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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 HOW DOES ETHNICITY AFFECT CURRENT CHINA-MALAYSIA RELATIONS?  
Kankan Xie First Year Graduate, South and South East Asian Studies

26 CONSTRUCTING “CULTURE”  
Mark Portillo Undergraduate Senior, Political Science

41 THE SUCCESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL NGOS IN SUHARTO’S INDONESIA  
Rachel Phoa Undergraduate Junior, Political Science and Environmental Science

55 THE RELEVANCE OF KAUTILYA’S ARTHASHASTRA  
Ramanathan Veerappan Undergraduate Sophomore, Physics and South Asian Studies Minor

70 AINU AND THE METAPHORS OF INDIGENEITY: LAND, HISTORY, SCIENCE, LAW AND BODIES  
Valerie Black First Year Graduate, Group in Asian Studies

87 NOT SO SINGULAR: LAICIZATION IN JAPANESE BUDDHISM AND PARALLELS IN SOUTH ASIA  
Robert Bowers Curl First Year Graduate, Group in Asian Studies
Dear Reader,

We are pleased to present the third volume of the Berkeley Student Journal of Asian Studies. The journal developed as an effort to provide a forum to showcase, connect, and enrich young scholars studying issues related to Asia at UC Berkeley.

In this volume, Valerie Black uses metaphor to explore the status of the Ainu in Japan, as well as the relationship of metaphor to perception. Robert Bowers Curl examines some unique characteristics of Japanese Buddhism as it shifted away from a Theravada Buddhist model towards a Newar Buddhist model. Rachel Phoa looks at the role environmental non-governmental organizations played under the regime of Suharto in Indonesia as a result of international pressure and environmental damage. Mark Portillo uses photography as a tool to analyze how a government garners power and uses that power to create cultural memory, specifically regarding the Vietnam War. Ramanathan Veerappan sheds light on the themes found in the ancient Indian text Arthashastra by Kautilya, its relevance to modern institutions, as well as the text’s economic and political strategies echoed in later Western schools of thought. Kankan Xie looks at the role of ethnicity in China and Malaysia’s bilateral relationship, and its impact on politics and economics.

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-The Editors
HOW DOES ETHNICITY AFFECT CURRENT CHINA-MALAYSIA RELATIONS?

Kankan Xie

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to analyze the current China-Malaysia bilateral relationship from the perspective of ethnicity by drawing attention to Malaysia's ethnic-based domestic politics. Unlike in many other countries where Chinese diasporic communities account for only a relatively small portion of the total population, the proportion of ethnic Chinese in Malaysia represents a sizable minority of 24.6%. In order to take care of Chinese interests domestically while reducing the country's dependence on its ethnic Chinese minority in dealing with China-related issues, the Malay-controlled Malaysian government has actively adopted a series of implicitly pro-China policies in both bilateral and multilateral spheres. This paper first examines how the Chinese diaspora fits within the Malaysian domestic political climate in general. Based on a survey conducted in 2009, this paper discusses how Malaysian people's perceptions of China vary according to their ethnic background. Following this, it demonstrates the ways in which economic and cultural issues affect China-Malaysia relations as the country's domestic political struggles proceed. This study concludes that there is a mismatch between Malaysian Chinese's relatively high economic status and their subordinate role in Malaysia's patronage system. On the one hand, this allows them to benefit tremendously from close China-Malaysia bilateral ties and thus gain substantial leverage in domestic politics, but on the other, makes them further marginalized in inter-governmental dialogues.

INTRODUCTION

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1974, the bilateral relationship between China and Malaysia has been developing smoothly and steadily. The friendly ties between the two countries have become increasingly close over the subsequent 38 years. According to data published by China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2011, bilateral trade rose by 42.8% and its total amount reached $74.2 billion USD in 2010, which was the highest among all ASEAN countries. China's imports from Malaysia reached $50.4 billion USD and its exports to Malaysia totaled $23.8 billion, an increase of 55.9% and 21.3% respectively compared to the 2009 data. As of the same year, Malaysia had directly invested $5.6 billion USD in China. By comparison, China's direct investment in Malaysia was $440 million. Driven by this vibrant economic cooperation, bilateral exchanges of people are also more frequent than before. More than one million people from each country visited the other in 2010.1 For Malaysia, China has become a major source of tourists. The two countries have signed a number of agreements aimed at deepening bilateral cooperation in various fields, including technology, culture, education and military. Despite minor issues, such as a territorial dispute over the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, the development of the China-Malaysia relationship is generally quite positive, and is expected to continue improving into the foreseeable future.

Among many important factors contributing to the stable development of bilateral ties, the ethnic composition of Malaysian society is one that influences their bilateral engagement in many areas. According to the 2010 census, 24.6% of Malaysia's total population is Chinese.2 Unlike in many other countries where Chinese diasporic communities account for only a relatively small proportion of the total population (Singapore is the only exception), the percentage of ethnic Chinese in Malaysia is high and represents a sizable minority.

Politically, Beijing does not openly support the political organizations of Malaysian Chinese outside of the ruling United Ma-
lays National Organization (UMNO). In fact, the Communist Party of China (CPC) maintains close contact with both the UMNO and the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), the UMNO’s most important ally in domestic political campaigns and the largest Chinese political party in Malaysia. Economically, Malaysian Chinese have played critical roles in promoting bilateral trade and stimulating investment both into and from China. Especially during the early days of China’s reforms and opening up, Malaysian Chinese businessmen were among the first investors from overseas Chinese communities who first entered the still largely undeveloped Chinese market. For obvious reasons, cultural affinities have to be given serious consideration in explaining this quick embrace. Traditional Chinese culture has been well preserved in Malaysian Chinese society. Chinese language and Chinese education, although experiencing various hardships, have survived decades of political struggles. Such cultural linkages have not only played important roles in maintaining Malaysian Chinese identity, but they also significantly contributed to the development of China-Malaysia relationship by facilitating channels of communication through personal and group connections.

Ethnicity is always a central issue in Malaysian domestic politics. As early as the colonial era, ethnic tensions emerged due to imbalances between the political and economic strength of different ethnic groups. After the Second World War, the introduction of the Emergency Regulation against the insurgency of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP)—a predominantly Chinese leftwing political party—greatly deepened existing racial tension. For a long period of time, China had openly supported the outlawed MCP in fighting the guerrilla war against the Malay-dominated Malayan/Malaysian government. On 13 May 1969, a severe riot broke out in Kuala Lumpur, in which 196 people died because of interracial violence. This incident further exacerbated the conflicts between Malays and Chinese. As a result, the Malaysian government adopted more stringent affirmative action policies in order to ease racial tension. In 1974, with the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, Beijing severed its connections with the MCP and China-Malaysia relations were normalized. Due to this significant shift occurring after 1974, the ways in which ethnicity influences China-Malaysia relations will focus only on the post-1974 era.

Ostensibly, much inter-governmental engagement in multilateral dialogues has very little to do with issues related to ethnicity. But I believe the evidence shows that ethnicity does affect Malaysia’s foreign policy towards China. Specifically, in order to protect Chinese interests domestically while reducing its dependence on ethnic Chinese for dealing with China issues, the Malay-controlled Malaysian government has actively adopted implicitly pro-China policies, both bilaterally and multilaterally.

To elaborate on these points, I will first discuss how ethnicity became a central issue in Malaysian society and how the Chinese diaspora fits into the Malaysian domestic political climate in general. In the third section, I will discuss Malaysian perceptions of China based on a survey I conducted in 2009. Following this, I will underscore the mismatch between Malaysian Chinese’s heavy investment in China and their limited roles in domestic politics, which on one hand allows them to economically benefit from close China-Malaysia ties, but on the other hand, marginalizes this group in inter-governmental dialogues. Finally, I will discuss how cultural issues affect China-Malaysia relations by examining the cases of the newly founded Confucius Institute at the University of Malaya and Malaysia’s government fellowship program for students studying in China.
the Malays and other indigenous peoples of Malaysia. Through this categorization, Bumiputera has become the dominant majority of the country to the exclusion of ethnic Chinese and Indians. As of 2010, Bumiputera accounted for 67.4% of the country’s total population, followed by Chinese at 24.6%, Indian (7.3%) and others (0.7%).

As I have mentioned previously, the Chinese represent the second largest ethnic group in Malaysia with a population of nearly seven million, and their presence is significant by any measure. With a handful of active forces representing their communal interests, ethnic Chinese have played indispensable roles in the Malaysian political arena. On the other hand, Malaysian politics is still predominantly ethnic-based and largely Malay-dominated.

The Barisan Nasional (BN), along with its predecessor, the Alliance—largely comprised of ethnic-based political parties such as the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC)—has been the only ruling party coalition since the country’s independence. While ostensibly functioning as a multi-ethnic political party coalition, the BN has been predominantly controlled by UMNO. Over the past five decades, the country’s prime ministers and the heads of the key ministries have always been members (Malays) of UMNO. Despite an official consensus of pursuing racial harmony, to a large extent, each constituent party of the BN primarily works in accordance with their respective ethnic interests in hope of securing and maximizing votes from their own community.

In fact, the origin of Malaysia’s communal politics can be traced back much earlier when Malayan/Malaysian people were fighting for independence. Although there was a wide range of political options advocated by different interest groups, the central issues were always concentrated within the debate between two major camps: the Bumiputera, who advocated the revival of Malay sovereignty as it existed in the pre-colonial era, and the non-Malay immigrants, who struggled for equal rights and permanent citizenship within the new country. In many Malay extremists’ view, “immigrants formed an inextricable part of the colonization process” and thus, the realization of the decolonization must be conducted with an emphasis on the fact that “the land belongs to the Malays.” In contrast, the Chinese and Indians were particularly anxious to end colonization through popular sovereignty, including the participation of immigrants by granting them rights equal to the indigenous. As Muhammad Ikmal Said argued, “(The Malay’s special position or equal rights) is an open question and is an object of struggle. Such a struggle, of course, would not occur if the immigrant communities in question are small, as they could be accommodated, that is, ‘controlled’, easily. On the other hand, if they form a large proportion of the population, an economically stronger majority as in the Malayan case, the implications are very different.” In this sense, each ethnic group was big enough to contest the others, but no single group had the absolute strength necessary to take the lead without making compromises. This fact also ensured that almost all political issues in Malaysia are approached as communal struggles, or at least in most circumstances, communal interests must be taken into account as a primary consideration.

As of 1961, there were 7.19 million people living in Malaya, 3.57 million of whom were Malays and were accounted the majority of the population; whereas within a Chinese population of 2.63 million, only 880,000 had citizenship. Despite the economic advantages the ethnic Chinese enjoyed, they were politically un-
derprivileged due to a lack of eligible voters when the country’s independence was achieved. By working closely with the dominant UMNO, the MCA successfully helped the vast majority of ethnic Chinese obtain citizenship and secured its own position within the ruling party coalition. In exchange, however, the special right of bumiputera became legally acknowledged in the country’s constitution.  

In the following decades, the UMNO-dominated federal government implemented a series of policies that favored bumiputera, not only in hope of narrowing the economic gap between ethnic Malays and Chinese, but also to create a large and politically powerful Malay middle class that would continuously support the UMNO’s rule. In 1970, the New Economic Policy (NEP) was officially implemented by the Mahathir administration in order to ease the tension provoked by the May 13 Incident of 1969, the most notorious interracial riot in the country’s history. Based on Article 153 of the Constitution, the NEP specified the special rights enjoyed by bumiputera, including subsidies for real estate purchases, quotas for public equity shares, and general subsidies to bumiputera businesses. As a result, ethnic Malays (elites in particular) became the largest beneficiaries of such policies. The Chinese community, by contrast, although not always content with the compromises the MCA made with the UMNO, usually had no better alternative than relying on this kind of political arrangement in order to make their voices heard. While primarily focused on the interests of the Malay community, the UMNO also must help the MCA take care of Chinese interests, and thus secure Chinese votes for the BN. Although such a political structure has a very limited effect on alleviating tensions between different ethnic groups domestically, it is helpful in maintaining a generally peaceful and stable environment in plural societies like Malaysia.

MALAYSIAN PERCEPTIONS OF CHINA

Both the Malaysian Chinese community and the Malaysian government have played very important roles in improving the China-Malaysia relationship, but their respective incentives are quite different. Beyond economic considerations, I believe that ethnic Chinese in Malaysia have favorable perceptions of China largely due to ethno-racial connections. In contrast, for the UMNO-controlled Malaysian government, in light of its major concern with maintaining the status quo in Malaysian domestic politics, it seeks to make the Chinese community happy by maintaining friendly ties with China.

To test this hypothesis, I conducted a survey of Malaysian perceptions of China in 2008. I collected data from 131 participants from both Chinese and non-Chinese communities in Malaysia and investigated their perceptions from three different angles, namely “China and Chinese,” “China-Malaysia Relationship,” and “Culture and Communication” (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>48.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Chinese</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>15-24</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>80.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24+</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>66.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>77.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Businessmen</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11 Also refers to “Ketuanan Melayu,” which is commonly translated as Malay Special Position, Malay Special Right, Malay Privilege, Malay Supremacy, etc., which was recognized by Article 153 of the Malaysian Constitution: “It shall be the responsibility of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong (the head of state of Malaysia) to safeguard the special position of the Malays and natives of any of the States of Sabah and Sarawak and the legitimate interests of other communities in accordance with the provisions of this Article.”
Regardless of ethnic background, the majority of respondents expressed positive views of China’s national image (71%) and China’s efforts in dealing with global and regional issues (69.2%), reflecting Malaysian people’s generally positive impressions of China. The differences between ethnic groups are not statistically significant (Table 2 and 3).

### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do you view China’s national image?</th>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Chinese</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>77.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>63.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do you view China’s efforts in dealing with global and regional issues?</th>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Chinese</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>62.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On other issues, however, there were huge divergences between ethnic Chinese respondents and their non-Chinese counterparts:

### Table 4

<p>| Which one of following countries is Malaysia’s most important partner? |
|-----------------------------|------------------|---------------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Name of Country</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Chinese</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>35.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>China</td>
<td>31.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The United States</td>
<td>20.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>11.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>60.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The United States</td>
<td>23.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>11.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>4.80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this survey, I asked the participants to answer the question: which country is Malaysia’s most important partner, and listed “The United States,” “Japan,” “China” and “Others” as options. The Chinese respondents demonstrated a significant preference for China, with 60.3% of them selecting China as Malaysia’s “most important partner.” In comparison, non-Chinese respondents did not show any particular preference for any single country. Among three options, Japan ranked first, accounting for 35.8%, while China and the US had slightly smaller proportions, namely 31.3% and 20.9% (Table 4).

### Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Free trade between China and Malaysia will damage Malaysia’s interests.</th>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Chinese</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>82.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>14.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Do not Know</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As high as 82.1% percent of the non-Chinese respondents believe that China-Malaysia free trade will damage Malaysia’s interests, whereas only 15.9% of Chinese respondents shared the same concern (Table 5).

In general, the development of economic collaboration has demonstrated strong momentum in recent years. China-Malaysia bilateral trade has been growing by double digits annually since the end of the Cold War. By the year 2002, Malaysia surpassed Singapore to become China’s primary international trading partner among ASEAN countries. As mentioned earlier, bilateral trade totaled $74.2 billion USD in 2011. Significantly, Malaysia has long been running a bilateral trade surplus with China, making clear that its economic position is by no means that of inferior partner.

Furthermore, it is unsurprising that Malaysian Chinese demonstrate greater satisfaction towards the bilateral economic relationship due to close and frequent China/Malaysian-Chinese interaction. While being the biggest beneficiaries of bilateral trade, the Malaysian Chinese also act as investors who contribute most significantly to the bilateral collaboration. It is hard to find an accurate percentage of their share of investment in Malaysia’s overall investment to China, but Malaysian Chinese investors have surely played major roles: As of 2009, Malaysian Chinese were running 4,189 investment projects in China, which translates into a total of $4.53 billion USD Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

### Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Chinese</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>25.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>64.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do not Know</td>
<td>10.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>91.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>6.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do not Know</td>
<td>1.70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, the overwhelming majority of ethnic Chinese respondents feel satisfied with China’s current policies towards Malaysia. Among the non-Chinese, however, 64.2% expressed dissatisfaction (Table 6).

In general, both ethnic Chinese and non-ethnic Chinese hold positive views of China’s national image and its role in dealing with regional and global issues. However, the survey also demonstrated that China was more positively perceived among Malaysian Chinese, who had good impressions of China regardless of whether or not they had visited the country personally. Contrarily, China’s image needs improving among Malaysia’s non-Chinese citizens, as these respondents expressed mostly negative feelings about their country’s current relationship with China. For the Malaysian government, it believes that maintaining a good relationship with China is a helpful strategy for taking care of the domestic interests of ethnic Chinese.

### The Dilemma of Being Malaysian Chinese

At the risk of oversimplifying, Malaysian Chinese occupy economically advantageous, but politically underprivileged, positions within Malaysian society. Rich ethnic Chinese businessmen rely heavily on Malay elites in securing their economic interests.
Similarly, Chinese business tycoons’ strong financial support is critical to the ruling Malay upper class. This situation has formed a typical patronage system, in which the powerful and the wealthy exchange resources effectively at the top, in spite of racial segregation on the lower rungs of society.

In Malaysia, class divisions are systematically manipulated within prevailing ethnic-based communal politics. Voices of the lower class are ignored or intentionally superseded by discourses of racial inequalities. The UMNO and the MCA, both largely representing the elites in their respective ethnic groups, often use requests from the lower classes as bargaining leverage against opposition parties. To fully take advantage of ethnic Chinese citizens’ favorable perceptions of China, both the UMNO and the MCA have eagerly developed a close relationship with Beijing, as a way to show their commitment and capability to take care of ethnic Chinese interests in Malaysia.

One of China’s most consistent policies towards Malaysia since the establishment of diplomatic relations has been the maintenance of friendly ties with both the UMNO and the MCA. According to the records of the International Department, Central Committee of the CPC, in the past ten years the two sides have exchanged high-level delegations on an annual basis, without the involvement of the Malaysian opposition parties, regardless of ethnic composition.15

Of course, it is also worth noting that the Malaysian Chinese who have been making investments in China are of the same group of people who rely the most on the domestic patronage system.16 During the early years of China’s “Reform and Opening Up” policies, “overseas Chinese” was no doubt a very lucrative identity. On the one hand, people in China were eager to access the resources the Malaysian Chinese had in hand: capital, technology, and access to foreign markets and overseas networks. On the other hand, being ethnically Chinese meant they could get things done easily in China by using their Chinese networks when investors elsewhere were still suspicious of China’s prospects. Being politically vulnerable and dependent, it was believed that the ethnic Chinese in Malaysia (as in other politically unstable countries) had stronger incentives to put their eggs in other baskets. Afraid of losing their most important financial resources, the Malay-dominated government also became more generous in offering profitable deals to these wealthy Chinese businessmen as long as they remained active in the domestic patron-client relationship.

Despite knowing that it is very dangerous to let a powerful country like China intervene in its domestic politics by forging close ties with the Malaysian Chinese, visionary Malay leaders decided to take the initiative to engage Beijing directly by refusing to allow Malaysian Chinese to act as middlemen, and by keeping them out of state-to-state interactions. The Malaysian government has actively adopted an implicitly pro-China policy in both bilateral and multilateral dialogues. In fact, Malaysia is not only the first ASEAN country that established diplomatic relations with China, but also the first country that initiated the China-ASEAN Dialogue and hosted the China-ASEAN Summit.17 At the regional level, Malaysia has also been playing an important role in pushing forward multilateral cooperation between ASEAN and China as well as other players from across the Pacific. Within the framework of regional institutions such as ASEAN Plus Three, the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), and the East Asian Summit (EAS), China and Malaysia have been working quite closely with each other.18 Nonetheless, both China and Malaysia claim overlapping territorial waters within the South China Sea. But unlike Vietnam and the Philippines, the


HOW CHINESE LANGUAGE EDUCATION MATTERS

Other than the general improvement in terms of political engagement and economic cooperation, the close China-Malaysia relationship has boosted a high volume of cultural exchange between the two countries. Due to the sharp imbalance of power between the two countries, China’s cultural influence on Malaysia is far stronger than vice versa, is similar to the situation faced by other Southeast Asian countries. In addition, because of the large percentage of ethnic Chinese, Malaysian society is not only more accommodating of Chinese culture, but there is also high demand to develop it locally.

In societies where the Chinese presence is not significant, “Chinese culture” usually functions as a medium to showcase China’s image. In Malaysia, however; vaguely defined “Chinese culture” has multiple layers of meaning. First, it is an integral part of Malaysian culture itself, on which the identity of the Malaysian nation has been politically constructed. Therefore, being recognized as an indispensable pillar in Malaysia’s plural society, Chinese culture plays an important role in maintaining racial harmony and mutual respect amongst different ethnic groups. Secondly, Chinese culture is extremely important for the Chinese community in Malaysia. More specifically, it is both a powerful weapon that ethnic Chinese wield in domestic political struggles against the non-Chinese dominant powers, as well as representing an ultimate goal that they intend to achieve, namely preserving their cultural identity. Although less explicit than these first two layers, a third layer is equally important: Chinese culture (Indian culture is similar in this case) is constantly manipulated as a label that reflects the “foreignness” of the ethnic Chinese in Malaysia, which distinguishes them from the politically more privileged “local” and “indigenous” bumiputera. Consequently, while preserving their cultural identity by keeping this “foreignness” and “otherness,”ethnic Chinese have prevented themselves from accessing political resources that exclusively belong to the bumiputera.

Therefore, the term “Chinese culture” is very ambiguous in Malaysia, conveying the meaning of both Chinese culture from China and the culture of Malaysian Chinese themselves. Despite the fact that there are many differences between the two, they are also closely connected to one another. Under the banner of preserving cultural identity, ethnic Chinese in Malaysia engage themselves actively in cultural exchanges with China, including activities such as ancestor worship, education cooperation, and joint festival celebrations. In respect to culture, the Chinese community benefits more from the close China-Malaysia bilateral relationship than other ethnic groups.

As the guardian of both the interests of the state and more importantly, the bumiputera community, the UMNO-controlled government often plays seemingly contradictory roles in promoting—and simultaneously curbing—the development of Chinese culture. As previously mentioned, the Malaysian government has implemented a series of economic policies that favor the bumiputera in terms of subsidies for real estate purchases, quotas for public equity shares, and land ownership, etc. In fact, the government’s favorable treatment of the bumiputera has gone far beyond the realm of purely economic interests. In the field of education, for in-
stance, there are constant controversies amongst different ethnic communities related to what the ethnic Chinese see as educational discrimination.

In Malaysia, there are basically two types of public elementary schools. One is the Malay-medium national schools where Malay (Bahasa Melayu) and English are the recognized languages of instruction. The other type is the national-type schools where ethnic languages such as Chinese and Tamil are taught, while Malay and English courses remain compulsory. Although ethnic Chinese enjoy the freedom to send their children to either type of school at the primary level, students have few options but to attend Malay-medium high schools so that they can further their studies at the country’s public universities. Otherwise, they may choose to attend private Chinese-medium schools outside of the public education system, though the graduates of these schools can only go abroad for higher education and have absolutely no chance of enrolling in domestic public universities. Through various types of political campaigns and fund raising projects, the Malaysian Chinese have exerted every effort to protect their own education system. To this day, however, the government does not recognize the Chinese-medium independent schools. Due to the favorable treatment of bumiputera, it is also far more difficult for ethnic Chinese to get into public universities, not to mention the paucity of financial aid available to non-bumiputera students.

One of the consequences of such education policies is a trend among ethnic Chinese students to study abroad. Traditionally, Singapore and Taiwan have been two major destinations for Malayan students of Chinese background, not only because of their geographical proximity and their close linguistic and ethno-racial ties with the ethnic Chinese in Malaysia, but also due to their own respective policies of attracting ethnic Chinese students from overseas. Boosted by the rapid development of the China-Malaysia bilateral relationship in recent years, however, there is an increasing number of Malaysian Chinese students who choose to study in China, owing to the fact that China has a wider range of schools at a relatively lower cost. As of 2011, there were approximately 4,000 Malaysian students studying in China. Unsurprisingly, these students are predominantly self-financed ethnic Chinese, although the exact number is unknown.

In the name of continuously promoting the development of the bilateral relationship, in 2007 the Ministry of Education of Malaysia (KPM) launched a government scholarship program to train Malaysian Mandarin teachers. Selecting students from national high schools across the country, the KPM has since sent out five batches of students to Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU) to pursue bachelor degrees in teaching Mandarin as a second language. Following the KPM program, the Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA), a government-run bumiputera development agency, has also signed an agreement with BFSU to train Mandarin teachers. As of 2012, there have been 175 Malaysian students studying at BFSU through these two programs. Like many other government education programs in Malaysia, the recipients of these two scholarships are predominantly Malay. According to an unpublished document from BFSU, out of the 175 students, there are only two ethnic Chinese, one ethnic Indian, and three indigenous Kadazans.

In addition to helping Malaysia train its non-ethnic Chinese

21 Sekolah Kebangsaan.
22 Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan
24 ibid.
26 Premier Wen Jiabao’s speech at the Malaysia-China Economic, Trade, and Investment Cooperation Forum in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 28 April 2011.
28 Beijing Foreign Studies University, "2012 nian 9 yue yingjie malaixiya jiaoyu" (Welcoming the KPM Delegation in September 2012), (unpublished document), September 2012
Mandarin teachers in China, Beijing is also expanding its own education network in Malaysia. As part of China’s global strategy in advancing its “soft power,” a Chinese government-sponsored network of educational organizations named the “Confucius Institute” has been established to teach Chinese language and promote Chinese culture worldwide.\(^29\) In contrast to most countries where the name “Confucius” represents a school of philosophical thought, in Malaysia the word is closely associated with the religious beliefs of a certain fraction of the ethnic Chinese community in Malaysia, distinguished from ethnic Chinese Buddhists and Taoists. As a result, the Confucius Institute has experienced several unexpected difficulties in getting approval from the UMNO-controlled government to establish its branch in Malaysia, as many conservative party members were concerned that the institution would play a role in promoting the religion of a particular segment of ethnic Chinese.\(^30\) As a compromise, the first Confucius Institute in Malaysia has changed its name into “Kong Zi Institute for the Teaching of Chinese Language” (KZIUM), to rid itself of the religious implications of “Confucianism.”\(^31\)

More importantly, the “Kong Zi Institute” is specially tailored to serve the non-Chinese community in Malaysia. According to an unpublished document of the institute, 1104 students enrolled in its Chinese language courses in the first year (2011) of operation.\(^32\) Malays accounted for approximately 80% of the total number, whereas the percentage of Chinese and Indian students was 15% and 5% respectively.\(^33\) This situation is distinct from other Chinese language training institutions in Malaysia such as the non-Chinese government-sponsored Global Hanyu & Culture College and the Mandarin Journey Language Center run by Malaysian Chinese, where ethnic Chinese account for the overwhelming majority of their respective student bodies.

