384; Yliniemi 2019, 12–14.

61 Leonard 2017: 16.

"tribals," and Sikkimese Bhutia language represented as endangered. In this instance, Sikkimese Bhutia language educators and activists resisted these representations by promoting language use. Organisations such as Khyerab Yargay Tshogpo produced materials such as music cassettes that contributed to a rise in cultural identity. In the early 2000s, several dictionaries,[62] and music video VCDs appeared. One of the most prolific songwriters and performers from this period was school teacher Bhaichung Tsichudarpo from East Sikkim. Tsichudarpo recorded songs, produced music videos, and also wrote the first ever novel in Bhutia, *Richhi* (*Hope*) in 1996.[63] He is also an astute cultural entrepreneur, as he has become more widely known for his astrological calculation publications that he sells as printed one-page annual calendars. The release of *Bya-kay* in 2017 was the latest in Tsichudarpa's continued efforts to use new technologies to promote language use.

The rise of interest among young Bhutias in learning Bhutia language has been accompanied by the growth of research on Bhutia language and culture. In 2019, linguist Juha Ylineimi completed a doctorate outlining Bhutia grammar, following the publication of several articles.[64] His dissertation includes a survey of Bhutia language production and estimates that at present there are around thirty active Sikkimese Bhutia language authors.[65]

Phase 2 continued: Representations of Sikkimese Bhutia as Both Uniquely Sikkimese and Trans-Himalayan

Most of these authors are Sikkimese Bhutia language teachers, and write to produce materials for the government education curriculum. These materials are therefore pedagogical in nature, and this pedagogy goes beyond presenting linguistic standardisation to promote specific forms of everyday identity and behavior.

Textbooks written for Sikkimese Bhutia language students include vocabulary that is specific to Sikkimese Bhutia communities, and over time, this has included variations on spelling from classical Tibetan terms. One of the most controversial and distinctive elements of Sikkimese Bhutia orthography was the *tsha-lag*, which functions "to mark that the members of consonant cluster do not merge into one pronunciation, as they would do in Classical Tibetan spelling, but are pronounced separately."[66] This letter was developed by Pema Rinzin Takchungdarpa in the 1980s, and generated great debate among scholars in Sikkim. Scholars trained in Buddhist monasteries found the creation of a new letter disturbing, since it represented a movement away from classical Tibetan orthography and challenged conceptions of classical Tibetan letters

62 Ylineimi 2019, 10–11.

63 Tsichudarpo 1996 [2003].

64 Yliniemi 2018; 2017; 2019.

65 Ylineimi 2019, 10–11.

66 Yliniemi 2019, 28.

as inherently sacred, and thereby historical discourses that subsumed Sikkimese Bhutia within Tibetan. Pema Rinzin Takchungdarpa argued that the tsha-lag was necessary to represent a sound specific to Sikkimese Bhutia language, and was therefore part of the assertion of a local linguistic and literary identity.[67] Since public debates in the 1980s and 90s, the tsha-lag has continued to be used by Sikkimese Bhutia authors.

As has been noted in other studies of Sikkimese language and culture, Sikkimese Bhutia language textbook materials are concerned with presenting specific local narratives related to Sikkimese Bhutia identity and history that complicated historical ties to Tibet. A vivid example of this is the *Denjong Chharab* (*History of Sikkim*), a textbook assigned to Class Ten-level students released in 1986.[68] As noted by anthropologist Brigitte Steinmann, the *Denjong Chakrab* promotes a specific history of Sikkim.[69] This history of Sikkim provides an overview of "how the Valley of Rice came into existence" by outlining the genealogy of the kings of Sikkim. This history begins with the visit of Guru Rinpoche to the "Hidden Land" (*beyul*) in the eighth century. During this visit, he left a prophecy that Sikkim would become a shelter for Buddhists fleeing from political disturbances in coming centuries.[70] These Buddhists were led to Sikkim by Treasure Discoverers (*terton*), who had karmic connections with Guru Rinpoche and came to "open" the valley of rice for Buddhists to reside in. In the conventional Sikkimese history represented in the *Denjong Chharab*, this process of settlement begins with Khye Bumsa, a chieftain with a lineage connecting back to eastern Tibet who arrived in Sikkim in the thirteenth century. When he arrived in Sikkim, he met with Thekongthek, a local Lepcha leader, and made a vow to the mountain deity, Kanchendzonga to live peacefully as equals with the Lepcha community and the beings of the landscape.[71] While these details appear to emphasise Sikkimese ties to Tibet, the rest of the narrative is more complicated. It continues with an overview of the very distinctive local Sikkimese Bhutia clan system.[72] In following centuries, Tertons continued to arrive in Sikkim, culminating in the arrival of Lhatsun Namkhai Jikme in the seventeenth century. Lhatsun met with two other Tibetan yogis in Sikkim, Ngadak Sempo Phuntsok Rigzin and Kathok Kuntu Zangpo, and they enthroned the first king of the Sikkimese Bhutia Namgyal dynasty, Phuntsok Namgyal, in 1642.[73] But even as the Tertons appear to tie Sikkim to Tibet, the emphasis on details related to the Namgyal dynasty are distinct and local. The appearance of this version of Sikkimese history in a school textbook is consistent with forms of Sikkimese nationalism circulated by

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67 Takchungdarpa 2010.

68 Takchungdarpa 1986.

69 Steinmann 2003/2004, 151–152.

70 Takchungdarpa 1986, 1–5.

71 Takchungdarpa 1986, 5–12.

72 Takchungdarpa 1986, 14–16.

73 Mullard's study of Sikkimese historiography provides more detailed analysis about the representations of this period of state formation. Mullard 2011.

the Chogyal Palden Thondup and his supporters in the 1960s and 70s.[74] The *Denjong Chharab* continues the presentation of Sikkimese history that corresponds with the lineage of the Sikkimese Bhutia kings, providing a chapter for the reign of each king until the reign of Thondup Namgyal, the twelfth.[75] However, since the *Denjong Chharab* was produced after 1975, the ending presents a naturalised absorption of Sikkim into India. This chapter focuses on the appearance of the institution of the Chief Minister as head of state,[76] which was necessary since the publication of this work was sponsored by state initiatives. The book has not been updated since 1986 and continues to be reprinted, with evidence of its state patronage intact.

While Sikkimese Bhutia literary materials have historically had strong local influences, they have also always had translocal ties. When Sikkimese Bhutia scholars developed the orthography for Sikkimese Bhutia language, they used the Classical Tibetan alphabet. This decision has entangled Sikkimese Bhutia literary and cultural production with Tibetan literary history, an issue common in other contemporary Himalayan states such as Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh in India and Kingdom of Bhutan that have historical connections to Tibetan-derived forms of Buddhism. These ties challenge British colonialism and contemporary geopolitical claims by India and China in these regions, but also complicate local identity production. Anthropologist Swargajyoti Gohain wrote of the movement in western Arunachal Pradesh for Bhoti, or Tibetan, language to be adopted in schools as a mother tongue language. She argued that this call for language recognition for Bhoti, instead of for Monpa or another regional language, gestured towards a "Himalayan imaginative geography" that connected Arunachali Buddhists with other parts of the Himalayas.[77] The use of Classical Tibetan script for Sikkimese Bhutia is another example of this shared imaginary with other Himalayan Buddhist communities. It is also evidenced in textbook materials. In Class 10, students are required to learn Tibetan astrology as part of their Sikkimese Bhutia curriculum. In the foreword to the textbook, the unnamed Joint Director of Language Education justified this addition to the curriculum by writing that astrology is a "distinctive form of knowledge that is rarely taught outside of monasteries and needs to be studied by more lay people."[78]

Phase 2 continued: Bhaichung Tsichudarpo's Sikkimese Bhutia as a Language of Buddhist Modernity

However, the representation of Buddhism in Sikkimese Bhutia language materials and media is by no means uniform and complicates the movement in the development of Sikkimese Bhutia language materials towards decolonisation. Author Bhaichung Tsichudarpo's longer length works, the novel *Richhi* and drama *Namtog,* both contain

74 Hiltz 2003.

75 Takchungdarpa 1986, 26–79.

76 Takchungdarpa 1986, 79–89.

77 Gohain 2012, 338–340.

78 Dakpa and Takchungdarpa 1995 [2013], 1.

very specific representations of both Sikkimese Bhutia identity and Buddhist identity. As with Tsichudarpo's film *Bya-kay*, they also both present specific pedagogical intentions that can be interpreted as responsive to the challenges of modernity in Sikkim. Tsichudarpo's presentation of modern identity is representative of an internalisation of modernist discourse and another element of the continued legacy of colonialism in the region.

Tsichudarpo's novel, *Richhi* (or in English, *Hope*) is the only long form Sikkimese Bhutia language novel that has been published to date. Published originally in 1996, and reprinted in 2003, the narrative outlined a love story between a village teacher named Chokyi and her student's older brother, Karma. The novel plotted their meeting and courtship before they were separated when the boy went to study medicine. A family-arranged marriage became a further barrier to their love when Chokyi entered into a marriage arranged by her parents. Fate cruelly brought the lovers together once again when Chokyi became ill and was assigned to Karma's care in the hospital. Out of a sense of shame, Chokyi behaved as though she did not remember Karma. At the end of the book, she was taken for treatment for Delhi, and she and Karma were once again separated.

Richhi featured a conservative central social message, as Chokyi obediently followed her parents' wishes by marrying their ideal groom. The novel did not question her decision, and in fact uses the Buddhist concept of karma to explain why they did not end up together. Following their reunion in the hospital, Karma observed that,

> [Chokyi] must have recognized me yesterday, but because of the situation, even if she did recognize me she would have pretended not to. The Precious Jewel knows! What a situation! What bad luck! In the end, even if we met each other, we couldn't even say a single word. What sort of unwholesome merit must we have collected in the past! The Three Jewels know! My heart has become like a feather that has been blown away by the wind; it is so light that it travels from place to place, finding no resting place.[79]

Karma understood that events were predetermined by "unwholesome merit" and invoked the Jewels of Buddhism to cope with his heartache. This theme of predetermination continued through to the conclusion of the novel, where Chokyi hoped fervently that she could be reunited with Karma in their next lives, and took solace in his professional success.[80] The invocation of karma and karmic connection at the end of the novel emphasised the lack of agency Chokyi and Karma had in deciding the outcome of their relationship. The novel did not present any critique or alternative. Instead, both characters were shown to be at peace with their lives.

The final representation of the authority of karma in *Richhi* does not correspond to most modernist readings of Buddhism. Religious studies scholar David McMahan has written of the construction of "Buddhist modernism" around the world following

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79 Tsichudarpo 1996 [2003], 171–172; our translation.