On top of offering courses to the public, the KZIUM actively engages in special language training programs for Malaysian government employees by cooperating with the Institute of Diplomacy & Foreign Relations (IDFR), the National Defense University (UPNM) and the Royal Malaysia Police College (RMPC).\(^34\) Directly influenced by the ethnic composition of personnel in the Malaysian government, most of the participants of these programs are Malays. For example, out of 184 IDFR students who registered for language courses, only two were ethnic Chinese and eight were ethnic Indians. Similarly, 54 out of 55 students from the RMPC were Malays.\(^35\) According to Zhao Wanzhen, a language lecturer who worked at the KZIUM from 2011 to 2012, there is virtually no connection between their institute and local ethnic Chinese organizations whatsoever.\(^36\)

CONCLUSION

Malaysia’s domestic politics is highly ethnic-based. Due to imbalances of political and economic status between the bumiputera and non-bumiputera communities in this plural society, different ethnic groups have engaged in constant struggles to secure their respective communal interests. Although tensions between different ethnic groups are sometimes politically manipulated, ethnicity remains a central issue in the domestic politics of Malaysia.

As the second largest ethnic group in Malaysia, the Chinese community plays indispensable roles in the country’s political arena. Their resilient linguistic and ethno-racial ties with China have meant that the engagement between China and Malaysia is not a conventional state-to-state relationship. The basic pattern of Malaysia’s domestic politics has strongly influenced its foreign policy toward China. Due to the favorable perceptions of China among Malaysian Chinese, the Malay-controlled government has been cautious in developing its bilateral relationship with Beijing. It needs

30 Zhao Wanzhen, interview by author, 12/05/2012. Zhao Wanzhen worked as a language lecturer at the KZIUM from 2011 to 2012.
31 “Kong Zi” is the exact Chinese pinyin spelling of “Confucius”.
32 Kong Zi Institute For the Teaching of Chinese Language at University of Malaya, “Ma Da Kong Yuan PPT” (Introduction to the KZIUM), (unpublished document), 06/23/2012
33 ibid.
34 Maktab Polis Diraja Malaysia
35 Zhao Wanzhen, interview by author, 12/05/2012.
36 ibid.
to maintain and improve this relationship in order to satisfy the ethnic Chinese, especially business tycoons who have made large investments in China and play critical roles in its domestic patronage system. Conversely, it has to prevent Malaysian Chinese from getting too close to a powerful Beijing, consequently jeopardizing the country’s own security. To do so, while taking the initiative to engage Beijing in both bilateral cooperation and multilateral dialogues, the Malaysian government has simultaneously marginalized ethnic Chinese Malaysians in intergovernmental interactions.

The high volume of cultural exchanges between China and Malaysia should not be regarded as simply the combination of close government-to-government engagement and increasingly developed people-to-people interactions. Rather, it is a very complex network, in which the two governments and people with different backgrounds play distinct and variable roles. The ethnic Chinese in Malaysia rely heavily on the ethno-racial ties with China in order to protect their cultural identity in their political struggles against the dominant Malay majority. The Malaysian government, by contrast, usually plays a contradictory role in both promoting and curbing “Chinese culture.” Specifically, it restrains the development of Malaysian Chinese culture by prioritizing the interests of the bumiputera community in most of its political agendas. At the same time, however, it is also very active in improving bilateral ties with Beijing by promoting “Chinese culture from China” in its non-Chinese communities in order to encourage racial harmony among its constituent ethnic groups. In return, while benefiting tremendously from a momentum driven, in large part, by its close interaction with ethnic Chinese in Malaysia, Beijing has tactically maintained a good relationship with the Malay-controlled Malaysian government by acquiescing to their demand to respect the interests of the bumiputera, and by excluding ethnic Chinese Malaysians from certain sectors of inter-governmental cooperation.

The basic pattern of Malaysia’s ethnic composition is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. Therefore, ethnicity will continue to play an important role in shaping the bilateral relationship between China and Malaysia. This does not mean, however, that the current relationship is not subject to change. In fact, the UMNO-led Barisan National is facing an unprecedented challenge in the upcoming election from the opposition party coalition Pakatan Rakyat, consisting of the self-proclaimed non-ethnic-based People’s Justice Party, the Chinese-led Democratic Action Party and the deeply conservative Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (Malays). Regardless of the election’s final results, it is widely believed that the country’s domestic politics may be undergoing a major paradigm shift away from a largely ethnic-based arrangement. If this happens, it is unclear whether the China-Malaysia relationship will continue to follow its current trajectory.
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ABSTRACT

Despite the vast amount of research surrounding Western photojournalist’s role in the Vietnam War, little is known about photography and its uses by the Vietnamese communist leadership during and after the war. Western photojournalists aimed to highlight the unnecessary suffering of the GI and the brutal violence occurring overseas, but what were the Vietnamese aiming to achieve with their images? To answer this question, I conducted a comparative historical analysis of communist leadership relationships to modes of culture production, specifically photography. Through this comparative analysis I demonstrate how photographs have served the nation’s Communist leadership by aiding in the construction of a cultural memory and consequently, a politicized identity. This research is part of a growing body of research on memory, culture production, and their role in politics. By utilizing photography and drawing attention to its important role in struggles for power, it is my hope that this research will contribute and promote future related projects.

INTRODUCTION

How can the culture of an entire country be constructed? The answer lies in cultural memory. In this essay I will discuss memory, what it means for a culture to remember, how that cultural memory is constructed, produced, and for what purpose. I will look specifically at the changing Vietnamese cultural memory beginning from the Vietnam War to the present. Through a comparative historical analysis of communist leadership relationships to
modes of culture production I will demonstrate how photographs have served to construct cultural memory. It is through this constructed cultural memory that a heroic Vietnamese national identity has been constructed and exploited in Vietnam’s political sphere both in the past as well as the present.

It is important to understand that there is a definite tension between the uses of the past as a legitimizing device, as a means of constructing community, as well as its repackaging as a marketable commodity. Thus, the struggle over the past is an aspect of control over the future. Photography in Vietnam serves to reflect these tensions in the nation of Vietnam. The relationship between photography and the nation had not been substantially developed until 1945 and not fully realized until the Vietnam War. From the Vietnam War to present day, photography has served as a social mirror reflecting an image to the nation’s inhabitants. The “image in the mirror” comes from memory, more specifically cultural memory. This memory is constructed through re-writing the past to reflect the interests of those in power. To understand how this feat is accomplished it is important to understand memory and more importantly, memory’s relationship to identity.

CULTURAL MEMORY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

Memory establishes life’s continuity; it gives meaning to the present, as each moment is constituted by the past. As the means by which we remember who we are, memory provides the very core of identity. This understanding of memory can be extended to answer bigger questions of what it means for a nation to remember and the importance of constructing cultural memory. A nation’s memory of what their culture is can often appear similar to that of an individual. Memory serves as a tool for an individual to shape their identity and remember “who they are,” and in this way a collective cultural memory serve to shape the identity of a nation. The development of cultural memory is complex because it is bound to various political stakes and meanings. Cultural memory serves to both define culture and is the means by which its divisions and conflicting agendas are revealed.

To define memory as culture is, in effect, to enter into a debate about what that memory means because the cultural memory process does not efface an individual, but rather involves the interaction of individuals in the creation of cultural meaning. Cultural memory is a field of cultural negotiation through which different stories vie for a place in history. To summarize, the term “cultural memory” is to be understood as a memory that is shared outside the avenues of formal historical discourse yet is entangled with cultural products and imbued with cultural meaning. Cultural memory is produced in various forms, such as memorials, public art, popular culture literature, commodities, and activism. Understanding how individual memory leads to a collective cultural memory allows for the significance of cultural memory to be ascertained.

IMPORTANCE OF MEMORY IN POLITICS

Memory is a political force. Foucault asserts that “since memory is actually a very important factor in struggle, if one controls people’s memory, one controls their dynamism.” Cultural memory draws its significance from the ability to serve as a core of identity for a nation and political force that a core identity carries with it. Identity is an important political tool because leaders use identity to legitimize their questionable agendas in multicultural countries, to further undermine opposing voices, and to marginalize differing opinions. The process whereby identities become politicized as well as mobilized are in wars and their many different representational contexts (i.e. monuments, etc.), in order to

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4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
produce political resistance, social solidarity, and civic virtue. In Vietnam's history there are many examples of each of these political events as leaders have utilized a constructed identity to anchor their legitimacy to power. With this being understood I draw attention to the process by which a culture memory is produced.

PRODUCTION OF CULTURAL MEMORIES

In Destination Culture, Barbara Gimblett discusses how culture is produced. Her focus is on heritage as the new mode of culture production in the present and how it has recourse in the past. Gimblett emphasizes how:

*Heritage is not lost and found, stolen and reclaimed. Despite a discourse of conservation, preservation, restoration, reclamation, recovery, re-creation, recuperation, revitalization, and regeneration, heritage produces something new in the present that has recourse to the past. Such language suggests that heritage is there prior to its identification, evaluation, conservation, and celebration. By production, I do not mean that the result is not “authentic” or that it is wholly invented. Rather, I wish to underscore that heritage is not lost and found, stolen and reclaimed. It is a mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past.*

Gimblett's analysis of culture production serves as a tool for understanding photography in Vietnam.

As Gimblett's writings stress, culture is neither lost nor found. Culture is ubiquitous and takes on various forms. Vietnam is comprised of an ethnically diverse people, however the government has promoted one cultural identity, namely the identity constructed by the Communist party. At no point in Vietnam's history has a constructed culture been so clearly produced than of that surrounding the Vietnam War. This identity is remarkably visible in the photography of the Vietnamese during this period, and is even more identifiable when compared with that of the Americans.

CONTRASTING FOCUSES

Unlike Westerners who were primarily in Vietnam on a “voluntary basis and could walk away if they so desired, the freedom to leave their country and the war was not an option for Vietnamese photographers.” The war was at home for Vietnamese photographers and their contiguity to the domestic suffering of war permeated the meanings and subjects that Vietnamese photographers chose to capture, as well as into the images that the National Liberation Front promoted. In addition, Vietnamese photojournalism was not predicated on violence and disaster alone, but upon the placement of suffering within a broader spectrum of wartime experiences and subjectivities, and it thus produced a more extensive and informative visual history. As explained in Schwenkel’s writings, culture played a huge role in what was photographed by the Vietnamese during the war.

Unlike reporters working for the Western press, most of whom were independent of the war effort and thus regarded as “objective” outside observers, Vietnamese correspondents were considered cultural soldiers of the revolution, whose weapons consisted of pencils, paper, and in the case of photojournalists, cameras. In interviews and conversations, photographers stressed the importance of photography to serve the country, denounce the war to national and international audiences, and transmit and propagate information from the front. But they also emphasized their multivalent roles as cultural producers immersed in the social worlds of the people who comprised their subject matter. They endeavored to show the crimes, destruction, and techniques of war, as well as the cooperation, compassion, and social interactions among soldiers and villagers.

Despite the variety of cultural messages captured by Viet-

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9 Ibid
namese photographers, only those that shared the cultural wartime purposes of the National Liberation Front were widely circulated.

CONSTRUCTED CULTURAL MEMORY DURING THE WAR

The communist cultural message is characterized by a re-written past that reflected a heroic narrative and ultimately triumphant struggle against foreign domination, while inscribing the future as a vision of communist utopia achieved through the inexorable workings of History, Marxist style. Images circulated typically captured enthusiastic soldiers, crowds of joyous people (to convey popular support), and moments of victory. These messages are encapsulated in the subjects and circulations of what have now become iconic photos taken by Vietnamese photographers. The most widely circulated photo is that which captured the shooting down of an American F-105D during a raid on Hanoi. Another famous photograph is that of a young woman carrying a rifle while escorting a captured American pilot. Another is of a group of young soldiers smiling and an image capturing Northern Vietnamese forces towering over enemy corpses to solidify an image victory.

CONSTRUCTED CULTURAL MEMORY OF THE WAR TODAY

Today the Vietnam War is portrayed in a different, but very familiar way. Contrary to the graphically violent photographs that in the United States narrate the history of the war as a moral and political failure, images displayed in Vietnamese museums depict the virtues, hopes, labors, and triumphs of the revolution to produce a narrative of progressive and total victory. Images typically contain “themes of joy, play, enthusiasm and even love. Images in Vietnamese museums regularly show acts of labor and preparation for war, providing a visual testimony to Vietnam’s historical and heroic ‘spirit of resistance to foreign aggression in action.” Furthermore, Schwenkel emphasizes how these images re-inscribe the centrality of discourses of unity and solidarity to the war effort, as evident in photographs taken during or immediately after combat that foreground action and victory rather than casualties. Even when injured troops are present, the emphasis is on camaraderie (such as tending to their wounds) rather than on their pain and suffering.

EVIDENCE OF CONSTRUCTED CULTURAL MEMORY

As previously stated, American War photography served to construct a culture memory that starkly contrasts with that of the Vietnamese. The memory is one of a moral and political failure. Famous photographs that helped to sway American public opinion were aimed at capturing the unnecessary suffering of the American GI and the atrocities that occurred during the war. The Vietnamese government has taken these famous photos from Western culture and re-written their meanings to serve their interests. The Ministry of Culture takes this action because there are “political-ideological motivations for utilizing photography insofar as the state regularly invokes memories of war through images to commemorate and keep the spirit of the revolution alive, as well as to teach the youth about the past, (so that) there is political interest in emphasizing victorious achievements and collective acts of solidarity.”