80 Tsichudarpo 1996 [2003], 173; our translation.

the nineteenth century that promoted Buddhism as rational, scientific and democratic.[81] Tsichudarpo's idea of karma here was not democratic, instead functioning as encouragement for readers to comply with family decisions. But Buddhist modernist trends are found elsewhere in Tsichudarpo's literature. In particular, his play *Namtog* (*Superstition*)[82] outlined a clear demarcation between what the characters considered to be effective, rational Buddhism and superstitious traditions that should be eradicated. Tsichudarpo's pedagogical intent was clear from the prologue of the play, where he discussed that he was inspired to write *Namtog* due to his concern about the continued tradition of animal sacrifice, which he saw as a superstitious. Tsichudarpo critiqued his community, stating that "at a time when researchers, scientists and astronomers have reached the moon, and people can fly in space [i.e., in aeroplanes] and move across the earth, we still believe in superstition, are amazed by superstition, and place our hopes in superstition. This is a big mistake! Since we are Buddhist, we should not believe in worldly deities, Bon and other things such as *bongthing*, and the ideas of non-believers."[83]

Namtog related the story of a family seeking medical care for their patriarch. In it, Palmo, the patient's wife, had relied on the local village shaman, or *bongthing*, Norgyay, to treat her husband during a long illness. Her husband's sister, Yudron and her husband Rabzang arrived to visit and discovered that the patient had become extremely ill. Rabzang demanded that he be taken to the hospital immediately. Norgyay, the *bongthing*, discouraged this, instead preferring to engage in a lengthy and convoluted ritual. The patient's wife remained torn, and eventually Yudron and Rabzang convinced her to try taking her husband to the hospital. The *bongthing* left after absolving himself of any responsibility if the patient's health declined. Once the patient arrived at the hospital, Dr. Dolma and a nurse engaged in a lengthy check up, and diagnosed him with a swollen liver. After several days of glucose drips and injections (that are all relayed in painstaking detail) the patient improved. After thirty-two days he was allowed to return home, and everyone was happy with the outcome.

The style of the play illustrated its pedagogical intent. The pacing was slow and scenes were detailed. Especially noteworthy is the scene where the patient arrived at the hospital for treatment and was examined by Dr. Dolma in great detail. These details suggest to us that the intended audience may be villagers like the patient and his wife, who were depicted as fearful and unsure about medicine. Ignorance was also thoroughly condemned. At one point early in the drama, the patient cried out when receiving an IV line, "Aiyo! You people are trying to kill me!"[84] This comical response was intended as a criticism of the irrational fear of medicine.

This attitude towards shamanic religious practice was also demonstrated in the characterisation of major protagonists in the play. The *bongthing*, Norgyay, was shown

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81 McMahan 2008.

82 Tsichudarpo 1997 [2003].

83 Tsichudarpo 1997 [2003], 2.

84 Tsichudarpo 1997 [2003], 28; our translation.

as comical. He bumbled about, coughing and spitting, and warned that the patient would deteriorate if taken to the hospital due to the influence of spirits.[85] Rural communities were implicated as perpetuating these practices due to ignorance. The patient's wife, for example, was shown as indecisive and even attributed her husband's initial improvement to the *bongthing*'s care.[86] Her change of mind was not actually depicted in the drama. Instead, the narrative skipped ahead to the day the patient was released from hospital, and by this point, she was emphatic about the benefits of modern medicine.[87]

However, *Namtog* did become knottier at the end. Here, a visiting family member Aku Tshering embarked on a long discourse about the uselessness of *bongthing* and pig sacrifices, before suddenly concluding that Buddhism also offered opportunities for clearing obstacles through ritual, and that through faith in the lama, followed by a hospital visit, all illnesses could be cleared.[88] According to this uncle then, Buddhism, or "the Buddha's teachings" (*nang po sanggyay ki chos*), were clearly not superstition, but instead were compatible with scientific rationalism and medicine. Buddhist practices such as doing smoke offerings (*sang*) or oblations (*serkyem*), which were forms of ritual practice, were seen by the uncle as rational.[89] His reasoning behind what separates these rituals from the *bongthing*'s ritual were not entirely clear. The patient agreed with Aku Tshering, saying that because of the widespread use of animal sacrifice, many villagers were dying before their time and needed to have their "eyes opened."[90] Here then, Buddhism was constructed as compatible with modernity in contrast with animal sacrifice. The problematic element of how this plays out however is that in reality in Sikkim many Buddhist lamas and practitioners are also very much tied to these superstitious activities.[91] Who then are intended to be the Buddhists that the play refers to? What type of Buddhism is rational Buddhism? The play ended with a critique of villagers, as the patient laments that he and his community would never progress as long as they kept sacrificing pigs and going to *bongthing* when they got sick. Along with this, a dialogue between the patient, his wife and a visiting uncle toward the end of the play also repeatedly affirmed how wonderful medicine is, and how useless shamans were. Together, these details conveyed a strong message that denigrated shamanic practices, gathered together here under the rubric of "superstition" or *namtog*, in favor of medicine, and more generally, science and modernity. These pedagogical concerns that were intended to celebrate a specific form of modernity demonstrated the continued valorisation of colonial epistemologies in Sikkimese communities.

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85 Tsichudarpo 1997 [2003], 17.

86 Tsichudarpo 1997 [2003], 31.

87 Tsichudarpo 1997 [2003], 36, 38.

88 Tsichudarpo 1997 [2003], 41.

89 Tsichudarpo 1997 [2003], 39.

90 Tsichudarpo 1997 [2003], 40.

91 Balikci 2008.

Phase 3: #learnlhokay! And Decolonise Sikkimese Bhutia: The Emergence of Multiple Sikkimese Bhutia Public Spheres

Tsichudarpo's critiques of what he perceived to be backwards behaviour were not veiled or subtle, and represented a particular vision for how to speak and behave as a modern Sikkimese Bhutia. Tsichudarpo's concerns with cultural fluency have continued to feature in his work across mediums. When the trailer for *Bya-kay* was uploaded to Youtube in 2017, it was enthusiastically celebrated by participants in the Sikkimese Bhutia language online community for its representation of tradition, with several viewers commenting that it seemed "more like a documentary."[92]

However, the idea of a singular Sikkimese Bhutia culture or language as imagined by Tsichudarpo with his documentary-style exposition and presentation has been challenged since the early 2000s, with the emergence of an online cultural production among Sikkimese Bhutia speakers, students, and activists. There have been criticisms by scholars of communication and sociologists of presenting the Internet as the site of a utopian public sphere in which all sections of a society can present their perspectives, due to the different structural inequalities of technological access, literacy and other factors that prevent equal access to the Internet.[93] However, in Sikkim internet access using smartphones in widespread, and the innovative adoption of different platforms have led to a reclamation of Sikkimese Bhutia language initiatives by community members who are not perceived experts, such as scholars and teachers writing for government school students. Groups dedicated to Sikkimese Bhutia language use have sprung up on Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, and at present these forums are the mostly lively representatives of a Sikkimese Bhutia public sphere. This growth in the diversity of language materials, and public interest in and demand for them, connects to broader global trends among minoritised languages. As Kristen Tcherneshoff and Daniel Bögree Udell have written, due to increased awareness of linguistic diversity and concern about loss, "minoritised peoples are proactively reclaiming ancestral languages and rebuilding their cultures, especially when access to media creation is available."[94] Online Sikkimese Bhutia cultural production at present demonstrates elements of a decolonial approach. Although it is hosted on Internet platforms created by corporations, the different mediums that are being accessed, used and responded to by Sikkimese Bhutia users allow for the emergence of multiple epistemologies and forms of expression that challenge state institutions and colonial legacies.[95]

A significant figure in the creation of online forums for sharing Sikkimese Bhutia knowledge is scholar-activist Thupten Palzang, a faculty member at Gyalshing Government College in Gyalshing, West Sikkim. Like many other young Sikkimese Bhutia language teachers in Sikkim, Thupten Palzang is a scholar with a monastic Buddhist background from West Sikkim and possesses a strong command of classical Tibetan as well as Sikkimese Bhutia. His innovative approaches to creating Sikkimese

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92 *Bya-kay* 2017.

93 Loader and Mercea 2011, 12.

94 Tcherneshoff and Udell 2019, 106.

95 Wesley 2017, 20.

Bhutia materials online allow him to reach audiences far outside of his classrooms, and demonstrate how Bhutia language innovators have continued to incorporate new technologies into the promotion of language use. Thupten Palzang's initiatives, linked together under the title of "Denjong ki Lhokay" (meaning Sikkim's Southern Language) and the hashtag #learnlhokay! include recording Youtube videos where he teaches Sikkimese Bhutia vocabulary and sentence construction,[96] sharing wedding videos and travel logs, and running Facebook and Instagram accounts where he circulates materials related to Sikkimese Bhutia language and culture.[97] These forums feature links to each other. The most popular online forum is a WhatsApp group, where people upload speeches, words, and questions about vocabulary and pronunciation and share them. This forum also features visual materials, particularly related to Buddhism and Sikkim's landscape, and shared news items of interest. While Thupten Palzang's original Youtube videos inspired the beginnings of these sharing communities, over time they have far expanded beyond language sharing. As with Sikkimese Bhutia language curriculum materials, these social media platforms reinforce certain ways of being Bhutia, especially with the strong emphasis on Buddhism-related materials, including the circulation of advertising for Buddhist monastic festivals and Youtube videos of prayers. The WhatsApp platform still also continues to have most of its material generated by older Sikkimese Bhutia speakers and teachers. Users have mentioned to us their anxiety over posting publicly on this forum, least they be shamed for making a mistake, and it therefore can be interpreted as a further medium for language policing.

Additionally, the ubiquity of Buddhist-related materials exhibits the continued complicated connections between Tibetan Buddhist monastic literary approaches to language and literature and Bhutia language and literature from earlier periods of Sikkimese Bhutia language production. The first generation of Sikkimese Bhutia language teachers were made up of men and women who were able to read and write in Tibetan because they had mostly grown up in families with monastic ties. However, the second generation, trained from the 1990s, included an increasing number of male teachers recruited from Buddhist institutions such as Nyingma Shedra in Gangtok, where they had received their education in Tibetan language. According to teachers who we interviewed, this has influenced the creation of official Sikkimese Bhutia curricular materials, as terms and orthography are often adopted from classical and contemporary Tibetan language materials.

However, the liveliness of the online public sphere disrupts the colonial legacy and Tibetan-isation of Sikkimese Bhutia language production. Social media platforms in particular allow participants to challenge dominant narratives and move away from the "positional superiority" of Tibetan.[98] For example, since 2019, many of the photographs shared on the DenjongLhokay Instagram page include people uploading photographs of themselves and friends wearing Denjong ki Lhokay t-shirts. The merchandising of Denjong ki Lhokay as a distinctive brand is a vivid yet complex example of "performing

96 Youtube.

97 Denjongki Lhokay Channel Youtube; Denjongke Lhokay Instagram; Denjongke Lho kay Facebook.

98 Leonard 2017, 20.

ethnicity" in Sikkim.[99] But these photographs also demonstrate the multiplicity of Sikkimese Bhutia language enthusiasts, as mixed-race and non-Sikkimese Bhutias are also featured in images.

Additionally, the WhatsApp group allows people from throughout Sikkim to share vocabulary and pronunciation practices from their communities. This challenges attempts at language standardisation. In interviews with older urban Sikkimese Bhutia language speakers outside of educational institutions, language standardisation was a common point of anxiety, with debates over whether some areas in Sikkim speak more "pure" Sikkimese Bhutia than others. However, young people who use WhatsApp do not have such concerns, and report that one of the elements of the group they find most valuable is the access to different forms of pronunciation. Younger Sikkimese Bhutia people who have studied outside of Sikkim in Delhi, Kolkata and South India report that they befriended students from around Sikkim and found great diversity in Bhutia languages spoken between different regions of Sikkim. WhatsApp allows people to share different vocabulary and forms of pronunciation, and participants can select what they find to be the most "authentic" information shared. Other online forums continue to appear that are further complicating and inspiring multivocality, and allow for code-switching and less policing of "orthodox" language use.

Conclusion

The online use of Sikkimese Bhutia language outside of government school and monastic contexts demonstrates the way that part of the contemporary engagement with Sikkimese Bhutia goes beyond ethnic politics and colonial legacies. The "ethnicisation" of Sikkimese Bhutia has also been challenged by the demographics of Sikkimese Bhutia language learners. In interviews with west Sikkimese Bhutia language teachers between 2013 and 2020, many noted the rising number of ethnically Sherpa students opting to study Sikkimese Bhutia language in government schools due to the comparatively lower number of Sherpa language teachers and courses available in the state. This was in perceived contrast to the preference of ethnic Sikkimese Bhutia students for learning Nepali as their second language. Additionally, Sikkimese Bhutia people in mixed race relationships and families have found online resources valuable for learning more about their partners and parents. Rural communities that have been marginalised by State-level discourses of modernity are now emerging as ideal sites for Sikkimese Bhutia language learning and reclamation. These different examples all demonstrate that there is no longer one authority capable of participating in Sikkimese Bhutia cultural production, and no one way to be Sikkimese Bhutia. This also exhibits a movement away from colonial constructions of Sikkimese Bhutia as a "dialect" or "gateway" for learning Tibetan language, and from even modernist perceptions and state programs that promote the revitalisation of a standardised Sikkimese Bhutia. The decolonial move that has taken place since the emergence of the online Sikkimese Bhutia public sphere allows for multiple forms of Sikkimese Bhutia language to circulate.

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99 Chettri 2017; Shneiderman 2015.

The liveliness of these initiatives challenge narratives of Sikkimese Bhutia as "endangered"; however, these narratives, circulated by often well-intentioned state officials and linguists are also important, as they support the distribution of state infrastructure and funding for language revitalisation which in the future may interact more with unofficial initiatives of reclamation. As time goes on, it will be interesting to see if non-Buddhist Sikkimese Bhutia also become involved in Sikkimese Bhutia language activities, as has been the case with the Lepcha communities of Sikkim, North Bengal and eastern Nepal. It will also be interesting to see if these public initiatives inspire more learning of Sikkimese Bhutia language by non-ethnically Sikkimese Bhutia people. At present, the Sikkimese Bhutia online public sphere and other forms of cultural production all demonstrate ways that Sikkimese Bhutia speakers are evading attempts at homogenisation, engaging in forms of decolonisation, and enriching ways to speak, and be, Sikkimese Bhutia.

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MALAY MIGRANTS IN AUSTRALIA: A LONGUE DURÉE PERSPECTIVE, 17th–21st CENTURIES

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Introduction

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census of Population and Housing in 2016 has it that there are at least 46,079 people of Malay ancestry.[1] The historically significant and rapidly growing Malay population in Australia has been the subject of a number of studies. However, they are largely segmented, in that such studies are either centred primarily around the Maccasans, the roles and experiences of indentured workers in Australia's pearling industry, Malays in islands surrounding islands of Australia, or those who settled as migrants in Western Australia.[2] In recent times, the motivations and experiences of recent Malay migrants from Malaysia to Australia has been the subject, albeit an isolated one, of critical enquiry.[3] Contemporary studies on Malays in Australia have mostly been focussed on Malaysian migrants with little nuance and focus on Malays from other parts of Southeast Asia. No scholar has attempted to show the long and seamless presence which Malays have had in Australia stretching back from the seventeenth century into the twenty-first century.

This article fills the gap in the literature by providing a synergistic and *longue durée* account of the ventures of Malays to Australia and the nearby islands. We develop the argument that the growth of localised and cosmopolitan Malay communities in various phases of Australian history was borne out of four driving forces: economic

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1 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), "Census of Population and Housing: Reflecting Australia – Stories from the Census, 2016 – Cultural Diversity".

2 See for example Marshall Clark and Sally K. May (eds.), *Macassan History and Heritage: Journeys, Encounters and Influences* (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2013); Julia Martínez and Adrian Vickers, *The Pearl Frontier: Indonesian Labor and Indigenous Encounters in Australia's Northern Trading Network* (United States: University of Hawaii Press, 2015); Wan Hashim Wan Teh and A. Halim Ali, *Rumpun Melayu Australia Barat* (Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1999).

3 For a review of these works, see: Asmah Haji Omar, *The Malays in Australia: Language, Culture, Religion* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2008).

exchanges, inter-cultural mixing, the formation of social contracts and, above all, open migration policies. Further, we assert that what are currently referred to as "Australian Malays" or "Malays in Australia" were actually a composite of sub-ethnic groups hailing from different parts of Southeast Asia. These sub-ethnic groups may or may not see themselves as "Malays" upon their arrivals to Australia but were soon integrated with and/or incorporated into that wider ethnic category.

More to the point, we are conscious of the contestations over and elusiveness of the term "Malay" or "Malays" to describe the various ethnic subgroups that travelled into and eventually stayed in Australia over four centuries. In what follows, we explain – where necessary – the changing definitions of Malays, where they came from and how they came to be identified as such. A quick note about the usage of the term 'Malay' is in order here. Before the nineteenth century, the term was used by both natives in the region and also travellers to connote a group of people who spoke the Malay language and trace their origins to the Malay world, a geographical space that consists of what we know today as Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Southern Thailand and Southern Philippines. This open-ended and linguistic understanding of Malay soon morphed into a racialised term following the advent of colonialism in Southeast Asia which included communities that came from Java and even creole Indians and Arabs who mingled and saw themselves as part of the Malay world. Upon the end of colonial rule in the 1950s onwards, the racialised definition of Malay persisted and is still used today in the Australian censuses and scholarly works.[4]

Indeed, in making the case for a longue durée history of Malays in Australia, we are cognizant of Anthony Milner's cogent point:

> Just who is 'Malay' and what it is to be 'Malay' remain open questions, and an attempt to establish a narrative over time for the 'Malay people' would confront profound disjunctures. Which of the many constituent 'Malays' should be given prominence, how do we disentangle one narrative from another, how can we convey lines of continuity where there appears only rupture? But if such concerns frustrate the task of giving an account of 'the Malays', it is this diversity and contention that makes 'Malay studies' so interesting, and ought properly to be our central concern.[5]

With the above observations in mind, our approach then is to transcend the protracted debates over Malayness in order to highlight the continuities and changes experienced by Malay migrants as they find their place within an evolving Australian multicultural domain. Covering more than four hundred years, we integrate primary sources such as censuses, newspaper articles and other official reports along with ethnographic studies

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4 For a comprehensive discussion over shifting notions of Malayness, see: Leonard Y. Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree: Trade and Ethnicity in the Straits of Malacca* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008) and Anthony C. Milner, *The Malays* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008).

5 Anthony C. Milner, *The Malays* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), 16.

and other secondary sources. In providing such a panoramic view, we hope to generate more interest on the studies of Malays in Australia, especially the immigrants from Singapore that are rapidly increasing in numbers in the last three decades.

To demonstrate our arguments, we have structured this article in three parts. The first part discusses trade and inter-cultural mixing between the aborigines and the Macassans (1700s to 1906) as well as Malays active involvement in the pearling industry under colonial rule (1870s to 1949). We analyse the establishment of contact, marriage and economic relations between Macassan seafarers and the indigenous population along the northern coast of Australia as well as the roles of indentured Malay workers who were sent and/or travelled to Australia to work in the lucrative pearling industry. The second part examines the social contracts with white creole rulers and community-formation on the islands which later on became part of contemporary Australia (1826 until the 1980s). The creation of a Malay communities on Cocos-Keeling and Christmas Islands followed by their migration to Western Australia is covered here.[6] Finally, we explore the localisation of Malays in multicultural Australia (1950s until the present day). The mass migration of Malays in cities such as Perth, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane was made possible the decline of the White Australia policy in the second half of the 20th century and the celebration of multiculturalism by the state.

The Macassan Trepangers and Malays in the Pearling Industry

Researchers generally agree that the economic interactions and inter-cultural mixing between Macassan seafarers and the indigenous Australian population along the northern coast of the country had already flourished by the time the First Fleet arrived in New South Wales in 1788.[7] Like many colonial labels that over-simplify ethnic, linguistic and cultural identities, the term 'Macassan' had been used (and is still used in academic studies) to refer to the seafarers originating from the port of Makassar in southern Sulawesi. These seafarers made annual trips to the northern coast of present-day Australia, primarily for the collection of *trepang* (sea cucumbers), or *teripang* in Indonesian language. They included ethnic Makassarese, Bugis, Butonese and Bajau peoples who were described by the European merchants then as "intelligent traders."[8] The Macassans would leave the port of Makassar in December in large wooden sailing vessels known as praus (from 'perahu' in Malay and Bahasa Indonesia). They travelled with the northwest monsoon winds to reach the northern coasts of the Kimberley and Arnhem Land, or "Kayu Jawa" and "Marege'" respectively, as the Macassans described these places. While waiting for the reverse southeast monsoon winds to bring them back to Makassar in three to four months, Macassans caught, cooked and dried the

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6 Different terms have been used to identify the islands throughout history, including 'Cocos-Keeling Islands' and 'Cocos (Keeling) Islands'. For the sake of consistency, we use 'Cocos Keeling Islands' throughout this article unless used otherwise in citation.

7 Marshall Clark and Sally K. May, "Understanding the Macassans: A Regional Approach", in *Macassan History and Heritage: Journeys, Encounters and Influences*, (eds.) Marshall Clark and Sally K. May (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2013), 2–3.

8 "Transaction of the Statistical Society," *South Australian Register (Adelaide)*, 1 January 1842.

trepang. These were done with the assistance of the indigenous population. The trepang, along with other valuable trade commodities such as pearl shells, were brought back to Makassar and sold to Chinese traders. Trepang was highly sought after in southern China for its medicinal and aphrodisiacal qualities.[9]

As a result of these annual trips, the Macassans developed not only economic but social ties with the indigenous population. The latter's ability to communicate with the Macassans in Malay resulted to long-term relationships between Macassan trepangers and indigenous women at Kayu Jawa and Marege'. Aboriginal sojourners also travelled with the Macassans on their return trip, some staying there for seasons while others settled there and established families with Macassan women. This sustained economic exchanges and inter-cultural mixing and between the Macassans and the indigenous communities along the northern coast had significant impact on the latter's language and culture.[10] Regina Ganter illustrates the harmonious acculturation of Macassan language and culture into the Yolngu people in Northern Australia. She describes how Yolngu languages are tinted with Malay, Bugis and Makassarese inflections and illustrates the extent of Islamic influences in Yolngu culture and religion. The harmonious acculturation and interaction between the Yolngu and the Macassans would likely have resulted in the adoption of Islam by the Yolngu, if not for the British that disrupted the process.[11]

The Macassan trade was evidently significant to the British who were looking for new trading opportunities and means to strengthen their presence in the east. In 1823, a committee of merchants advised the Colonial Office to establish commercial relations with the Macassan trepangers to the north of Australia. From the 1820s, stations were set up by the British at Fort Dundas on Melville Island, Fort Wellington in Raffles Bay and later at Port Essington based on recommendation of European ship owners.[12] All failed for numerous reasons and were abandoned. Nonetheless, the British maintained their presence in the region. Deals that were struck between the British and Malay merchants enabled the employment of Malays from different parts of Southeast Asia in view of their ability to communicate with both the seafaring Macassan traders as well as the local indigenous population from widely dispersed tribes. The British acknowledged the strategic advantage of working closely with the Malays in their long-term plan of establishing colonies and dominate trade along the northern coast of Australia.[13]

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9 "Exploration of Australia", *The North Australian* (Brisbane), 15 November, 1964.