Gimblette’s process of cultural production and Schwenkel’s notes about the significance of utilizing photography as a political tool is exemplified by the book *Vietnamese Photography in the 20th Century*. The book, released by Vietnam’s Ministry of Culture, features over 2,000 photos that are “closely linked to Vietnam

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12 Ibid

13 Ibid

14 Ibid
and its people through many historical ups and downs.” Among the numerous images, the book contains famous photos taken by Western photojournalists. The Ministry of Culture has taken these images and has explicitly re-captioned them in order to promote the Vietnamese government’s constructed cultural memory of the war.

Walter Cronkite wrote in LIFE, “correspondents and photographers in Vietnam could, accompany troops to wherever they could hitch a ride, and there was no censorship... That system—or lack of one—kept the American public well informed of our soldiers’ problems, their setbacks and their heroism.” Capturing images that highlighted the factors Cronkite mentioned was a main goal for American photojournalists. An example of this type of powerful imagery that came out of the Vietnam War is the photo “Reaching Out” taken by Larry Burrows. This iconic photo has been taken by the Ministry of Culture and re-captioned with the message “US troops died at the battlefields in Central Vietnam”. This caption demonstrates a stark contrast with the interpretation of the war offered in the original LIFE caption that reads “a wounded Marine desperately trying to comfort a stricken comrade after a fierce firefight.”

PURPOSES OF CONSTRUCTED CULTURAL MEMORY

The combination of the circulation of chosen images and their captioning by the Vietnamese government serves as a visual insight into the strategies and workings of constructing the cultural memory of a people’s war. Through a strategy of publicizing images that capture citizens of different ages and genders participating in the war effort, the government helped legitimate its claims to waging a “people’s war.” After the war, the re-captioning of famous photos helped the government hold on to this inherited right to power. The constructed historical narrative promotes the idea that the government in the past had fought and won the “people’s war,” and that the current government now continues to uphold its past goals and aspirations. The stake in maintaining this cultural memory of a “glorious war” lies in the power the memory has in legitimizing the government. Legitimacy is the main concern for the communist government of Vietnam.

The government’s concern with legitimacy manifests itself in the severe curtailment of civil and political rights in the hope of maintaining the one-party system that is seen as essential for the unity and prosperity of the country. These limitations stem from general anxieties about state independence, territorial integrity, and social cohesion. Vietnam extends this curtailment of civil and political rights to photographers and their photographs. The tension between government anxieties and the photographer’s artistic expressions are encapsulated in the significant changes in culture production following the Doi Moi reform periods.

THE DOI MOI REFORMS AND CULTURE PRODUCTION

After political reunification in 1975 the Communist leadership of Vietnam decided to pursue a second five year plan which aimed to integrate the North and South Vietnam economies as rapidly as possible with the socialist transformation of Vietnamese society being the ultimate goal. The term “socialism” held a particular meaning in Soviet-type economies, basically consisting of (i) allocation of resources through central planning and elimination of markets for goods and labor; (ii) ownership of all major means of production by the state, representing the whole society, and the elimination of private enterprise; and (iii) distribution of income

16 Ibid
19 Ibid
according to labor input and the elimination of wage differentials based on labor markets.\textsuperscript{21} The centralization of industry resulted in major economic problems such as high rates of inflation and underproduction of crops. As a result, Vietnam’s Communist Party made a decisive step to abandon the central planning model of socialism and to adopt a “market-oriented socialist economy under state guidance,” also known as the Doi Moi reforms, at its 6\textsuperscript{th} National Congress in December 1986.\textsuperscript{22}

Only fifteen years after the country was unified under communist rule, the leadership committed itself to implementing a market economy governed by the ethos of social Darwinian competition.\textsuperscript{23} The economic reforms known as Doi Moi are thought to have been a catalyst for the political liberalization of the country, which has allowed more open space for revisiting the past.\textsuperscript{24} The Doi Moi reforms have also led to the development of an art market and a growing tourism industry. Both of these markets have caused significant changes in the culture production of the country. As the politics of the country have been liberalized and the space for revisiting the past has become more open, photographers have been allowed to pursue themes that were once viewed as counter-revolutionary or decadent.

FOCUS OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION PRE-DOI MOI

Prior to the Doi Moi reforms photography typically contained Socialist Realist themes. This was because “historically, (this type of) artistic and cultural production (was) thought to embody and represent the spirit of the people and this was deemed central to the Vietnamese revolution and to the project of constructing a new socialist society.”\textsuperscript{25} In addition, prior to the politicization of Doi Moi aesthetics in Vietnam it “was the duty of the artists to support the war effort (while) anything else was seen as unacceptably decadent.”\textsuperscript{26} The communist leadership described photography prior to the Doi Moi reforms as “using a lens to serve the struggle for the right. The representative of the right and interest of the nation at that time was the Viet Minh.”\textsuperscript{27} Today the country views “such images as a necessary means to educate and motivate the youth. Photography is thus imagined to bridge the widening gaps between the past and the future: between generations who experienced war and generations born in its aftermath, which grew up in an era of increasing capitalist consumption and presumably no longer understand the sacrifices of their elders.”\textsuperscript{28}

Despite the continued use of photography as a cultural production tool in education that follows this heroic narrative, overall the country’s relationship with photography has dramatically changed following the advent of the Doi Moi reforms.

FOCUS OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION POST-DOI MOI

The Doi Moi reforms saved the Vietnamese communist leadership from irrelevance at a time when socialist regimes throughout Europe toppled, but the reforms also led to the integration of the country into the global economy.\textsuperscript{29} This integration produced the emergence of a private art market, which forced the communist leadership to re-think its relationship to photography. The re-interpretation of photography post-Doi Moi no longer emphasized its use as a tool for supporting the revolution and teaching about its victories, but changed its identity altogether. Photography today has been redefined by the communist leadership as a means of

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid  
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
political struggle for the working class and laborers.\(^{30}\) In addition, the communist leadership has refined the meaning of photography to the state as serving to “highlight the atmosphere of enthusiasm, happiness, and the devotion of their work (Vietnamese photographers), the goal of which is to contribute forces for the construction and development of the fatherland.”\(^{31}\)

**EVIDENCE OF NEW RELATIONSHIP TO CULTURE PRODUCTION**

The 25th National Photographic Exhibition captures Vietnam’s changed mode of culture production. This exhibition event was jointly organized between the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism in Vietnam and the Vietnam Association of Art Photographers in welcoming the 63rd anniversary of the National Day of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.\(^{32}\) The topic chosen was “The Beauty of the Vietnamese Land and People.” This topic choice reflects the country’s new aim of highlighting a “timeless beautiful landscape” that is attractive to tourists, as well as its effort to establish the nation’s photography in the international arena.\(^{33}\)

The government’s efforts to promote its beautiful landscape and to establish itself as a force in the international photography arena are also exemplified in the creation of the International Art Photo Contest. This contest was created and hosted in Vietnam in 1996 and is regularly held in the country every few years. The competition attracts over a thousand photographers from over 36 different countries with photos being judged by an international jury, while the event has been selected as one of the top ten outstanding cultural events of the year.\(^{34}\) The photos that are often awarded medals in the competition capture landscape, wildlife, portraits, and are sometimes simply aesthetically pleasing. While the competition is an exhibition that could never have existed before Doi Moi, after only ten years of reform, the contests highlights the nation’s new efforts of culture production both domestically and internationally. The photos themselves are no longer aimed at supporting post-revolutionary aspirations following formulaic historical narratives, but are aimed at engendering international interest.

**CONCLUSION**

Photographs serve as powerful evocations of historical experiences because of the way they leave an imprint on their viewers at the visual, psychological, and political levels.\(^{35}\) This power can serve governments well when constructing a national identity, as photos chosen can be used to evoke identity. In Vietnam the use of imagery to evoke historical memories has been demonstrated by the proliferation of selected photos during and after the Vietnam War. The images chosen were aimed at promoting a heroic historical narrative of a nation that fought off foreign invaders.

The Vietnam War has been frequently referred to as the “television war” in the United States, though it may be more accurate to describe it as the celluloid war due to the significant impact photos had in shifting public opinion, as well as photography’s availability to both sides in the war, as very few Vietnamese owned televisions.\(^{36}\) This “celluloid war” should continue as Vietnam’s politics continue to liberalize. As Vietnam’s integration into the international arena begins to solidify following the Doi Moi reforms, photography will play an increasingly prominent role in political critique. As an art market develops and tourism beckons, international forces will create a much more open space for revisiting the past. The communist heroic narrative will become increasing-

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32 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
ly challenged as the opportunities to revisit the past are utilized to provide competing historical narratives. Vietnam's leadership continues to curtail civil and political liberties, but as globalization begins to further influence the communist leadership, it can be expected that modes of culture production will continue to shift to preserve the nationally constructed cultural memory of the past in order to keep rightful claims to power in the present.

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THE SUCCESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL NGOs IN SUHARTO’S INDONESIA

Rachel Phoa

ABSTRACT

Despite the abundant research on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) during Suharto’s authoritarian regime in Indonesia, little research has focused specifically on environmental NGOs (ENGOs) during this period. However, given the relative success of ENGOs compared to many other NGOs under the Suharto regime, understanding why ENGOs succeeded can help us in understanding why or how NGOs succeed in authoritarian regimes. By means of an extensive survey of secondary literature on ENGOs in Indonesia as well as reports from prominent international NGOs and inter-governmental organizations, I conclude that the fundamental cause for the ENGOs’ success was international pressure on the Suharto regime to address the environmental damage that its extractive economic policies had caused. This pressure, combined with increasing government debt in the 1980s as a result of falling oil prices, worked to constrain the Suharto regime’s suppression of ENGOs through two main mechanisms: 1) the regime was forced to rely on ENGOs’ resources to address the extensive environmental damage and thus could not afford to suppress them completely, and 2) support from foreign governments and international NGOs for the work of Indonesian ENGOs made it harder for Suharto to suppress these ENGOs, even if he had wanted to. Thus, on the whole, this study adds to our understanding of how NGOs in authoritarian regimes may enjoy differing types of leverage against the government depending on the sector they operate in.
At the same time, Suharto’s rule, and in particular the latter half of his rule (1980s – 90s), was characterized by a “strengthening of state power” and a “steady weakening of... society-based forces” like NGOs. Although civil society actors were relatively active in the first half of Suharto’s regime (mid 1960s-70s), beginning in the 1980s, Suharto’s government engaged in a series of actions aimed at the “de-ideologisation” and “de-politicisation” of NGOs, in an attempt to curtail their political activities. For example, it established the principle of *perwadahkan* tunggal (the only, rightful place) whereby all NGOs were required to form an umbrella organization through which the government would carry out its “duties” of *pembinaan* (guidance) and *pengembangan* (development). This effectively meant that the government was able to monitor and curtail the activities of NGOs as it pleased. The government also passed the Law on Social Organizations (No. 8/1985) in 1985, which further increased its ability to control NGOs. This law required all NGOs to register with the government, placed restrictions on foreign funding that an NGO could receive, and gave the government the ability to dissolve any NGO that disrupted “public order and security.” Significantly, the vagueness of this last phrase gave the government wide rein to revoke the license of any NGO at will.

However, even during this period, Indonesian NGOs had some success in publicly advocating for more environmental regulation and stricter enforcement of these regulations by the Suharto regime. For example, in 1989, WALHI (the Indonesian nongovernmental Forum for the Environment, the umbrella organization for NGOs in Indonesia) took Indorayon, one of the largest government-backed pulp and paper companies, to court for allegedly violating the environmental regulation that environmental impact assessments must be carried out before beginning development. Although WALHI lost the court case on a technicality, through the case it managed to establish the right of NGOs to sue the government to force it to implement or enforce its own laws.

Moreover, there is evidence that the Suharto government was actually constrained by the advocacy of NGOs. For example, in June 1990, the government decided to establish an Environmental Control Agency (Bapedal) that subsequently went on to enforce industrial pollution regulations in an unprecedentedly aggressive manner. The reason for this became clear when the Indonesian Assistant Minister for the Environment admitted that “increasing NGO pressure” was one of the main reasons for the zeal shown by Bapedal in prosecuting hundreds of companies.

So why were NGOs able to exist and function in Indonesia even though they often worked against the Suharto regime? I argue that the fundamental cause for the NGOs’ success was international pressure on the Suharto regime to address the environmental damage that its extractive economic policies had caused. This pressure, combined with increasing government debt in the 1980s as a result of falling oil prices, worked to constrain the Suharto regime’s suppression of NGOs through two main mechanisms: 1) the regime was forced to rely on NGOs’ resources to address extensive environmental damage and thus could not afford to suppress them completely, and 2) support from powerful foreign governments and international NGOs for the work of Indonesian NGOs made it harder for Suharto to suppress NGOs. My argument will focus on the mobilization and activities of NGOs in Indonesia in the 1980s and 1990s, up to Suharto’s resignation in 1998, because during this period NGOs were the most constrained by the Suharto regime.
WHY ENVIRONMENTAL NGOS IN PARTICULAR?

The mechanisms that I highlight in my thesis could also apply to other NGOs in Indonesia, especially those engaged in support services or development work. However, I argue that these mechanisms were especially significant for ENGOs’ compared to other types of NGOs’ because of the unusually high international concern for the environment in Indonesia. Correspondingly, there was exceptional pressure on Suharto to address these environmental problems.