10 George Windsor Earl, *The Eastern seas: or, Voyages and adventures in the Indian Archipelago, in 1832-33-34, comprising a tour of the island of Java – visits to Borneo, the Malay Peninsula, Siam &c.; also an account of the present state of Singapore with observations on the commercial resources of the Archipelago* (London: Wm. H. Allen and Co., 1837), 442–446.

11 Regina Ganter, "Histories with Traction: Macassan Contact in the Framework of Muslim Australian History," in *Macassan History and Heritage*, 60.

12 "Shipping Intelligence," *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser (New South Wales)*, 20 June 1827.

13 *Ibid.*

From 1863, the northern coast and its waters came under the authority of the colonial government of South Australia. Very little interest was shown by this government in trading with the Macassans. The Macassan trepang industry declined from the 1880s onwards due to the taxes and charges imposed on visiting Macassan trepangers, as the government sought to evict them from the northern coast. With the advent of the White Australia policy via the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, antagonism escalated and finally the government decided to put an end to the Macassan trepang industry.[14] A prohibition was legislated in 1906, bringing an end to a once thriving trade.

The decline of the Macassan trepang industry along the northern coast of Australia coincided with the beginning of the lucrative pearling industry (or sometimes referred to as the pearl-shell industry). The industry was established in three locations from the 1870s, namely in Broome (Western Australia), Darwin (Northern Territory) and along the Torres Strait (Queensland) during this era. Before we dive further, it is important to discuss briefly the understanding and usage of the term 'Malay' during this period of time. Anna Shnukal writes: "The word 'Malay' in 19th-century northern Australia was an omnibus geographical and racial term, which obscures rather than clarifies geographical origins. It does not readily translate into contemporary geopolitical realities."[15] Interestingly, the term Malay then referred to an individual's geographical origin, encompassing ethnic groups originating from present-day Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia. In the Torres Strait for example, the Malays who settled on its various islands were those from Borneo, Java, Makassar and Singapore while Malays in Darwin originated from Maluku, Timor and Sulawesi in addition to Java and Singapore.

At other times, separate labels were used to differentiate and highlight the ethnic origins of these migrants. In Broome and in Darwin, 'Ambonese' and 'Koepangers' were differentiated from the Malays. In addition, the derogatory term 'Koepang boy(s)' was used on the Koepangers – individuals who came mostly from the islands off Kupang in West Timor. The use of the term 'boy', usually reserved for Aboriginal workers was never applied on the Malays. Even so, these communities were all referred to by colonial newspapers in Australia in the 1920s as a "color problem."[16] Martinez, in turn, argues that a racial hierarchy which reflected British colonialist prejudices existed in these places, one that "distinguished between the Malays and the supposedly more 'primitive' indigenous populations of the outer islands."[17] Riots in Broome in 1914 and 1920 further exposed this differentiation and relative inequality faced by the Ambonese and Koepangers, who were frequently subjected to bullying and cruelty at the hands of

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14 See: Immigration Restriction Act (Cth), https://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/scan-sid-144.html

15 Anna Shnukal, "They Don't Know What Went on Underneath: Three Little-known Filipino/Malay Communities of Torres Strait", in *Navigating Boundaries: The Asian Diaspora in Torres Strait*, (eds.) Anna Shnukal, Guy Ramsay and Yuriko Nagata (Canberra: ANU E View, 2004), 82.

16 "The Nor'-West Color Problem", *The Australian* (Perth), 1 April 1921.

17 Julia Martinez, "The Malay Community in Pre-war Darwin", *Queensland Review* 6, no. 2 (1999): 50.

the Japanese within this highly stratified social system. In 1914, the Malays were spared when a group of Koepangers were attacked by hundreds of Japanese wielding axes, revolvers and clubs.[18] In 1920, clashes broke out between the Malays and Ambonese, with the cause of the disturbance allegedly being the refusal of the Malays to collaborate with the Ambonese against the Japanese.[19]

Bearing in mind these nuances in the use of the term 'Malay', it is noteworthy that the earliest instance of Malay recruitment for the pearling industry was in 1870. Individuals from the islands of Alor and Solor in the Lesser Sundanese Archipelago (*Kepulauan Sunda Kecil*) were recruited to work in Western Australia for a period of twelve months. This venture proved successful and marked the beginning of the trend of labour recruitment in the Malay Archipelago that lasted nearly a century.[20] The rapid increase of the Malay population within pearling stations and towns along the northern coast of Australia was the direct result of systematic mass indenture, where recruits signed an agreement for a fixed term with a flat rate of pay. The pearling industry offered the promise of wealth that was often beyond the reach of these indentured recruits, especially among those from the rural areas who lived in poverty. In the 1880s, an indentured recruit could hope to earn at least £200 annually as divers and labourers – an amount that could allow them to live in relative prosperity on their return. The high salaries which pearl divers enjoyed also came with high risks.[21]

Indeed, the harsh reality of the industry was far from its promise of prosperity. Pearling crews lived on board their vessels for about eight to nine months of the year. Conditions on board these vessels were cramped and unsanitary. The crew were often malnourished and subjected to diseases like beri-beri which also infected the indigenous population that they came into contact with.[22] During the cyclone season from December to March, the vessels were laid up along the coast for maintenance and the men lived ashore in crowded camps and boarding houses. The pearling industry was also notorious for its high rates of mortality where hundreds of indentured personnel succumbed to diseases or perished in tropical cyclones. The 'Big Blow of 1887' which came unexpectedly in April of that year caught everyone off guard and as a result over a hundred divers at sea, many of whom were Malays.[23] Additionally, hundreds of others were permanently incapacitated as a result of diving mishaps. There were also numerous cases where these indentured personnel were left stranded in pearling towns by employers who refused to return them home.[24]

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18 "Serious Rioting at Broome", *Sunday Times* (Sydney), 13 December 1914.

19 "The Broome Riots", *Northern Territory Times and Gazette* (Darwin), 28 December 1920.

20 Peter J. McGann, "'Malays' as Indentured Labour: Western Australia 1867–1900", *Papers in Labour History* 5 (1990): 36–37.

21 "A Pearl Fishing Catastrophe", *South Australian Register* (Adelaide), 29 April 1887.

22 "Annual Report on British New Guinea for the year ending 30th June 1905" (Government of Commonwealth of Australia: State of Victoria, 1905), 39.

23 Christopher W. Coppin, "A North-West Tragedy: The Big Blow of 1887", *Early Days: The Journal of the Western Australian Historical Society*, 3, no. 9 (1947), 37– 40.

24 Peter J. McGann, "'Malays' as Indentured Labour", 52.

By the time the Commonwealth of Australia was formed in 1901, there was a significant population of Malays in Western Australia, the Northern Territory and the Torres Strait– along the northern coast where pearl beds were found. During this period of time, there was a 'Malaytown' in Broome and Darwin as well as on Thursday Island and Badu (Mulgrave Island). These communal enclaves acted as sites where Malays of various origins and the aborigines intermixed with one another.[25] Despite the advent of the White Australia policy and the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, the arrival of indentured Malays into Australia continued unabated as the pearling industry was exempted from the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901. With this exemption, a large number of indentured Malays worked in the pearling industries of Broome, Darwin and Thursday Island in the early 20th century. A newspaper editorial wrote any visitors to Broome would encounter "every day Malays with poles like the Chinamen use to carry their baskets and boxes with a fish or two each end, their tails keeping out of the sand. This is simply a pearling station."[26] Martinez estimates that there were some 1,000 Malays employed on average each year in Australia within the first decade of Australia's formation.[27]

Even as the numbers fluctuated as a result of the demands and supply of Malay indentured labour, 1,161 Malays were enumerated in the first Census of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1911 (Table 1). They formed about 2.75% of the total non-European migrant population of about 42,000. It is noteworthy that the migration of Malay individuals to Australia during this period was greatly gendered. Of the 1,161 Malay individuals enumerated in the 1911 census, only 90 – a modest 7.75% of the Malay population – were females. Due to the small number of Malay female population, many of these pearling labourers had established marital ties with indigenous population, as had the Macassans in the past. A select few entered into relationships with white women, giving rise to what was later called as "blue-eyed Malays."[28]

Table 1: Population of Malays in the Commonwealth of Australia in 1911, enumerated according to gender and caste.

Males		**Females**		**Persons (Total)**	
Full-blood	Half-caste	Full-blood	Half-caste	Full-blood	Half-caste
1,033	38	44	46	1,077	84
1,071		**90**		**1,161**	

25 Peta Stephenson, "Keeping it in the Family: Partnerships Between Indigenous and Muslim Communities in Australia", *Aboriginal History* 33 (2009): 106–107.

26 "Pearling at Broome", *The Register* (Adelaide), 7 May 1908.

27 Julia Martinez, "Indonesians Challenging White Australia: 'Koepangers' in the North Australian Pearl-shell Industry, 1870s to 1960s", *Indonesia and the Malay World* 40, no. 117 (2012): 236.

28 "Blue-eyed Malays", *The Register* (Adelaide), 26 January 1926.

One significant finding of this census is that a large majority of Malays were resident in the state of Queensland (Table 2). A sum total of 394 persons, Queensland had the second-largest population of Malays in Australia after Western Australia. A third of Queensland's Malay population (121 individuals) were born intrastate and at least 152 of its population were recorded to have resided in Australia for at least twenty years – evidence of the long history of Malays in the north eastern state. Queensland had the largest population of 'half-caste' Malays (individuals from mixed Malay and indigenous ancestry) in all of Australia with 56. The presence of a relatively high number of 'half-caste' Malay males and females in Queensland signify the close ties between its Malay migrants and indigenous population.

Table 2: Population of Malay persons in the Commonwealth of Australia in 1911, enumerated according to state/territory and caste. "FB" denotes "Full-Blood" and "HC" denotes "Half-Caste"

NSW		Victoria		Queensland		South Australia		Western Australia		Northern Territory	
FB	HC	FB	HC	FB	HC	FB	HC	FB	HC	FB	HC
29	**11**	**5**	**13**	**338**	**56**	**2**	**2**	**675**	**2**	**28**	**0**

The majority of Malays in Western Australia were considered 'migratory'. In the 1921 census, it was indicated that 'migratory' individuals were those who were working aboard ships and trains. In the Torres Strait, a large number of Malay migrants who had completed their period of indenture chose to remain, marry local women and settle down permanently. Shnukal cites seven marriages between Malay men and women from Badu and Mabuaig by 1898.[29] Malays and other non-whites who were already resident in Australia by 1901 were legally entitled to remain in the country. A similar community, dubbed the 'Malay Village' was established from 1939 on Port Lihou. Given that many Malay men had married local women, these two communities on Badu and Port Lihou naturally had strong social and kinship ties with the local indigenous population. However, both these communities did not last more than one generation. In both cases, they were forced to relocate to Thursday Island as a result of external circumstances beyond their control. Along with the aborigines, Europeans, South Sea Islanders, Papuans, Chinese, Filipinos and Japanese, these Malays developed a new cosmopolitan identity known as "Thursday Islanders."[30]

Numerically, the population of Malays remained relatively unchanged in the first half of the 20th century (Table 3). Nonetheless, there was a sharp increase

29 Anna Shnukal, "They Don't Know What Went on Underneath", 104.

30 "Meeting Place of Nations: Cosmopolitan Thursday Island", *Sunday Mail* (Brisbane), 13 January 1935.

between the number of full-blood and half-caste Malays between 1933 and 1947. In the span of fourteen years, the number of local born Malays of indigenous descent more than doubled. Within the same time, the number of indentured Malays dropped sharply, reflecting the decline of the pearling industry by the 1940s, especially after World War II.