International concern about the environment in Indonesia was unusually high mostly because Suharto’s policies had major global environmental effects, such as the haze from forest fires, and the destruction of globally significant biodiversity-rich forests. An example of this international concern can be seen in the World Wide Fund for Nature’s (WWF) report on the 1997 haze. The Director General of the WWF wrote in the preface of the report that the WWF had “watched in horror” as the forest fires “rage[d] out of control in Indonesia,” and called the fires a “planetary disaster.”

At the same time, in a separate report, the WWF identified the Suharto government’s overly-permissive policies on logging and plantation concessions and failure to enforce its own environmental regulations as the main causes for these fires. Other international agencies also showed concern over Indonesia’s environmental problems. Indeed, even the World Bank, when it began to pay more attention to environmental concerns in the 1990s, identified Indonesia as one of 20 countries where tropical forests were “seriously threatened” by government policy, and thus pursued a conservation agenda within the country. Thus, we can see that the severe environmental impacts caused by Suharto’s economic policies did indeed spark high international environmental interest in Indonesia.

SUHARTO’S RELIANCE ON ENGOS DOMESTICALLY

International pressure on Suharto’s regime to deal with the environmental problems in Indonesia, combined with a decline in oil prices that hurt the government financially, led to two distinct mechanisms that constrained the regime from completely suppressing ENGOs. First, in addressing the extensive environmental damage that it had caused, the Suharto government was required to rely on ENGOs’ resources and thus could not afford to eliminate them. On the other hand, international support for these ENGOs from foreign governments and organizations that the Indonesian government relied on for aid made it increasingly difficult for Suharto to suppress these ENGOs. In this section, I present evidence relating to the first mechanism.

In the 1980s, as the result of a decline in oil prices, the Indonesian government saw its debt burden increase significantly from 6.7% of total expenditures in 1980 to 33.2% in 1988. As a result, it was forced to cut spending, and reduced non-aid development expenditures from 38.3% of total expenditure in 1980 to just 13% in 1988. This drastic cut in expenditure meant that relying on NGOs to provide services became an attractive alternative. Thus, although the government “deeply distrusted” ENGOs because of their advocacy activities, it could not completely suppress them due to its reliance on their help in tackling environmental problems.

Statements and actions by the Suharto government provide evidence that it came to realize that its own agencies could not sufficiently implement programs aimed at solving environmental problems without assistance from “intermediary organizations.”

13 Claude Martin, preface to The Year The World Caught Fire by Nigel Dudley, Jean-Paul Jeanrenaud and Sue Stolton (Gland, Switzerland: World Wide Fund for Nature International, 1997).
14 Rob Glastra, Eric Wakker and Wolfgang Richert, Oil Palm Plantations and Deforestation in Indonesia (Dreieich, Germany: World Wide Fund for Nature Germany, 2002), 4-5.
16 Hadiwinata, Politics of NGOs, 92-93.
18 Gordon, “NGOs, the Environment and Political Pluralism,” 17.
19 Hadiwinata, Politics of NGOs, 92.
Suharto himself had requested the “assistance and participation of the whole Indonesian people” because his government could not implement all of its development programs alone.¹⁰ However, his government only formalized this request for assistance in the environmental sector, perhaps because of the especially severe environmental problems in the country. The government passed the Undang Undang Lingkungan Hidup (Law of the Protection of the Environment) in 1982, which guaranteed a greater role for NGOs in environmental management and development.²¹ Indeed, following the passage of this law, the number of NGOs in Indonesia grew rapidly as “policy change catalyzed NGO formation.”²²

Further evidence for my argument that Suharto’s government did not completely suppress NGOS because it relied on them comes from several actual cases where the government actively enlisted NGOS to carry out government environmental programs. One prominent case was the government’s 1989 showcase Prokasih-Program Kali Bersih (clean river program).²³ This program was aimed at cleaning up, within two years, the 24 most polluted rivers in Indonesia. Initially, the Environment Ministry, along with the various provincial government authorities, took the lead in implementing the program. However, when it realized that it had insufficient resources to implement the program fully, it “actively encouraged” NGOS to work with local community groups to monitor pollution levels and the activities of polluting companies.²⁴ Another national environmental program where the Suharto government enlisted the help of NGOS was its Pengendalian Penghijauan Nasional (national conservation and reafforestation Programme). In this case, WALHI carried out most of the education aspects of the program, thus eliminating the need for the government to pay for such activities.²⁵ Lastly, Suharto’s regime also relied heavily on the WWF to maintain its national parks system. It delegated the management of 17 of its 32 national parks to the WWF, which in turn provided U.S. $5 million of its own funds and 15 staff to assist in the running of these parks.²⁶

The Suharto government even publicly acknowledged its reliance on NGOS to tackle environmental problems. For example, Suharto once presented a national award to a Yogyakarta-based NGO, Bethesda CD, for working to ensure that surrounding communities were able to access unpolluted drinking water.²⁷ On occasion, government officials also offered wary praise for the support of NGOS. For example, in 1994, Djon Sani, the head of the Sub-Directorate on Development and Guidance within the Office of Social and Political Affairs commented that domestic NGOS were “quite promising in terms of becoming a national asset, in their efforts to improve the quality of life and the welfare of the people,” although he still criticized NGOS that he claimed had become involved in “opposition activity.”²⁸

Thus, we can see that Suharto’s regime actually relied significantly on NGOS to address the environmental problems that had been created by its economic policies. This helps explain why the government did not want to suppress these NGOS too strongly.

INFLUENCE OF INTERNATIONAL ACTORS

The high level of international concern for Indonesia’s environmental problems indirectly contributed to Suharto’s need to rely on NGOS to provide environmental services. However, it was also, in itself, an important factor that constrained Suharto from suppressing NGOS. Foreign governments and international groups concerned about the environment in Indonesia often sup-

²¹ Hadwinata, Politics of NGOS, 92-93.
ported the advocacy activities of Indonesian ENGOs, and were able to exert pressure on Suharto in a way that domestic political actors could not. Again, one important factor behind their position of power was a decrease in oil prices. As I noted earlier, the drop in oil prices resulted in a severe decline in government revenue and a rise in government debt. This not only had the effect of constraining domestic government expenditure, but also reduced Indonesia’s financial independence, leaving the government much more dependent on the good will of foreign donors. Indeed, at the time, the Suharto government was receiving financial assistance from several foreign governments as well as international organizations like the World Bank. This left it susceptible to pressure from these governments and organizations, and enabled these actors to significantly constrain the Suharto regime with regard to the suppression of Indonesian ENGOs.

A stark illustration of how international actors were able to constrain the Suharto regime can be seen in the Suharto government’s reaction to the perennial Southeast Asian “haze” problem caused mostly by forest fires in Indonesia. In 1995, when Suharto’s own environment minister tried to take action against three plantation companies that had set fires contributing to the haze, he was stopped by the agriculture ministry, which was backed by Suharto. In contrast, during the especially severe 1997 haze, both Singapore and Malaysia were upset enough to publicly express their displeasure over the failure of Suharto’s regime to control the forest fires that had caused haze in their countries. Perhaps because of the aid these countries had provided to Indonesia to combat the haze, among other problems, Suharto was concerned enough to apologize publicly twice, his first public apologies. In addition, the environment minister was empowered to enforce regulations that prohibited the use of fire to clear land, while the forestry minister was even able to revoke the logging licenses of 176 concessionaires. Thus, we can see the significance of international actors in constraining the Suharto government.

Powerful international actors also directly worked against the Suharto regime’s suppression of ENGOs by providing concrete assistance to these groups. One major way in which this happened was when foreign actors used their own leverage to provide funds to Indonesian ENGOs, even in the face of government displeasure. Through the 1985 Law on Social Organizations, the Suharto government had placed restrictions on the ability of NGOs to receive funding from foreign sources. The Suharto government was wary that foreign funding would increase the power of domestic NGOs. However, powerful foreign organizations were still able to pressure the Suharto government into allowing domestic ENGOs to receive foreign funding. An example comes from the case of WALHI, which variously received funds from the US Agency for International Development (USAID), as well as the Canadian, Dutch, Swedish and Japanese Ministries of Foreign Affairs. There is evidence that the U.S. government was pressuring Suharto by implying that it would only continue supplying Indonesia with high-tech military equipment, such as F-15 aircraft, in return for the government’s acceptance of USAID funding for NGOs like WALHI. This demonstrates one way in which support from powerful international actors was important in helping Indonesian ENGOs survive despite the restrictive laws placed on them.

Other evidence for the importance of international leverage comes from the decision of Indonesian ENGOs to consciously enlist the help of powerful international actors in their advocacy against the Suharto government. One example was when WAHLI

29 Eldridge, Non-Government Organizations and Democratic Participation in Indonesia, 198.
publicized an exchange of correspondence between twelve Indonesian ENGO representatives and the president of the World Bank. The ENGO representatives had demanded that the World Bank withhold funding until the Indonesian government could prove that the “large scale resettlement of farmers to the outer Indonesian islands is ecologically sustainable,” and would not “adversely affect primary tropical forests, important wetlands, and other key wildland areas.” Another example involves the International NGO Group on Indonesia (INGI), a network of Indonesian NGOs including WAHLI. In 1995, INGI conducted interviews with several donor governments and the World Bank in order to educate them about the environmental impact of the Kedung Ombo dam. As a result, several European countries pulled funding from dam projects in Indonesia, significantly angering the Suharto regime. Overall, the decision by Indonesian ENGOs to leverage foreign governments and international organizations that the Suharto regime depended on, and the success of their efforts, provide further evidence that these actors were effective in supporting Indonesian ENGOs advocating against Suharto regime policies.

WAHLI, in particular, was especially successful in leveraging powerful international actors to boost its domestic stature. Indeed, Joseph Molyneux argues that during the Suharto era, WAHLI was foremost in prominence among Indonesian NGOs and wielded significant power in the Indonesian domestic political scene because of its global “web of influential contacts” that included foreign governments, international NGOs and intergovernmental organizations. For example, senior WAHLI staff received invitations from several Western governments, such as the U.S. and Sweden, to participate in all expense paid trips similar to those offered by the U.S. State Department for senior foreign government officials. These trips enabled WAHLI to form solid links with these governments, and gave them influence in the relationships of those governments and the Indonesian government. Since the Suharto government depended on assistance and goodwill from these Western governments, this tremendously increased the political power that WAHLI enjoyed within Indonesia, and provides another explanation why the Indonesian government did not shut it down.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have argued that ENGOs were able to operate and advocate openly in Indonesia in the 1980s and 1990s as a result of two main mechanisms: 1) Suharto’s reliance on ENGOs to provide environmental services, which made him reluctant to fully suppress them, and 2) international support and funding for Indonesian ENGOs constrained Suharto’s ability to suppress them, even if he had wanted to. However, I also highlight that the underlying causal factor was actually Suharto’s extractive economic policies, coupled with a fall in oil prices in the 1980s. As a result of the high level of environmental degradation caused by his economic policies, Suharto faced strong international pressure to resolve Indonesia’s severe environmental problems. However, his ability to do so was hampered by a fall in oil prices in the 1980s, which increased his government’s debt and reduced the level of expenditure it could afford. Consequently, he was forced to rely on domestic ENGOs as well as international aid, leaving him unable to completely suppress ENGOs despite the existence of laws that technically empowered him to do so.

REFERENCES


THE RELEVANCE OF KAUTILYA’S ARTHASHASTRA

Ramanathan Veerappan

ABSTRACT

This paper demonstrates that Kautilya’s Arthashastra, the great ancient Indian political and economic treatise, is relevant today for its similarities to classical economics, its practical applications to the modern corporate world, and the importance of Kautilya as a cultural icon. Before discussing Arthashastra’s contemporary relevance, some background information on the treatise—especially the issue of its authorship—will be provided. Focus will then shift to the usefulness of Kautilya’s strategies for the modern corporation. The relevance of the Arthashastra to business and economics does not lie entirely in its application to the corporate world; Kautilya’s text is important for its striking similarities to later Western schools of thought. In this paper, the specific Western school of thought that will be examined is classical economics. Because Kautilya was able to anticipate important political and economic ideas that individuals in the West would not conceive of until many centuries after his death, Kautilya has become an iconic figure in India and his ideas have become a source of great pride. This pride, when combined with the timely rediscovery of the Arthashastra in the early 1900s, allowed Kautilya to become a figure that nationalists used to place Indian culture and thought on par with Western culture and thought. This paper will show that Kautilya and his famous treatise are relevant to the modern world for a variety of reasons and that Arthashastra deserves a place among the world’s greatest texts, ensuring that it will never again be lost to the world.

Kautilya, also known as Chanakya or Vishnu Gupta, was the chief advisor to the first Mauryan emperor—Chandragupta Maurya—and the legendary author of one of India’s foremost political and economic texts, the Arthashastra. 2300 years ago his ideas helped build the Mauryan Empire, which at its height was one of the world’s largest empires and one of the most extensive empires on the Indian subcontinent. Kautilya’s theories were ahead of his time and could have been an important influence on later systems of thought, such as classical economics and Machiavellian politics, had Arthashastra not been lost from the end of the Gupta Dynasty (c. 500 CE) until the early 20th century. Kautilya’s work has reemerged and scholars are examining its significance in light of modern politics, economics, and society. Although the Arthashastra is considered to be “an ancient system of thought designed for feudal states which were often, if not constantly at war,”1 “its precepts about social, political and economic structure are relevant even today.”2 India’s National Security Advisor Shiv Shankar Menon has recently acknowledged the importance of Kautilya’s text stating “Arthashastra is a serious manual on statecraft, on how to run a state, informed by a higher purpose, clear and precise in its prescriptions, the result of practical experience of running a state. It is not just a normative text but a realist description of the art of running a state.”3 As men like Shiv Shankar Menon continue to discover and embrace Kautilya’s Arthashastra as one of India’s most important treatises, it has the potential to emerge on the forefront of modern economic thought for its striking similarities to classical economics and its relevance to the corporate world. Similarly, Kautilya himself has the potential to enter the pantheon of India’s indigenous “politic-cultural” icons not only for the contribution of his ideas, but also for his role as a figure used by the Indian independence movement to place Indian thought on par with Western

2 Kautilya’s Arthashastra: Its Contemporary Relevance, (Pune: Indian Merchants’ Chamber & Indian Merchants’ Chamber Economic Research and Training Foundation, 2005), 14
3 “India needs to develop its own doctrine for strategic autonomy: NSA”
I will first discuss the *Arthashastra’s* main ideas, and will then shift my focus to the all-important topic of the *Arthashastra’s* authorship. In my discussion of the treatise’s ideas and authorship, I will provide background information on the Mauryan Empire and the political and economic environment of northern India at Kautilya’s time. The *Arthashastra* is a political treatise that is focused on realpolitik, which refers to a set of political and diplomatic strategies focused on power, practicality, and material gains as opposed to strategies that are based on ideological, moral, and ethical premises. Perhaps the best known treatise on realpolitik is Niccolò Machiavelli’s *The Prince, and for this reason the Arthashastra* has often been compared to that work. However, scholars often regard Kautilya’s work as even more radical than Machiavelli’s text. German sociologist Max Weber compares the two texts, stating that “truly radical ‘Machiavellianism’, in the popular sense of that word, is classically expressed in Indian literature in the *Arthashastra* of Kautilya (written long before the birth of Christ, ostensibly in the time of Chandragupta): compared to it, Machiavelli’s *The Prince* is harmless.” Weber’s acknowledgment of the *Arthashastra* as an older and far more radical version of Machiavelli’s text has had a profound impact on its legacy. For now it is important to note that the text’s primary focus is on promoting a forceful style of political pragmatism. However, Kautilya doesn’t just outline harsh strategies; he also provides justification for using them. Roger Boesche claims that “Although Kautilya proposed an elaborate welfare state in domestic politics ... he proved willing to defend the general good of this monarchy with harsh measures.” Kautilya only considered using extreme tactics if they were employed for the good of the state as a whole. He explains that the primary task of a king applying the *Arthashastra*’s strategies is promoting the welfare of the people. In Book I of the *Arthashastra* he states that for a king “In the happiness of his subjects lies his happiness; in their welfare his welfare; whatever pleases himself he shall not consider as good, but whatever pleases his subjects he shall consider as good.” The ideal Kautilyan king exists to promote the welfare of his subjects, an idea I will explore in more detail when I apply the *Arthashastra*’s ideas to the corporate world, specifically to the concept of value-based management. Having discussed the *Arthashastra*’s main ideas, I will now shift my focus to the treatise’s authorship.

The text of the *Arthashastra* itself refers to its legendary author by the name of Kautilya; however, Kautilya did not write the *Arthashastra* based solely on his ideas. Instead, Kautilya built upon the preexisting political and economic ideas present in ancient northern India and consolidated them into a single text. While Kautilya’s predecessors may have independently developed many of the *Arthashastra*’s ideas, Kautilya himself receives the most portion of credit for writing the text. This is likely due to the success that Kautilya had in implementing the *Arthashastra*’s ideas. Kautilya and Chandragupta Maurya used the political and economic ideas of ancient India to build the Mauryan Empire, which was to become the first pan-Indian empire. Before the advent of the Mauryan Empire, smaller regional kingdoms dominated the subcontinent. Using the strategies outlined in the *Arthashastra*, Kautilya and his king were able to establish an extensive empire in a region dominated by these smaller kingdoms. Therefore, Kautilya received credit for writing the *Arthashastra* because he was the first to successfully use the treatise’s ideas of realpolitik to build a vast state spanning northern India. Kautilya also takes credit for the *Arthashastra*’s authorship in part due to the need of Indian nationalists to have an iconic figure to place on par with Machiavelli and the other great European political theorists. The practical necessity of a single individual who could rival great Western thinkers spurred the recognition of Kautilya as the primary author of the *Arthashastra*.

Admittedly, Indian nationalists did this largely out of convenience, however; and a variety of scholars have downplayed Kau-

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4 Gautam, P.K. *Endogenous Politico-Cultural Resources: Kautilya’s Arthashastra and India’s Strategic Culture*
tiliya’s importance. For example, Thomas R. Trautmann believes that the Arthashastra is actually a compilation of several texts by multiple authors—of which Kautilya was probably one—and that Kautilya himself was neither the final author nor editor of the text because it “was probably not composed until the post-Mauryan pe-
riod,” a few centuries after Kautilya’s death.\footnote{Thomas Trautmann, India: Brief History of Civilization, (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2011), 98.} To further marginalize Kautilya’s role, Thomas Burrow has argued that the legendary author Kautilya is not the same as the historical figure Chanakya, the chief political advisor to Chandragupta Maurya.\footnote{Thomas Burrow, “Kautilya and Chanakya,” Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (1968): 48-49.} If Burrow’s claim is correct, it means that the two biggest accomplishments ascribed to the legendary Kautilya—writing the Arthashastra and helping build the great Mauryan Empire—were actually performed by different people. Although the arguments of Trautmann, Burrow, and others downplay the centrality of Kautilya himself, the rest of this paper shows that this legendary figure—who may in fact be a combination of historical figures, including the Arthashastra’s various authors and Chandragupta Maurya’s political advisor—still has the potential to emerge as one of India’s great politico-cultural icons, joining the ranks of Ashoka, Buddha, Akbar, Gandhi, and Nehru. Out of convenience and due to the importance of Kautilya’s iconicity to the Indian nationalist movement, Kautilya shall henceforth be referred to as the sole author of the Arthashastra and the chief minister to Chandragupta Maurya, although many claim that the legendary figure is actually a combination of multiple people. Despite the Arthashastra’s authorship being subject to considerable debate, there is no question as to the significance of its ideas, both for their similarities to later Western schools of thought and their relevance to modern corporate structures and value-based management. I will first examine the text’s relevance to modern economics, and then shift my focus to Kautilya’s role during the Indian independence movement, and finally to the legacy of the Arthashastra and its legendary author.

At first glance, it may seem far-fetched to be able to apply the Arthashastra’s ideas to the modern corporate world. On the surface, Kautilya’s Arthashastra and its concepts of realpolitik appear most relevant to expansionist regional states. In discussing his ideas on the ideal state, Kautilya writes from “the point of view that kingship is the normal and desirable form of government,” while stressing the need for a hierarchy of advisors to assist the king.\footnote{Kautilya. Arthashastra. Translated by R. Shamasastry. Bangalore: Government Press, 1915, 319-325.} Thus, Kautilya’s ideal state is structured along monarchical feudal lines, so that the Arthashastra’s strategies seemingly apply best to systems of this type. Kautilya outlines the structure of his ideal state in Book VI of the Arthashastra, suggesting that “The king, the minister, the country, the fort, the treasury, the army and the friend are the (fundamental) elements of sovereignty.”\footnote{Timothy W. Starzl and Krishna S. Dhir, “Strategic Planning 2300 Years Ago: the Strategy of Kautilya,” Management International Review, 26, no. 4 (1986): 75.} Similarly, Timothy W. Starzl and Krishna S. Dhir argue that a feudal system is still to be found in modern corporate structures. They point out the strikingly similar features that corporations share with feudal states, such as a “head of state” in the form of a CEO, who depends heavily on a set of “ministers”—VP’s and division heads—who control different areas of the CEO’s domain in the name of their “ruler.”\footnote{Ibid., 76} Also important is the fact that in corporations and feudal states alike, no individual’s position is secure.\footnote{Kauliya. Arthashastra. Translated by R. Shamasastry. Bangalore: Government Press, 1915, 391-409.} The modern CEO demands success from the firm’s employees; if an individual does not meet certain standards, he or she may face punishment for his or her failures. Likewise, Kautilya also suggests that no individuals’s position is secure, stating in Book VII of the Arthashastra:

it is verily the king who attends to the business of appointing ministers, priests, and other servants, including the superintendents of several departments, the application of remedies against the troubles of his people, and of his kingdom, and the adoption of progressive measures; when his ministers fall into troubles, he employs others; he is ever ready to bestow rewards on the worthy and inflict punishments on the wicked.\footnote{Kautilya. Arthashastra. Translated by R. Shamasastry. Bangalore: Government Press, 1915, 391-409.}
Thus, the *Arthashastra* remains as relevant today as during the era of feudal states because "There is probably no place or system of controlling the world today that more closely resembles the highly competitive, dangerous, and fast moving world of the feudal state, with the accompanying great rewards for success, and great punishment for failure than the modern business or corporation."15 Kautilya’s treatise is focused primarily on forming and then controlling of a very particular type of organizational structure. He provides a practical way for managing these specific structures. Due to the inherent similarities between the structures of the political states described by Kautilya and the modern corporation, Starzl and Dhir claim that “the mapping of the structure of a corporation onto the structure of feudal states is not too difficult to do, and thus the application of the *Arthashastra* to the modern corporate world should be no more difficult to accomplish.”16 As Starzl and Dhir have shown, the *Arthashastra* is relevant to the corporate world and its strategies can be applied to the management of corporate structures. There is certainly potential for Kautilya’s strategies to have a significant impact on the formation and maintenance of corporations, which are—from a purely organizational and structural standpoint—the modern day equivalent of feudal states.

Following Starzl and Dhir demonstrating that the strategies of the *Arthashastra* are applicable to the corporate world due to the similarities in structural organization between the ideal Kautilyan feudal state and the modern corporation, scholars began to apply Kautilyan strategies to business. One such example is N. Siva Kumar and U.S. Rao’s derivation of value-based management guidelines from the *Arthashastra*. Value-based management refers to the management approach that ensures corporations are managed consistently on value, usually with the focus of maximizing shareholder value. Kumar and Rao’s approach for developing a “value based management framework” focused on five key components: “organizational philosophy, valued based leadership, inter-

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16 Ibid.

18 Ibid., 416
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid., 416-417
21 Ibid., 419
22 Ibid., 419-420
these Kautilian guidelines would, in theory, benefit corporations institutionally deficient in ethical behavior. The fourth component of Kumar and Rao’s framework for value-based management is the accomplishment of organizational purpose. This component of the framework builds off of the previous three components because an organization can easily achieve its goals if it has a well-defined organizational philosophy, a capable leader who exists primarily for the accomplishment of organizations goals, and an organizational environment that promotes ethical behavior. The final component Kumar and Rao discuss in their framework on Kautilian value-based management is feedback on performance. Because the central tenet of both value-based management and the Arthashastra’s definition of the ideal king is that a leader and organization exist primarily for the benefit of stakeholders, getting feedback from these stakeholders is essential. Kumar and Rao claim that “through such feedback, the leader is supposed to sustain various activities and thus fulfill the organizational philosophy.”

The concept of feedback from stakeholders not only completes the Kautilian total framework for value-based management, but synthesizes the other components and applies them directly to the main principle of value-based management. Kumar and Rao have shown that the Arthashastra’s strategies do indeed have practical applications, so Kautila’s ideas remain as relevant to the modern corporate world as they were to the world of ancient Indian kingdoms.

The Arthashastra’s contemporary relevance does not, however, lie solely in its potential for application to the world of the modern corporation. The treatise is also important for its similarities to the classical economics school of thought developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries primarily by European economists Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, David Hume, Thomas Malthus, David Ricardo, and Jean-Baptiste Say. Although Kautilya had no influence on these economists because his work was lost during the 18th and 19th centuries, his work is significant in what Charles Waldauer, William J. Zahka, and Surendra Pal call a “neglected precursor to classical economics.” Kautilya’s text was centuries ahead of Western economics and anticipated many of the ideas of the great European classical economists. As Waldauer, Zahka, and Pal point out, the three principal economic ideas contained in the Arthashastra are (1) the value of international trade and recognizing that imports are just as important—if not more important—than exports, (2) a fair and efficient tax system that supplies the states with income, but does not stifle economic growth, and (3) a “just” wage system rewarding workers for the economic value they create, while paying them based on the amount of time put in and the skills necessary for their work. All three of these ideas are not only central to Kautilya’s Arthashastra, but to the classical economics school of thought developed over two thousand years after Kautilya’s death. The Arthashastra was clearly ahead of its time, and anticipated the ideas that Smith, Hume, Ricardo, Mill and others developed independently of Kautilya. If Kautilya’s work had not been lost, it may have had a huge influence on classical economics.

One can only speculate that trade theory, principles of taxation, and the labor theory of value associated with classical economic thought might have evolved much earlier (perhaps in the fourteenth or fifteenth century) if Kautilya’s views had been known to scholars such as St. Thomas Aquinas in the late middle ages or early Mercantilists in the Renaissance.

Unfortunately, Kautilya’s work remained lost for a great period of time, so the Arthashastra was never able to realize its possible contribution to world economic thought. However, India still finds great pride in the fact that it “beat” the West to many of the political and economic concepts laid out in Kautilya’s text.