Table 3: Population of Malays in the Commonwealth of Australia in from 1911 to 1947, enumerated according to caste.

1911		**1921**		**1933**		**1947**	
Full-blood	Half-caste	Full-blood	Half-caste	Full-blood	Half-caste	Full-blood	Half-caste
1,077	84	1,087	90	969	160	580	394
1,161		**1,177**		**1,129**		**974**	

After World War II, the pearling industry was slowly re-established, but in a different form with the introduction of pearl farming and the cultured pearl with expertise from Japan. The importation of indentured labourers from Asian countries ceased from the early 1950s, years before Australia changed its citizenship requirements and began to dismantle its White Australia policy.[31] Many of the Malays who worked in the pearl farms were Muslims who partly belonged to the early batch of indentured migrants. Despite their numbers, the Malays of Broome, Darwin and Torres Strait Islands, however, did not leave a lasting Islamic legacy – at least one in which present-day Muslim migrants to Australia can identify with.

Stephenson describes how the descendants of Malay migrants in the Torres Strait are "extremely proud of their Muslim heritage, but are not interested in taking on (accepting) Islam."[32] According to her research, there were only two practising Muslims on Thursday Island and they have since relocated to Malaysia. The cultural practices of Thursday Islanders called *ailan pasin* ('island custom'), are a hybrid of indigenous and Asian practices, including that of their Muslim Malay ancestors. While Thursday Islanders follow the Muslim practice of wrapping the deceased in white shrouds before burial, they add the unique practice of tying any excess shroud on to their wrists until they fall off in a few months. The death is then commemorated after a hundred days with a feast – a practice though contested, is not completely unfamiliar with Muslims in the Malay Archipelago. However this feast is followed by the unveiling of the deceased

31 "Indenture labor to cease", *The Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 20 July 1950.

32 Peta Stephenson, *Islam Dreaming: Indigenous Muslims in Australia*, 96.

tombstone.[33] Additionally, no mosque was ever built in the Torres Strait. In Broome, only one mosque had ever been built by the Malays in the 1924. It was destroyed during World War II and never restored.[34] There was similarly no mosque in Darwin until 1979 via the efforts of the Islamic Society Darwin.[35]

Social Contracts and Community-formation on the islands

The Malays on the Cocos Keeling Islands can be considered Australia's oldest Muslim community from Southeast Asia. As of 2016, there are 400 Malays living on the Cocos Keeling Islands.[36] What makes the Malays of the Cocos Keeling Islands unique is that it is a diaspora in itself. Substantial number of Malays from the Cocos Keeling Islands settled in Western Australia, Christmas Island and Sabah (on East Malaysia). Some of these individuals found their way to Singapore and West Malaysia. We explore the history of the Cocos Malays and its diaspora while touching on other Malay-Muslim communities on Christmas Island and Western Australia.

The history of the Cocos Malays can hardly be discussed without mention of the Clunies-Ross family who owned the Cocos Keeling Islands and were recognised by the British as "kings" and "absolute rulers" over the Cocos Malays for five generations.[37] The first of them was John Clunies-Ross, who had arrived on the islands in February 1827 with his family and men. They built a settlement on Selma Island (later renamed Home Island), where the Cocos Malays have lived since. The arrival of John Clunies-Ross on the islands was preceded by Alexander Hare some months prior. John Clunies-Ross' relationship with Alexander Hare stretched back to 1813 when Clunies-Ross was hired as master of *Olivia*, a brig (sailing vessel) owned by Alexander Hare. Hare plays a significant role in Cocos Malay history, being the original owner of the people who the Cocos Malays descended from.[38]

John Clunies-Ross and Alexander Hare soon occupied the Cocos Keeling Islands jointly and used the islands as a depot for spice and pepper before shipping it on to Europe. Hare's original intention was apparently to settle his people in the Cocos Keeling islands, free from interference by the outside world, while he pursued compensation

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33 Anna Shnukal, "Confluence: Asian Cultural Contribution to Ailan Pasin", in *Navigating Boundaries: The Asian Diaspora in Torres Strait*, (ed.) Anna Shnukal, Guy Ramsay and Yuriko Nagata (Canberra: ANU E View, 2004), 256.

34 "First Mosque", *Mirror* (Perth), 16 August 1924. See also: Qassim Saad, "Perth Mosque: A Cultural Structure Strengthening Collective Identity", *Garland*, Mar. 12, 2018, https://garlandmag.com/article/perth-mosque.

35 Mohammad Nurul Huq, *A brief history of the Islamic society of Darwin* (Mohammad Nurul Huq: Anula, Australia, 2009)

36 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), "Census of Population and Housing: Reflecting Australia – Stories from the Census, 2016 – Cultural Diversity".

37 "A Scottish King: Absolute Ruler of Cocas-Keeling Islands", *The Ballarat Star* (Victoria), 31 March 1989.

38 See C.A. Gibson-Hill, "Notes on the Cocos-Keeling Islands", *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 20, no. 2 (1947): 147.

from the Dutch authorities and reversal of the ban on living in the Netherlands East Indies. Quarrels between the two became common, eventually resulting in Hare leaving the islands within the next few years. Upon Alexander Hare death in Bencoolen in 1834, Clunies-Ross consolidating his authority over the island and its inhabitants.[39]

It is generally known that the Cocos Malays descended from Hare's entourage, which by 1901 had come close to 700 men, women and children.[40] The women seemed to have originated from places within the Malay Archipelago that included Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes, Java, Bali, Sumbawa and Timor as well as places so distant as the Cape, India and China. The Cocos Malays would have also likely descended from the male crew of *Borneo* and *Hippomenes* – the vessels owned by Hare and Clunies-Ross. These men, perhaps numbering about twenty, reportedly originated from Java and Sumatra. Even before Hare's withdrawal from the islands, the women who belonged to Hare had deserted him to join these men in Clunies-Ross' settlement. Clunies-Ross had refused to send them back and encouraged the men to take these women as wives through what was taken to be a binding marriage service.[41] Amidst differences in ethnic and regional origins, the early Cocos Malays developed a unified communal identity as 'Orang Cape' (the Cape People).[42] It is interesting that they had chosen to identify themselves as people of the Cape Colony instead of the Malay Archipelago where almost all of them had originated from.

Although Cocos Malays have attempted to take control of their lives through demands and grievances expressed against the Clunies-Ross family, their relationship between the white creole rulers was generally peaceful throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The 'social contract' put in place between the Cocos Malays and the Clunies-Ross family stemmed from the agreement that the white creole rulers would govern the islands with "careful and systematic principles."[43] Opium was banned on the islands and gambling limited to the Batamese coolies only on special occasions. All married couples were provided with houses. Malays were free to practice their faith in as long as they abide the laws enacted by the white creole rulers.[44]

The Clunies-Ross maintained their authority over the Cocos Malays through a closed economy. The islands had a unique currency not recognised anywhere else which were coins made from plastic ivory. Up until 1900, the economy of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands was wholly supported by exports of high-quality copra to Singapore

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39 Obituary of Alexander Hare is found in "Singapore News", *Sydney Herald* (New South Wales), 21 July, 1834.

40 "The Cocos Islands", *The Brisbane Courier* (Queensland), 19 February 1901.

41 C.A. Gibson-Hill, "Notes on the Cocos-Keeling Islands", *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 20, no. 2 (1947): 149.

42 John G. Hunt, "The Revenge of the Bantamese: Factors for Change in the Cocos (Keeling) Islands" (Master's thesis, Australian National University, 1989), 6.

43 "The Cocos-Keeling Islands", *The Queenlander* (Brisbane), 19 March 1898.

44 "Cocos Island: The King is Dead – Long Live the King", *Golburn Evening Post* (New South Wales), 10 July 1945.

and Europe. The Cocos Malays provided the labour required for the island's copra production. Males above the age of 14 were required to work on the plantations and workshops on the island. The Cocos Malays were paid wages in a currency unique to the islands – initially sheepskin, and later plastic coins. This currency could only be used to purchase supplies from the local shop (*toko*) run by the Clunies-Ross family themselves. The Cocos Malays could not move about from one island to another within Cocos Keeling Islands without prior permission of their rulers, also know as *Tuan*. Emigration was an irreversible choice – an islander who decided to leave could no longer return to the community. The unique currency with which the Cocos Malays were paid with also made it impossible for the islanders to trade with passing vessels. Interestingly, for over a century, Cocos Malays generally accepted such socio-economic arrangements and legal codes which they saw as congruent to their desires of wanting a simple and tranquil way of life. Undeniably, crime on the islands was almost non-existent.[45]

The social contract was further strengthened through the intermarriages of the Cocos Malays and the Clunies-Ross family since the days of the first ruler of the island. Additionally, isolation from the outside world had caused the culture and identity of the Cocos Malays to coalesce with those of their rulers – resulting in a highly Europeanised Malay community. The Cocos Malays reportedly had their meals on tables and using cutlery, instead of their hands; the men wore trousers instead of the 'sarong'; and the ladies did not cover their head and were more sociable with strangers compared to their counterparts in parts of the Malay world. Additionally, polygamy was unknown among the Cocos Malays, who by early twentieth century had adopted English marriage customs. Newborn babies were given European names by members of the Clunies-Ross family, such as Atlas, Daniel, Esther, Gatling, Kitchener and Wallace.[46]

The white creole rulers also employed indentured labourers from Java, known to the Cocos Malays as 'Orang Banten' and to the Europeans as the 'Bantamese.' Despite living as a separate community in their own village with their own leaders and Imam, they soon inter-married with the local islanders. They were credited for bringing *Wayang Kulit* (Javanese puppet performance) to the Cocos Keeling Islands and into the Cocos Malay culture. Within a generation, Bantamese influences worked their way into Cocos Malay culture and the European influence was gradually eroded. When John Sidney Clunies-Ross took over the rule of the Cocos Keeling Islands in 1910, he consolidated both communities into a single village after repatriating the Bantamese who had chosen not to reside permanently on the islands. The islanders' identities as 'Orang Banten' and 'Orang Cape' were gradually subsumed under a new rubric known as 'Orang Pulau' (Islanders). Influenced by the social and religious practices of the Bantamese, Cocos Malays recovered their traditional values and customs.[47]

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45 "White 'King' returns to nearby 'Paradise'", *The West Australian* (Perth), 24 January 1950.

46 "A Malay Kingdom ruled by a Scotchman", *The Albury Banner and Wodonga Express* (New South Wales), 1 November 1907.