Because his political and economic ideas were well ahead of his Western counterparts like Niccolò Machiavelli and Adam Smith, Kautilya earned a special place among Indian nationalists during the Indian independence movement of the first half of the 20th century. The timely discovery of the Arthashastra by Sanskrit scholar-librarian R. Shamasas in 1904 allowed Kautilya’s text to attain prominence in the independence movement. Various views developed regarding the salience of Kautilya for India’s indepen-

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23 Ibid., 421
25 Ibid., 102
26 Ibid., 107
dence leaders, most notably India’s first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. As the German political scientist Michael Liebig pointed out in a recent presentation, one view “contends that the Indian independence movement needed Kautilya vis-à-vis the colonial power in order to demonstrate that the ancient Arthashastra was at par with, or even superior to, the ancient and medieval works of European political theory, for example, Machiavelli’s The Prince.”27 The discovery of indigenous political and economic ideas dating back to the third century BCE—long before Western scholars would independently develop similar ideas—became a great source of pride for Indians. As Liebig stated in his presentation, Kautilya is “present in the Indian public mind as a metaphor” for “(1) the cunning politician getting the job done, and (2) the historical personality who unifies India.”28 Thus, Kautilya is part of the “broad spectrum of Indian politico-cultural icons”29 consisting of such figures as “Buddha, Asoka, Akbar, Aurobindo, Gandhi, and Nehru,”30 who helped unify, metaphorically or literally, India.

As Liebig demonstrated, Kautilya’s importance to the Indian nationalists of the 20th century lay in his iconicity and in the Arthashastra’s incredible political and economic ideas. This is not the entire extent of Kautilya’s significance to the nationalist movement, however, as the nationalists were also drawn to his idea of a pan-Indian state. As mentioned earlier, the Mauryan Empire that Kautilya and Chandragupta built was the first state to span the Indian subcontinent. Kautilya himself writes of his desires for the king to be a world conqueror, stating that only after “Having conquered the earth with its people of distinct castes and divisions of religious life, should [the king] enjoy it by governing it in accordance with the duties prescribed to kings.”31 Thus, the Arthashastra’s legendary author believed that the ideal king would be a world conqueror. While world conquest and the creation of a pan-Indian state may appear to be entirely different ideas, Roger Boesche claims that the two are in fact synonymous. Boesche claims that “Kautilya apparently meant by the phrase ‘conquering the world’ something like conquering up to what Indians regarded as the natural borders of India, from the Himalayas all the way south to the Indian Ocean, and from the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal.”32 In fact, Kautilya mentions in Book IX of the Arthashastra that “Country (space) means the earth; in it the thousand yojanas of the northern portion of the country that stretches between the Himalayas and the ocean form the dominion of no insignificant emperor.” This region described as the “world” simply refers to the extent of the Indian subcontinent, bound in the north by the Himalayas and in the south, east, and west by water. Therefore, Kautilya believes that a true world conqueror needs only control the region of India, as opposed the entire world.

This makes Kautilya one of the earliest—if not the earliest—proponents of a pan-Indian state. This was of particular importance to the Indian nationalists, who were fighting to establish an Indian-controlled state spanning the entire subcontinent. The nationalists saw the Arthashastra as a potential source of historical support for their idea of a single Indian nation. Kautilya and the Arthashastra were, thus, significant to the Indian nationalists for three reasons: (1) the legendary Kautilya’s iconicity; (2) the Arthashastra’s political and economic ideas, which preceded its Western counterparts; and (3) the Arthashastra’s envisioning of a single state spanning the Indian subcontinent.

Although Kautilya and the Arthashastra were important to the Indian nationalist movement, their significance faded immediately after India and Pakistan gained independence. However, Kautilya’s importance as an icon is once again on the rise. Michael Liebig believes that Kautilya and his fellow Indian politico-cultural icons have the potential to have a huge impact on the modern world, provided India can promote its diverse, yet cohesive cultural resources in a manner similar to China’s promotion of Confucianism.33 This means that India can make Kautilyan thought as well

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27 Gautam, P.K. Endogenous Politico-Cultural Resources: Kautilya’s Arthashastra and India’s Strategic Culture
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
33 Gautam, P.K. Endogenous Politico-Cultural Resources: Kautilya’s Arthashastra and India’s Strategic Culture
known and as relevant as it deserves by making resources about the *Arthashastra* more widely available in the world, and by encouraging research and discussion on Kautilya and the *Arthashastra*. Perhaps this discussion may expand the *Arthashastra*’s reach beyond the scope of Indian nationalism, Western business, and the schools of Western thought with which it shares many similarities. Kautilya and the *Arthashastra* certainly have the potential make a significant impact upon a variety of fields not directly addressed in this paper.

Unfortunately, as of today Kautilya and his famous *Arthashastra* are still little known outside of South Asia and South Asian Studies. This is despite the fact that Kautilya not only anticipated the ideas of Western thinkers like Machiavelli and Adam Smith, but combined the concepts of realpolitik and classical economics into a single text distinct from its European counterparts. In fact, Kautilya’s linking of politics and economics is perhaps the greatest aspect of the *Arthashastra*. In discussing the concept of good governance by the ideal state “Kautilya equates political governance with economic governance” where “the end is economic governance while political governance is a means.”\(^\text{34}\) Just as in Machiavellian politics, the concept of the “end justifies the means” is a basis for Kautilyan thought. Good governance in a Kautilyan sense, then, whether political or economic, is about “justifying the ends and means as the socio, economic, and political conditions demand.”\(^\text{35}\)

Because the *Arthashastra* is distinct from its Western counterparts in its synthesis of the ideas of realpolitik and classical economics into the single concept of good governance, Kautilya’s text deserves a place among the world’s great political and economic treatises. More importantly, the works of Starzl and Dhir, Kumar and Rao, and a number of other scholars have shown that the *Arthashastra* is neither outdated, nor strictly theoretical; it does in fact have applications to the modern world of corporations and big business. However, as Kautilya’s work is still relatively unknown—especially in comparison to other Eastern texts that have been influential in business, such as *The Art of War* and the *Bhagavad Gita*—most CEOs have yet to employ Kautilya’s strategies. With more research on the *Arthashastra*’s relevance and more time for the text to gain popularity, the *Arthashastra* may become more influential in the corporate world. When the *Arthashastra* does earn its rightful place in the personal libraries of political theorists, economists, world leaders, and CEO’s alike for its ideas on statecraft and economic policy and its applicability to modern corporations, the *Arthashastra* will finally be recognized for its contribution to human knowledge. Only then will the legacy of Kautilya and his famous treatise be permanently cemented in history, ensuring that the *Arthashastra* will never again be lost to the world.

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\(^\text{34}\) Kautilya’s *Arthashastra*: Its Contemporary Relevance, (Pune: Indian Merchants’ Chamber & Indian Merchants’ Chamber Economic Research and Training Foundation, 2005), 73.

\(^\text{35}\) Ibid.
REFERENCES


AINU AND THE METAPHOR OF INDIGENEITY: HISTORY, SCIENCE, LAW, AND BODIES

Valerie Black

ABSTRACT

Drawing on Max Black’s interaction theory, this paper explores the transformative properties of metaphor, and its ability to alter the perception of its original components through the interaction of comparison itself. Identifying a metaphoric underpinning to conceptions of indigeneity, I examine past and recent shifts of the status of Ainu in Japan in order to show the power of this unexamined metaphoric relationship in impacting Ainu perceptions, including self-perceptions. The metaphor of indigeneity does not operate exclusively to the detriment of the populations it symbolically links. By examining the role of metaphor in constructing and reconstructing Ainu identities, and establishing the relationship between these identities and Ainu history, science, law, and bodies, I seek to show the potency of metaphor in shaping, as opposed to merely reflecting, reality.

INTRODUCTION: INDIGENEITY AS METAPHOR

I seek to call attention to the mechanisms of how indigenous identities (including self-identities) are constructed, and by whom. By examining the role of metaphor in shaping Ainu indigenous identities, and analyzing the corresponding production of Ainu identities within history, science, law, and ethnography, I suggest it is possible to uncover the function of metaphor, and to detect unexamined pathways through which power is both sought and subverted.
Does the formation of a global indigenous identity imply that the similarities shared by indigenous populations outweigh the significance, or even the existence, of any corresponding differences? As the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples demonstrates, there is increasing power, in the form of international legal precedent, in conceiving of contemporary indigenous populations as similar—as populations more alike than different in terms of the rights to which they are entitled. I suggest that this comparison derives its power to link distinct populations from a framework of colonization. In other words, it is of the knowledge and mindset of a particular and relatively recent period world history, and a corresponding manner of dividing populations along the lines of colonized and colonizer, that produces the framework for establishing this connection. Yet, the perception of indigenous populations as analogous has arguably provided a basis by which Ainu have gained significant rights and recognition in the past decade.

There is no ‘neutral’ formation of metaphoric understanding; metaphors are by definition highly contextualized modes of perception. Detection is imperative, for as metaphors become increasingly familiar, they shed their metaphoric encasement and become regarded as self-evident ‘fact.’1 If the connections forged by a metaphor appear obvious, this is because the metaphor has become “so woven into our cultural and linguistic system as to have lost its obviously metaphorical quality and to [instead] seem part of ‘nature.’”2 Similarity is actively produced, not passively discovered, but in order to effectively create similarity, metaphors must discard information that does not uphold the link they construct.3 These similarities emerge firmly bound to preexisting systems of hierarchy. The very arbitration of what does and what does not get included suggests an underlying authority—a center, rather than a periphery, about which these metaphors orbit.

According to Max Black’s “interaction” theory, both components of a metaphor are transformed by their interaction, and rendered more alike.4 Indigeneity, when understood as a metaphoric interaction, implies stagnant and timeless human populations located in an exalted pre-colonized past that is forever beyond reclamation. Indigenous groups are symbolically bound to conceptions of time and place, even long after land and other resource access has been systematically appropriated from them. A metaphoric underpinning accounts for the ways in which indigenous identities are collectivized and condensed—impacting, in turn, how legal rights, and thus recognition, take shape.

The question of whether Ainu are ‘more’ indigenous than Wajin has been long disputed in Japan—Ainu were not officially recognized as an indigenous population by the Japanese government until 2008. To speak of Ainu and Japanese as discrete categories suggest that Ainu are not Japanese, and excludes those of mixed heritage. Yet to call ‘ethnic’ Japanese ‘Wajin’ upholds the idea that there is an ethnically ‘pure’ form of Japanese identity. To gain legal and political leverage, indigenous populations, and thus individuals, must fall neatly into contemporary national borders, and exist in the context of a nation-state. When an Ainu leaves Hokkaido for Los Angeles, or for Tokyo for that matter, does this diminish the source of power behind a collective indigenous identity?5 Should Ainu rights in Japan follow an international model, and be situated first and foremost in indigenous identity? How might perceptions, including self-perceptions, of indigenous groups be impacted by unexamined metaphoric relationships? The metaphor of indigeneity does not operate exclusively to the detriment of the populations it symbolically links. By examining the role of metaphor in constructing and reconstructing Ainu identities, and establishing the relationship between these identities and Ainu history, science, law, and bodies, I seek to show the potency of metaphor in shaping, as opposed to merely reflecting, reality.

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2 Ibid., 368.
3 Ibid., 368, citing Stanley Fish, 369.
Maps, Histories, and Ownership

Maps themselves are metaphors: they reveal our orientation to land and water, and convey, through the portrayal of boundaries, the underlying organization of power over the resources they depict. Often, what is not included reveals as much as what is. Pre-modern Japan’s relationship with the waters that surrounded it could be characterized as ambivalent. On the one hand, the oceans were rich in life-sustaining resources. At the same time, the open sea was a source of great risk and uncertainty. Accordingly, the earliest known maps of Japan as a unified realm, from the eighth century, show the three large islands of Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu surrounded by water. No other lands, such as the Korean peninsula, the vast continental China, or the large island to the north of Honshu known today as Hokkaido, were depicted. In fact, Hokkaido wasn’t included on national maps until the early modern period. Though widely considered to be the ancestral home of Ainu, Hokkaido is not the only historical Ainu land. In addition to Hokkaido, Ainu occupied northern Honshu, the Kuril Islands, and the disputed island of Sakhalin. The necessary simplification of information required to create maps demonstrates the difficulty of showing a relationship between land and people that extends beyond a single, dominant narrative. By definition, indigenous status links people to land, but at the same time, renders them subject to a defining authority. Maps, in short, reveal an intense ambiguity of ownership.

The question of ownership is similarly applicable to the production of historical narratives. Is Ainu history Japanese history? David Howell asks this essential question in his eponymous article.6 Just as maps are ill suited to display conflicting narratives, so, too, are national histories; the power to author one’s own history is not freely bestowed. Howell states that Ainu history must be told in the context of Japanese history, even though this limits the types of questions that can be asked and the ways they can be answered. He identifies three barriers preventing the emergence of an Ainu history apart from Japanese history: 1) The broader acceptance of Ainu history within academia; 2) the expansion of viable source materials (reflecting a bias against oral tradition within ‘official’ historical narratives); and 3) the political tensions surrounding the study of Ainu.