47 John Hunt, "The Revenge of the Bantamese", 26.

By 1931, just after a century of their arrival on the Cocos Keeling Islands, the Cocos Malay population had risen to 1,082. Only a few dozens had ever left the islands, mostly to Singapore and Christmas Island. The emigration of Cocos Malays out of these islands illustrates their agency in determining their own socio-political destiny. It is especially remarkable bearing in mind the kind of challenges they would have faced as immigrants in new lands after a lifetime of isolation. Mass emigration of Cocos Malays occurred in four waves:

(1) to Singapore between 1936 and 1941,

(2) to Singapore, Christmas Island and Borneo (Sabah) between 1948 and 1951,

(3) to Christmas Island between 1958 and 1959,

(4) to Kattaning and other towns in Western Australia from 1975.

With the mass emigration of Cocos Malays, the social contract which the Cluniess-Ross dynasty maintained for over a century began to unravel. The growing poverty in the 1930s amidst the global economic depression, the declining price of copra and overpopulation meant that Cocos Malays had to move to other neighbouring islands and states in search of better lives.[48] By the 1950s, more than a thousand Cocos Malays left to North Borneo (Sabah).[49] Cocos Malays provided labour to develop the plantations owned by the Colonial Development Corporation amidst a desperate shortage of labour. After the Cocos Malays arrived in North Borneo, the population distributed – mainly at Tawau, but also to Lahad Datu, Kunak and Sandakan.[50]

The rest of the population migrated to Singapore and Christmas Island. By August 1951, there was a sizeable population of Cocos Malays in Christmas Island with twenty-four families (comprising of 124 persons).[51] Between 1958 and 1959, amidst another period of unhappiness and uncertainty regarding their future, over a hundred Cocos Malays requested to leave the Cocos Keeling Islands in order to join their relatives on Christmas Island. The latter offered prospects of working for real money, educational opportunities for their children and the freedom to travel to Singapore and Sabah. Many of these Cocos Malays had by then been granted Australian citizenship.[52]

In the early 1970s, the future of the phosphate mine on Christmas Island became increasingly uncertain prompting the Australian government to plan the resettlement of Christmas Islanders to mainland Australia. By then, there were about 500 Cocos Malays on Christmas Island. In 1973, the first few families from Christmas Island

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48 "Excess Population In Cocos Island" *Malaya Tribune*, 28 April 1948.

49 "1,000 people want to leave when island rule changes", *The Straits Times* (Singapore), 27 June 1951.

50 Noor Aziah Mohd. Ariffin and Nurul Ain Osri, "The Evolution of Space Organisation in Cocos Malays' Dwellings in Tawau, Sabah," *Advanced Science Letters* 23 (2017): 6231–6236.

51 John Hunt, "The Revenge of the Bantamese", 119.

52 "These 350 Malays will become Australians,"*The Straits Times* (Singapore), 27 January 1955.

arrived in the Western Australian town of Katanning, where the local abattoir sought to expand into the Muslim poultry and food market. Demand for Muslim workers at the export abattoir attracted further families from both Christmas Island and Cocos Islands.[53] Those already settled in Katanning continued to share positive news about life there while assisting their relatives by securing jobs and accommodation before they migrated. On the Cocos Keeling Islands, life for the Cocos Malays became increasingly uncertain as John Cecil Clunies-Ross tried to hold on to the islands under intense pressure by the Australian Government. On the other hand, approximately 300 Cocos Malays from Christmas Island and Cocos Islands had migrated to Katanning by 1979. In the years that followed, a number of the Cocos Malays in Katanning migrated to other areas of Western Australia, with Bunbury and Perth popular destinations as they offered better job opportunities. Newer migrants also settled in Geraldton and Port Hedland.[54] In 1984, under the supervision of the United Nations, the population of Cocos Malays voted to integrate with Australia.[55]

Parallel to the migration of Cocos Malays to Western Australia, a large number of Malays from Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia migrated to Perth in the 1980s. Retirees from Christmas Island were reportedly also offered retirement packages at the age of 55 to live in Perth. Nonetheless, they form separate communities and do not interact with the Cocos Malays in Western Australia. Like the Malays who settled in Melbourne and Sydney, they are part of the recent wave of Malay migration to Australia. In 2016, there are at least 10,753 Malays in Western Australia, the second largest population of Malays in Australia after Victoria.[56]

Malays in Multicultural Australia

In the years after World War II, public sentiment towards the White Australia policy began to change. Contributing to this sentiment was the government's decision in the late 1940s to repatriate a number of Malay men who were married to Australian women – some of whom already had children born in Australia.[57] A large number of non-Europeans including between 50 and 100 Malays had been admitted temporarily during the war, either as refugees or as members of the Allied Forces.[58] Others who

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53 Simon Lyas *et al.*, "A Case Study of Katanning: Innovation for Cultural Dividend," in *Regional Advantage and Innovation*, (eds.) S. Kinnear *et al*. (Heidelberg, Germany: Physica-Verlag, 2013): 222.

54 Monika Winarnita and Nicholas Herriman, "Caring and Family: Marriage Migration to the Malay Muslim community of Home Island (Cocos Keeling Islands)," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 40, no.118 (2012): 377.

55 "Cocos (Keeling) Islands Annual Report, 1983/1984, Parliament Paper No. 124 of 1985" (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 1984), 17.

56 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), "Census of Population and Housing: Reflecting Australia – Stories from the Census, 2016 – Cultural Diversity".

57 "Malay Seamen's Wives", *The West Australian* (Perth), 22 January, 1948.

58 A. Henderson, "Malays (Australia)", Hansard, UK Parliament, Feb. 5, 1948, https://hansard.parliament.uk/ Commons/1948-02-05/debates/788a2077-e01a-43a4-a9b5-71e1e90e1266/Malays(Australia)

were repatriated had been in the country even longer as indentured labourers. The plight of these men and their families evoked significant public sympathy and indignation within Australia and in Malaya.[59]

From the 1950s, Australia began to actively open its doors to immigrants. In 1951, the Colombo Plan was launched "to strengthen relationships within Asia and the Pacific and promote partnerships of mutual help towards social and economic development in the member countries."[60] Australia and Malaya were among the original eight signatories. With this, large scale migration of Malays to Australia began anew in the post-war years. The Colombo plan brought nearly 17,000 South Asian and South East Asian students to Australia, and the majority of these were Malaysians. Of these students, some married locally and later sponsored their parents or siblings to settle in Australia.[61] Among the Malaysians, many were Muslims (and presumably mostly Malay) from middle-class families who were intelligent and proficient in English.[62]

In 1966, the Australian government introduced measures which were the first major steps towards ending the long-held White Australia policy. Seven years later, the government removed race as a factor in Australia's immigration policies.[63] With this, the White Australia policy which had been in place for more than seven decades was definitively renounced, establishing a policy of multiculturalism in which the Malays would become part of. The majority of Malays who migrated to Australia during this period henceforth settled in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, in the territories of Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland respectively, with a smaller number migrating to western and southern parts of Australia such as Perth and Adelaide.

Asmah Haji Omar and Ahmad Zaharuddin Sani Ahmad Sabri have researched and written extensively on Australian Malays in Victoria, New South Wales and Brisbane. According to Asmah, the Malays in Sydney and Melbourne originate from Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. The earliest migrants who settled there were the students from these countries who had studied in Australia during the 1950s. Malaysian Malays have migrated in large numbers since the 1950s, Indonesian Malays since the 1960s and Singapore Malays since the 1970s. As of 2016, there are at least 14,268 Malays in Victoria, 10,381 Malays in New South Wales and another 6,098 in Queensland.[64]

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59 "Protest Over Malay Seamen", *The Herald* (Melbourne), 26 November, 1947 and "Fears to Return to Malaya", *Smith's Weekly* (New South Wales), 6 November, 1948.

60 "The Colombo Plan", Destination: Australia – Sharing our Post-war Migrant Stories, National Archives of Australia, accessed Mar. 25, 2020, https://www.destinationaustralia.gov.au/stories/work-play/colombo-plan.

61 Christopher Ziguras and Siew-Fang Law, "Recruiting International Students as Skilled Migrants: The Global 'Skills Race' as Viewed from Australia and Malaysia", *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 4 no. 1 (2006): 65.

62 Ahmad Zaharuddin Sani Ahmad Sabri, *Malay in Victoria: Past, Present and Future* (Saarbrucken, Germany: LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2011), 15.

63 "Immigration Policy: Labor Outlaws Racial Bias", *The Camberra Times* (Australian Capital Territory), 21 June 1971.

64 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), "Census of Population and Housing: Reflecting Australia – Stories from the Census, 2016 – Cultural Diversity".

Table 4: Population of Malays in the various states of Australia as accounted for in the 2016 Census.

NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
10,381	14,268	6,098	2,448	10,753	412	425	919

One of the major factors for migration mentioned is the enhanced education opportunities that Australia offers. Better quality education, leading to good domestic and international job prospects have been the main reasons that motivate Malaysian students to study in Australia.[65]

For Singaporeans, Australia provided a good educational system and better educational opportunities with significantly less competition, pressure and stress than in Singapore.[66] Another major factor for emigration is the promise of job opportunities and social freedom in light of perceived political and social discrimination in their home countries that tend to benefit certain sections of society. Singapore Malays who migrated to Australia in the late 1980s reportedly were unable to secure jobs which were commensurate with their qualifications. Many felt that their careers were stagnating as a result of being discriminated against by their employers.[67] Nonetheless, Sullivan and Gunasekaran have noted that (as of the early 1990s at least) the Malays in Singapore may not have the social capital to migrate easily.[68] Regardless, since then (a period of nearly three decades), there are at least 3,753 Singapore Malay-Muslims settled in Australia, suggesting that Malays from Singapore have significantly improved their educational attainment and tapped on pre-existing social networks in Australia resulting in more chain migration in recent times.[69]

In terms identity, it has been observed that the Malays in Melbourne socialise in across various communities, albeit with some overlaps. Malay and Islamic associations in Victoria and New South Wales serve to bring together people of similar background and origin. There are no less than four such organisations in Victoria and three in

65 I Lin Sin, "Malaysian Students in Australia: The Pursuit of Upward Mobility", *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 15, No. 2 (2006): 261.

66 See Gerard Sullivan and S. Gunasekaran, *Motivations of Migrants from Singapore to Australia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1994).

67 Asmah Haji Omar, *The Malays in Australia*, 115.

68 Gerard Sullivan and S. Gunasekaran, *Motivations of Migrants from Singapore to Australia*, 73.

69 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), "Census of Population and Housing: Reflecting Australia – Stories from the Census, 2016 – Cultural Diversity". The data presented covers "Country of birth by religious affiliation". 3,753 does not include Australian born Malays with ancestral origins from Singapore.

New South Wales.[70] Social gatherings and activities organised by these associations strengthen the bonds between members and provide a strong sense of "Malay" identity and belonging to these migrants and their families. They also provide a platform for newer migrants to familiarise themselves and settle down more easily. At the same time, these organisations ensure the preservation of religious and cultural knowledge, practice and values. Cultural shows are organised for the youths to inculcate a strong sense of identity and belonging in a diasporic community. Through these associations, the Malays in Victoria and New South Wales have been able to meet the religious needs of the community, such as obtaining permits to buy land and build mosques and purchasing land to bury the deceased.[71]

Nonetheless, in preserving the language and culture while practising Islam, Malays in Australia are believed to have little or no conflict in being Australian. Undoubtedly, this is due to their positive outlook in life as much as Australia's multicultural makeup and policies that embrace it. At the end of his short exposition of Malays in Victoria, Zaharuddin declares:

> There is nothing wrong in being proud of [being] Malay, there is nothing wrong in being Australian and there is nothing wrong in being proud to be Malay Australian. We are Malay Australians and we should be proud of it.[72]

Conclusion

This article has brought to the fore the four driving forces that led to the making of a localised Malay communities in Australia various points of history and from various points of origin namely, economic exchanges, inter-cultural mixing, formation of social contracts, and open migration policies. Broadly speaking, the different waves of Malay migration into Australia that we have discussed above can be further categorised into two periods – 'early' and 'ongoing', with the signing of the Colombo Plan in 1951 being the point of reference in history that distinguishes the two. The migration of Malays into Australia during the 'early' period was largely economic and for the most part, involved only males. Like the movement of Malays to Ceylon and South Africa during the colonial era, the movement of Malays to Australia during this earlier period was similarly facilitated by the presence of colonial authorities in the Malay Archipelago.

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70 The organisations mentioned by Asmah and Zaharuddin include *Persatuan Melayu Victoria* (Malay Association of Victoria), Malay Education & Culture Centre of Australia Inc. (MECCA), *Khairat Melayu Islam Victoria* (Victorian Malay Muslim Welfare Organisation) and *Kampung Utara Melbourne* (North Melbourne Village) for the state of Victoria; Malay Australian Association of New South Wales (MAAN), the Islamic Malay Association of New South Wales (IMAAN) and Ashabul Kahfi Islamic Centre for the state of New South Wales.

71 Asmah Haji Omar, *The Malays in Australia*, 128.

72 Ahmad Zaharuddin Sani Ahmad Sabri, *Malay in Victoria*, 45.

After 1951, Malay migrants began to arrive in large numbers from Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore under completely different circumstances than their predecessors. Although it has been more than fifty years since the first Malay students arrived in Australia under the Colombo Plan, we can consider the migration of Malays into Australia after 1951 an 'ongoing' process of chain migration. New migrants are often socialised into pre-existing Malay communities that were formed during the early decades of this period. The division between the two periods of Malay migration to Australia can be seen in the geographical dispersion of their settled communities; Broome and Katanning lie on opposite sides of Western Australia, separated by a distance of about 2,000 kilometres; Darwin and Thursday Island which lie along the northern coast of Australia are no longer migrant destinations, with Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane which lie along the south-eastern coast of Australia the focal point of migration in recent decades. Since the gradual dismantling of White Australia Policy in the years after World War II, Malays have migrated into Australia in large numbers and localised themselves seamlessly within the multicultural community. The arrival of Malay students in the 1950s created a renewed sense of familiarity with Australia, paving the way for the migration of individuals and whole families since. Perth, Melbourne, Sydney, and recently, Brisbane, have since been popular destinations for these migrants. In the 1970s, Malays from the Cocos Keeling and Christmas Islands migrated to Katanning and other towns in Western Australia.

There are two main features that distinguish the recent 'ongoing' migration with migration in the 'early' phase. The first is that Malay migrants in 'ongoing' phase are from a wider cross-section of Malay society – both male and females and across various age groups. They include youths who had studied in Australian universities who have decided to stay on in search of employment opportunities, dependent children and retired parents of married migrants as well as single men and women migrating for various reasons. The second is a strong sense of ethnic identification and the desire to maintain both religious and cultural identity and practices. To this end, the Malays in Australia today have multiple organisations that protect and further their interests and welfare. Studies on Malay communities in the 'early' phase have not only revealed the absence of such communal organisations but the absence of a concerted effort to preserve and pass on the Malay heritage to subsequent generations. In fact, the attitudes and priorities between both sets of migrants seem to be different. The earlier migrants by and large seemed to prioritise economic survival and were laxed on the practise of Islam and the maintenance of Malay culture to the extent that their families quickly acculturated into the wider Australian society. Newer migrants in Australia in recent times seem more cognizant of the possibility of subsequent generations assimilating into a Western society without maintaining their Malay identity or Islamic faith. It has been noted that the Malays in Australia today are more conscious about their sense of identity and are more concerned about a possible loss of this identity among future generations.

Another key difference that we found between the different batches of Malay migrants to Australia is the continuous connection to the Malay Archipelago. The earliest migrants who came prior to the late twentieth century were largely isolated

from the Malay Archipelago or that their interactions with families back home were less frequent. In comparison, in the recent decades, the internet, social media and instantaneous communication via mobile devices have made it easily for Malays in Australia today to maintain social and psychological ties with the Malay world – thus making it easy to maintain a sense of belonging to the Malay world and a sense of identity as a Malay. Despite this difference, there is a common theme among the Malay migrants in Australia regardless of the phases that they migrated – that is the shifting notion of 'home' and belonging – which were tied largely to changing relations between Malays and local indigenous peoples as well as the policies of colonial and post-colonial states.

After deciding to take on local spouses from indigenous families, the earliest Malay migrants shifted their notion of 'home' from their place of origin to their present place of residence. It may even be argued that these migrants occasionally carved out for themselves spaces of their own to call their home, such as the case of the Malays on Thursday Island and the Malaytown of Badu. For their children, 'home' never meant any part of the Malay world, suggesting that these Malay migrants were sure of settling permanently in Australia and visualised the future of their children in Australia. There was no 'myth of return' associated with many migrant communities, where 'home' had always been the place of origin.[73] Evidence from research on Malay communities in Australia also show that for any individual, 'home' can be multiple locations simultaneously. For the Cocos Malay community in Western Australia, 'home' could be any of the following: the Cocos Keeling Islands, Christmas Island or Katanning. A community's sense of home and belonging could also supersede their sense of ethnicity, as is the case of Thursday Islanders. Nonetheless, more research is required in exploring the notion of home for modern Malay migrants in Australia.

Biographical Notes

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73 For a discussion on the 'myth of return' in the context of immigrant communities, see Marta Bolognani, "The Myth of Return: Dismissal, Survival or Revival? A Bradford Example of Transnationalism as a Political Instrument", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 33 no. 1 (2007): 59–76.

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Reviews

H. Hazel Hahn (ed.), *Cross-cultural exchange and the colonial imaginary: global encounters via Southeast Asia*, Singapore, NUS Press, 2019, xi+310pp, ISBN 978-981-32-5006-2 (pbk).

The volume presents a fascinating collection of case studies, all challenging longstanding binaries used to understand Southeast Asia: Europe and Asia; ruler and ruled; modernisers and those being modernised; and even the sequence pre-colonial/colonial/postcolonial (pp. 1–2). Cross-cultural exchange, 'fluid, multi-linear and multi-layered' (p. 3), is set against 'cultural transfer' with its inference of passive acceptance.

Although not specifically instanced, the volume works with assumptions of alternative or multiple modernities, which de-center modernization from its assumed point of origin in the West. The lens is ethnographic as well as historical, focused on encounters, practices and objects.

The volume is divided into three sections addressing respectively knowledge exchange (three chapters); material and architectural exchange (four chapters); and leisure exchange (three chapters). If a little contrived, the categorizations nonetheless alert the reader to the range of topics; moreover, each author is assiduous in cross-referencing other chapters in the collection.

Knowledge exchange takes in Philippe Binh, a Vietnamese Catholic priest in early 19th century Portugal; the compilation of gazetteers of Malay knowledge by administrators in colonial Malaya; and the tension over the use of Javanese etiquette by Dutch officials in the Netherlands Indies. From a New Zealand angle, the first recalls the accounts of early Maori travellers to Sydney and to Europe, the second the assiduous gathering of matauranga Maori by George Grey and others.

The second group of four chapters explore objects – Chinese screens in Batavia/Jakarta (chapter 4); Hindu temples in Ho Chi Minh City (chapter 5); the governor-general's palace and houses built by wealthy locals in interwar French Indochina (chapter 6) and the' new city' of Putrajaya in Malaysia (chapter 7). In respect of this last Sarah Moser convincingly displaces 'authenticity' reasoning in favour of identifying the city's roots in colonial town planning, residential segregation and 'Orientalized' architecture (p. 189).

In the final bracket of chapters, the investigation of a particular corpus of photographs (chapter 8), and of just two photographs (chapter 9), shows how much meaning and ambiguity can be extracted from close readings.

In the comment that follows, I focus on one chapter in each section.

In 'Rituals and power: cross-cultural exchange and the contestation of colonial hegemony in Indonesia,' Arnout H.C. Van der Meer uses a specific encounter to unpack a wider story. In 1913, Raden Soemarsono, a Javanese public prosecutor, Western-

educated and fluent in Dutch, was asked by R.C. Bedding, the assistant-resident in charge of the court in which he was appearing, to change from the trousers and jacket into a Javanese sarong, and to sit on the floor – appropriately deferential according to traditional etiquette (*hormat*) – not use a chair (pp 75–76).

Van der Meer skillfully narrates the subsequent contest which played out not just between Soemarsono and Bedding, between educated young Javanese and senior Dutch officials, but between young and old Javanese and *within* Dutch officialdom. It is this that makes the episode such a deeply cross-cultural moment.

Van der Meer details the succession of circulars from the colonial government in Batavia (Jakarta) which had sought to end the Dutch use of *hormat* and 'stimulate increased participation of the Javanese in modern society' (p. 85). Most had been ignored (pp. 86, 88). The 1913 circular, the sternest and most effective, reiterated that there was 'no reason to be afraid of the national awakening of the Javanese' (p. 96) – although the logical endpoint was an end to colonial rule. Novel readers will recognise the contours of the contest between the liberal Fielding and the denizens of the Chandrapore Club in E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924).

In part two H Hazel Hahn equally skillfully explores two Tamil Hindu temples in colonial Saigon, now Ho Chi Minh City: the temple to Mariamman (aka. Khali, a South Indian goddess), and the temple to Sri Thendayuthapani (aka. Murugan, a son of Shiva). Both were a by-product of colonial-era Tamil migration (especially from the French Indian settlements of Pondicherry and Karikal) to Indochina. The cross-cultural interest of the latter lies in the unusual iconography of the Vimana (stepped pyramid), added to the temple in 1936. It incorporated figures of secular youths, which Hahn attributes to borrowings from contemporary French circus posters (pp. 143–45). Hahn acerbically and successfully demolishes a historiography which dates the temples to the early 19th century: a 'patently wrong revisionist account of Indians' history in colonial Vietnam, that erases the particular link between the diverse group of Indians and the French colonial regime.' (p. 148).

Equally confirmatory of the complexity of cross-cultural exchange is Hahn's explanation of the differing fates of the two temples in contemporary HCMC. The Mariamman temple is one of the most visited religious institutions in southern Vietnam; having early on attracted devotees who identified Khali with the Black Lady (Ba Den) of popular Vietnamese religion, it now does so again. Sri Thendayuthapani is neglected by comparison: it has 'primarily served the function of expressing the Tamil identity and … does not provide any compelling reason for Vietnamese devotion' (p. 151).

In the final chapter of the volume Frederick H Schenker looks at the spread of jazz in the British Empire, in the 1920s. Schenker focuses on the relationship between Westerners, for whom he argues 'dancing became an important way to try to control foreign space by recreating the leisure practices of home in a new territory' (p. 269) and the 'Asian jazz professional', most often Filipino or Goan (p. 271, the demand for jazz performers having outrun the supply of Westerners). This finding is not novel but a reminder of the bricolage of modernity that characterised the pre-1930 'colonial' Asia, and the way the pathways of empires – Schenker's example is the British, but consistently with the rest of the volume, could equally be the French or the Dutch – provided opportunities for the ruled as well as the rulers.

A couple of final thoughts. In an era (ours) saturated in notions of sexuality, of gender as performance, it is unusual that none of the chapters engages directly with such matters, although it is obliquely present in a couple. The work of Ann Laura Stoler, the ever-present sexuality in 'colonial' writers such as Somerset Maugham and Louis Couperus, suggest that this was a sphere which merited more attention than it attracts in this volume.

The originality of the methodology is over-stated; after all it is nearly two decades since Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe* was published. However, this rich trove of case studies demonstrates first, that that task is proving a much longer and demanding one than was envisaged at its outset and second, that there are rich rewards to those who examine thoughtfully and carefully specific objects, encounters and practices.

Reviewed by MALCOLM McKINNON
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Hayton, Bill, *The Invention of China.* United Kingdom, Yale University Press, 2020. 320 pp. ISBN: 9780300234824 (hardcover).

The Old Nationalists' New Clothes

Bill Hayton's "The Invention of China" is an accessible intervention in the study of Chinese nationalism, aimed not at China watchers but at any reader interested in modern Chinese politics. It aims to contextualise present worries about Xi Jinping's China within the study of intellectual history, exploring how major political figures and thinkers consciously shaped modern China as a national entity and the way in which certain thinkers contracted the notion of China as "a coherent territory with a seamless history" following the collapse of the Qing Empire. In deconstructing cliches such as the "five thousand years of history," "the century of humiliation" and "the founding of New China," Hayton argues that these exhausted narratives should instead be interpreted as those of any other nation: mythologies that are contingent on circumstance and as conscious responses to political change. More precisely, he argues that China has succeeded in constructing itself as an exception to the rule that nations and civilizations are overlapping but separate concepts, and that all manifestations of communal political identity are, to some degree, inventions.

In the early chapters of the work, Hayton highlights the fact that Late Qing intellectuals did not understand the foreign term "China" to be commensurate with *Zhongguo*, something that was only conceptualised by Liang Qichao (1873–1929). Foreign rulers, such as the Manchus and Mongolians, when invading the historical territories of China, stumbled upon a heterogenous set of Sinitic cultures ruled over by a Mandarin-speaking caste, thereby needing a conceptual framework which would suit them as both cultural outsiders and overseers. The projection of a unified Chinese identity befitted these ends. When Russia tried to establish relations in the late seventeenth century, they had to define an "imperii sinici" because the Chinese notion of *tianxia* (all under heaven) was not conceptually suitable for European nations beginning then to theorise the notion of bounded national sovereignty. At the height of European nation-building in the nineteenth century, when the Western imperial powers struggled to come to a coherent agreement with China on how they could separately conduct trade

relations with Beijing, the categorization of China also served their ends. Following this "century of humiliation" and the collapse of the empire and the Mandarin bureacracy, post-Qing intellectual were left only with this foreign-endowed notion of "China," what Hayton calls "*tianxia* with passport controls," with which to rebuild their identity.

From here, chapters three and four deal with the complex intersection of nationality with ethnicity. Covering the history of Chinese emigration to Southeast Asia and the West, Hayton explicates the distinction between long-term and short-term overseas Chinese (*huayi* and *huaqiao*), as well as the invention of the "Yellow Race," which has its roots in Late Qing intellectuals' misguided engagement with politicised Darwinian thinking from nineteenth-century Europe. This leads to the notion of ancestral lineage, *zu*, being reappropriated into the term *minzu* to mean something akin to ethnic groupings and to the construction of the Han Chinese majority elite, surrounded by smaller minorities. We eventually arrive at the foundation of the "five-thousand year" myth, conjured by Liang Qichao, who argued that a *zhongguo minzu*, defined by a *tianxia*, has existed in borders of the late-nineteenth century Qing empire, providing a justification for a more-or-less eternally existing nation.

Chapters five to nine are ones of pragmatism, reflecting on the multitude of ways in which these old ideas justify present political programmes. We see, after the Qing Empire's collapse, the transition from the notion of five ethnic groupings (Han, Hui, Mongolian, Tibetan and Manchu) to the delineation of the PRC's fifty-six minority groups, as well as the development of a uniform *putonghua* Mandarin dialect. At the end, he argues that, despite rhetoric of "socialism with Chinese characteristics," Xi Jinping is instead aiming at developing "national-socialism with Chinese characteristics," in which a surveillance state presides over a homogenised nation unified by corporatist economic policy. This echoes arguments that the type of hard nationalism which has emerged under Xi mirrors that which emerged in late Weimar Germany.

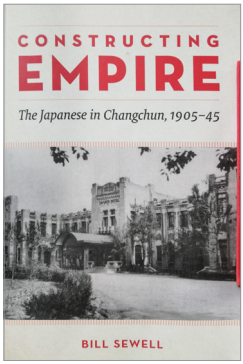
There is little in the way of new research, the book rather tying together various threads from branches of modern Chinese studies to tell the story of the creation of Chinese nationhood. While the constructed-ness of Chinese identity is obvious to sinologists, this point is lost on many supposed China aficionados. In perusing the writings of major modern China scholars like Arif Dirlik, Peter Zarrow and John Fitzgerald, Hayton is therefore trying to close a gap between popular understandings of China and overlooked scholarship from the ivory tower. In order for this broad thematic approach to remain narratively coherent, it overlooks some important subjects. For example, the book does not adequately engage with the territorial problems faced by the Beiyang and KMT regimes in Manchuria and the occupation by the Kwantung Army during the late twenties and early thirties, something which looms large in Beijing's territorial thinking, anti-Japanese sentiment being a core feature of Chinese nationalism. The same goes for the "War of Resistance," which is a central pillar of the patriotic education system and the paradoxical preservation of Mao's status as liberator and tyrant, as well as the history of federalism in the Republican period, which would have further illustrated the intellectual heterogeneity of post-Qing China.

One feels that the motivation underpinning Hayton's decision to review this history is that, as a correspondent for the BBC, he has often wondered why these questions about Chinese nationalism rarely permeate the boundaries of public

discourse, beyond the closed circuit of academic sinology. Indeed, the finger-wagging rhetoric of "five thousand years of history" is often used by politicians outside China as a justification for not pushing back on Beijing's unpalatable policies towards its immediate neighbours and border regions. Here, Hayton has simply cut through the noise, showing how a highly loaded political concept has come to be treated as an amoral aesthetic form of imagined community. By encouraging readers to think more sceptically when they encounter these historicist cliches, he hopes they will understand them more as rhetorical diversions which aim to evade reasonable questions about how China's view of itself fits within a rules-based global order.

Reviewed by WILL PEYTON

Bill Sewell. *Constructing Empire: the Japanese in Changchun, 1905–1945*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2019. Xv +295 pages, maps. ISBN: 978-0-7748-3653-1 (e-versions also available)



This monograph on Changchun complements the existing English-language literature on the Japanese imperial rule in north-east China – Dongbei – often referred to in English (and accordingly used here) as Manchuria.

Sewell's study covers two periods – 1905–1931, years when southern Manchuria was a Japanese sphere of influence, gained after Japan's defeat of Russia in the 1904–05 war, and 1931–45, when the Japanese annexed the whole of Manchuria, setting up the satellite state of Manchukuo and making Changchun a 'new capital' i.e., Xinjing (Shinkyo in Japanese).

In chapters one and two the study examines the planning and building of both the rail town (or 'treaty port') and Xinjing, the new capital city. The array of facilities in the latter – stadiums, botanical gardens, a zoo with open enclosures not bars – befitted a modern city, as did the large number of parks, collectively 250 ha by the end of 1936 and over 610 ha by 1940 (Central Park in New York City is 341 ha).

These discussions of the town and cityscape and of the built environment are the most assured in the book, suggesting Sewell's ease with, and interest in, architectural and town planning history. Sewell argues that the planners and architects recruited successively by the South Manchuria Railway (Mantetsu) and by the Manchukuo government's Capital Construction Bureau were most influenced by international and modernist styles, thus reflecting the outlook of the youthful architectural profession of early 20th century Japan. Planners and architects may have been encouraged to adopt (East) Asian architectural expressions, but 'Xinjing's fidelity to pan-Asianism was superficial' (p. 52).

The town and city building endeavours are framed in the context of coercive Japanese rule in Manchuria, in two ways. First, although Chinese were a majority of the population they had few rights. Yet in the 1920s, warlordism and banditry plagued

or threatened the Chinese as much if not more than the Japanese, as did outbreaks of pneumonic plague and cholera. Second, Chinese played little role in the making of the town, then the capital; in the 1930s: although Chinese and Japanese shared Xinjing, 'they lived in parallel worlds' (p. 169). Sewell cites a French observer describing 'a kind of Asian New York, reserved just about exclusively for Japanese and foreigners; the former [railway town], half-Japanese, half-Chinese; and the Chinese city' (p. 170). Chinese were also victimised by the promotion of opium consumption and, during wartime, by horrific medical experiments carried out in a nearby facility by the Imperial Japanese Army (pp. 170–71).

Against this stratified, power-saturated cityscape the monograph is insightful in detailing the ways the Japanese media, and the pages of the MNNS (*Manshu Nichi Nichi Shinbun*, aka. *Manchuria Daily News*) in particular, conveyed 'not only a sense of pride and empire, but also a 'sense of normalcy, portraying Japanese society in Changchun as much like Japanese communities elsewhere' (p. 148). MNNS reported on baseball and other sports; gatherings of the Mantetsu Employees Club and other social events; ran advertising from restaurants, department stores and cinemas.

Overall Sewell's approach reinforces the argument made by other scholars of the interpenetration of empire and modernity, with Xinjing a particularly convincing case study. Sewell also explains in the first pages of the book that it will explore the way that 'constructing empire was a mundane and popularly imagined affair as well as a diplomatic, political and military one'; he seeks to explore the 'civilian contribution to empire' (pp. 9–10). The book's discrete discussions, especially those about town and city planning and architecture, contribute to this but the personal, the ethnographic, facet of such an endeavour is mostly absent.

Finally, two broader contexts, which could not have been expected to be accorded extended discussion, given the specific focus of the monograph, nonetheless repay reflection by the reader.

First, the 'normalcy' of colonial modernity was played out in city after city across Asia and beyond in the early 20th century, be it in the guise of tennis-playing French in Saigon or Algiers, Filipino jazz bands in Shanghai or Singapore, or the denizens of hill stations in the Subcontinent or Southeast Asia. That Japan's internationally unrecognised rule in Manchuria should be as much a participant in imperial modernity as were Europeans and Americans in their colonial 'possessions' or indeed New Zealanders, in their dealings with Samoans, will come as no surprise to specialist scholars but will be educative for others.

Second, there are the palpable commonalities in capital construction projects, be it in Xinjing's own time, as New Delhi (mentioned briefly) and Canberra; or in the later 20th century, for example Brasilia, Abuja, Putra Jaya, Naypyidaw and Nur-Sultan (aka. Astana). All might be the capitals of 'authentic' nation states (unlike Manchukuo) but the top-down nature of the endeavours suggests parallels with Xinjing's energetic but doomed imperial modernity.

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