In regard to the obstacle of acceptance, Howell observes that, “Ironically, it will be hard for Ainu history to establish itself as a field until historians of Japan come to incorporate the Ainu routinely into their narratives, for that is the only way to overcome the current near invisibility of the Ainu in scholarly discourse.” Speaking to the issue of Ainu history as politically fraught, Howell notes that, “scholars who do not position themselves as impassioned defenders of the Ainu risk being tarred as crass assimilationists. This [...] has parallels in the politics of indigenous studies elsewhere in the world. It helps to account for the tendency of many studies of the Ainu to include denunciations of discrimination past and present as a framing device.” In other words, the present production of Ainu history is at once contained by and resistant to a dominant Japanese narrative; as a product of resistance, it draws either support or denial, and thus does not yet ‘exist’ in its own right.

Howell overtly suggests a relationship between Ainu history and a broader narrative of indigenous colonization that transcends Japan.7 Maps and histories both function as currencies of dominant powers, constructed to convey selective information. Symbolically contained within their boundaries, indigenous lands, histories, and thus, people, become enfolded and obscured rather than included, or even identified.

Producing Scientific Racism

In 2005, Taro Aso (now the former prime minister of Japan, then the internal affairs and communications minister) gave

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7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
a speech in which he referred to Japan as "one nation, one civilization, one language, one culture and one race. There is no other nation (that has such characteristics)." This statement met with some criticism, but the fact that Aso went on to become prime minister demonstrates that his sentiments were by no means rejected across Japan at the time.

The theme of homogeneity is part of a larger nationalist discourse in Japan in which a distinct Japanese ethnicity is tied to beliefs about Japan's past and present orientation to the world. To openly acknowledge a heterogeneous Japanese population threatens that identity; to openly acknowledge an extant Japanese population pre-dating the so-called 'ethnic Japanese' thoroughly undermines it. Unlike the West, theories of evolution in Japan were not regarded as particularly controversial, something that is recognized in Japan as a point of distinction. Yet, theories of the ancient settlement of the Japanese archipelago are tied to the notion of an unchanging ethnicity in which biological and cultural aspects of Japanese identity necessarily coincide. The formation of Ainu Studies in Japan corresponded to the establishment and early development of anthropology and archeology in Japan, with Ainu serving as a counterpart to other indigenous, 'uncivilized' populations, and thus providing the opportunity for Japanese to assert their relative superiority by means of the 'race science' prevalent in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

For centuries, Ainu were regarded as a uncivilized 'other,' and Japanese military campaigns against them may have begun as early as the eighth century; the Nihon Shoki refers to "Emishi," or barbarians, which is thought to be a possible reference to the ancestors of contemporary Ainu, though this connection is not established. The hierarchy of power between notions of civilization versus barbarism was not a concept introduced to Japan by way of Western colonialism—it was instead very much a part of pre-modern Chinese culture. Japan effectively spent centuries acquiring and developing a strong sense of what it was to be civilized so as not to be considered barbaric in the eyes of the neighboring Chinese and Korean kingdoms. The later word, "Ezo," by which Ainu were called for centuries, is simply a modified pronunciation of the same Chinese characters—'barbarians.' However, though regarded as an uncivilized other, Ainu identity did not become racialized as other until the advent of 'race science.' Western science played a direct role in making race scientific in Meiji and Taisho Japan (1860-1926).

Japanese accounts of Ainu predate those of Western travelers, and Western science was known in Japan since the 18th century by way of Dutch contact, but it was Western ethnographers in Japan who first unified these approaches and viewed Ainu within this scientific framework. The highly contextualized Western trope of the 'noble savage' thus entered Japan, and was received by an audience of academics, the first generation of Japanese scholars trained in Western scientific disciplines, who were eager to establish a scientifically-verified Japanese identity. This was a period of intense change in Japan, accompanied by the equally intensive formation of a nation-state, or nation-civilization, identity. Following centuries of relative isolation, the selective acquisition of Western culture, including science, was identified as a means of gaining a place at the table with ascendant Western colonial powers (and thereby avoiding a colonized fate). Under the privileged status of science, the debate over Ainu origins continued, and a biological supremacy of Japanese over Ainu was constructed. Just as in the West, bodily measurements were sought to "prove" this hierarchy.

11  Ibid.
14  Ibid., 81.
Thus, the metaphors of scientific racism and racial hierarchies were directly shaped by Western conceptions of indigenous populations.

**THE LAWS OF EXPANSION AND THE EXPANSION OF LAWS**

Protection is an ethically nebulous concept. Entities that view themselves capable of bestowing protection frequently justify their actions as unequivocally ‘beneficial’ to the populations they act upon. For example, Japanese colonization of Taiwan was openly declared by Japanese as beneficial to Taiwanese, while across the ocean a few decades later, US internment of Japanese-Americans during WWII was deemed beneficial to those interred. Additionall, ‘protection’ establishes an unmistakable hierarchy of power. Accordingly, ‘protection’ of Ainu under Japanese law aligned primarily with the interests of Ainu colonizers.

Political advocacy of legal protection for Ainu began in the late 19th century, following centuries of Ainu-Japanese interaction, and beginning in the 17th century, official trade relationships via Japanese outposts in Hokkaido. Prior to the introduction of protection laws, the settling of Hokkaido by the Japanese government was openly referred to as colonization. In present-day Japan, this past is now referred to as ‘development’ instead of colonization. In present-day Japan, this past is now referred to as ‘development’ instead of colonization, implying that the occupation of Hokkaido was instead a ‘natural’ extension, and a periphery settled rather than taken. Arguably, this orientation obscures the violence underpinning the process of land and resource annexation, and the corresponding exploitation of Ainu inhabitants.

Not all inland Ainu lands were seized at first, but when resources were sought by Japanese, such as hunting access, the Ainu were forced to relocate, and laws were passed to ban Ainu hunting tools and techniques. Following the introduction of hunting rifles by Japanese, deer herds approached extinction within a few years. Similarly, bans on Ainu fishing and appropriation of fisheries impeded Ainu autonomy, while unrestrained Japanese consumption led to sudden and dramatic resource depletion. Without access to their conventional foodways, Ainu began to die of starvation. Some attempts at amelioration were made by the Japanese government, such as the granting of small plots of land for agricultural production to Ainu, but ultimately, only small amounts of land were given to few individuals. Meanwhile, Ainu settlements were increasingly relocated to land ill-suited to agricultural production in order to make prime land available to Japanese settlers. Ainu relocation settlements were deliberately scattered in an attempt to separate and weaken Ainu communities. Ironically, the surveying and mapping of lands to be sold or distributed by the Japanese government relied heavily on Ainu knowledge and labor; after all,

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discusses how physical measurements, such as brain weight and skull shape, were employed as ‘evidence’ of racial and gender inferiority, observing that metaphor “generates data that conform to [the nature it constructs], and accommodates data that are in apparent contradiction to it, so that nature is seen via the metaphor and the metaphor becomes part of the logic of science itself.” (Stepan 371)

17 Siddle, Race, Resistance and the Ainu of Japan, 82.
19 Siddle, Race, Resistance and the Ainu of Japan.
this 'frontier' was for them already known, named, and traveled. Assimilation policies were first informally, and later, formally adopted. The call for protection was directly impacted by knowledge of other colonized populations, particularly the U.S. Dawes Act, which allotted land to Native Americans with the goal of assimilation. Consequently, decisions about assimilation were shaped by Japan’s conception of a metaphoric relationship between indigenous and colonizing populations.

In 1893, a Protection Act was proposed before the Diet. Arguments opposing it centered upon the notion that there was little need to protect Ainu, as they were already 'dying out,' a view rooted in social Darwinism and the scientific racism it produced. Other Diet members argued against formal legal protection, citing the destitution of Ainu as emblematic of their deserved decline. Accordingly, this proposal ultimately failed, as did a second attempt three years later. In 1898, another proposal, again framed in the language of a cultural and biological ‘survival of fittest,’ still projected the demise of Ainu as inevitable while stating it was the duty of the government to protect them in the interim. Notably, while this proposal spoke of Ainu as an ancient part of the Japanese empire, it did not explicitly recognize them as indigenous.

The Protection Act was enacted in 1899. Its objective was, first and foremost, assimilation. Ainu in Japan acquired a status of ‘former natives,’ and among the protections granted were limited land grants (without the full rights of ownership), elementary education in separate village schools, and access to limited health care (the effect of tuberculosis on Ainu populations, introduced with settlement, was devastating). These initiatives were designed to transform Ainu into subjects through the eradication of Ainu language, culture, and lifestyle, with an emphasis on agriculture as the primary means of achieving ‘civilization.’ Yet even under these protections, Ainu were unsuccessful in transitioning to an agricultural lifestyle, due to a lack of agricultural knowledge and training, and insufficient land size and quality. Additionally, there was no corresponding protection against exploitation by competing Japanese landowners.

The failures of the Protection Act to adequately ‘protect’ signified to Japanese that they couldn’t stop the extinction of the Ainu ‘race,’ which continued to be regarded as inevitable; the decreasing Ainu population was deemed further evidence of the principle of ‘survival of fittest’ in action. Still, Japanese viewed themselves as obligated to provide a measure of welfare to the Ainu, though not to the extent of attempting to defy the laws of ‘nature’ by trying to ‘save’ them. This opinion was directly influenced by the perceived correlation between Ainu and Native Americans; an Ainu education committee member wrote in 1901 that, while Native Americans were thought to be “violent and vengeful,” Ainu were instead “mild and servile,” and Japanese should show their compassion to this “dying race.” Notably, this noblesse oblige positioned Japanese as equivalent to Western colonizers in power, but superior to them in virtue. Cultural, and eventually biological, assimilation was soon advocated as the basis of providing this ‘support’: “Through the mixing of blood and assimilation they are fusing into the broader [ethnic Japanese] race and can be said to be developing.”

Opposition to this viewpoint continued, as many argued that Ainu should not be granted any protection, and that instead, their "survival or extinction should be left to nature.” Furthermore, conceptions of ‘racial purity’ were invoked, as supposed inherent racial inferiority became the basis of legal inequality. The hierarchical biological admixture of Ainu and Japanese identity was constructed, by way of standardized testing, to show ‘pure’ Japanese as intellectually superior, Ainu as abjectly inferior, and ‘half-breed’ Japanese-Ainu as in-between these two poles. Ironically, observations of the continued disadvantages experienced by Ainu further fueled belief in the need to increase, rather than reduce or alter,

24 Ibid., 60.
25 Ibid., 88.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid., 71.
28 Ibid.
30 Ibid., 92.
31 Ibid., 95.
32 Ibid.
existing measures of Japanese supervision and control. The Protection Act was revised in 1937 with even greater focus on cultural assimilation, and the ideology of protection continued, largely unchallenged until the later half of the 20th century. It was powered by the myth of a dying population, believed by both Ainu and Japanese, until activists directly confronted this narrative.

Law provided the basis for the seizure of Ainu land and resources, and the carefully controlled displacement of Ainu people. Law was an instrument of, not an obstacle to, expansion. Yet law has remained the basis of challenging this expansion, within Japan and globally. Through a collectivized identity as indigenous, Ainu have transcended national space and moved to an international space in which to seek legal protection. The UN itself has authored the discourse of what constitutes “indigeneity.” Within this legal model, indigenous identity at once subverts and operates within an existing conception of nation-states as legal entities. As non-state actors, rights granted to indigenous groups are arguably a continuation of protection, which seemingly undermines the very principle of self-determination sought by these indigenous populations. The fusion of indigenous identity constructed by the UN draws heavily on the metaphor on indigeneity as a claim to virtue, which in turn merits protection. The virtue of an abstracted indigeneity is increasingly rooted in indigenous ecology, which ultimately is yet another iteration of the narrative of protection. What must not be ignored is that shifting ideologies of virtue formed the very foundation upon which laws were constructed in order to displace, assimilate, and ‘protect’ Ainu.

33 Ibid., 96.

ETHNOGRAPHY, BODIES, AND RESISTANCE

The relationship between Ainu Studies and Ainu activism reveals the complexity of the politics of indigeneity, particularly the ambiguous division of academics and activism. Howell suggests that a ‘neutral’ perspective is not only possible, but ideal. Yet, the dynamic of positioning academia as separate and removed from the sphere of activism originates in the production of cultural hierarchies. As anthropology and other social sciences contemplate models of ‘engaged’ or ‘applied’ studies, it is important to ask, what constitutes an ‘unengaged’ model? Arguably, the myth of neutrality that permeated the early formation of social sciences continues unchecked. Instead, the ownership of knowledge, and of perceived sources of knowledge, bear close resemblance to patterns of colonization, and the assumed privilege of studying the inferior ‘other’. The disputed ownership of this knowledge and the formation of Ainu as subjects make past and present Ainu Studies a site of activist resistance.

In Bones of Contention: Negotiating Anthropological Ethics within Fields of Ainu Refusal, anthropologist Ann-Elise Lewallen describes the history of Ainu scholarship itself in relation to Ainu as subjects. She addresses the interaction of activism and scholarship, including the logistical issues of conducting ethnographic research requiring written consent within a culture where oral communication is dominant, and where written communication bears overtones of exploitation and oppression. She also observes the legacies of Ainu mistrust produced within Ainu Studies, including the extraction of cadavers from Ainu burial sites, and the history of ‘scientific’ testing on living Ainu subjects. Quite literally, the bodies of Ainu were employed to uphold the scientific racism promoted in the 19th century.

Drawing on her experiences of being rejected by Ainu communities due to her identity as an anthropologist, Lewallen con-

37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
tributes to the question of whether neutrality between researcher and subject is possible, by framing Ainu Studies as necessarily collaborative. What, aside from a claim to neutrality, authorizes the study of Ainu as subjects, particularly without producing a direct benefit for Ainu? Further, who then maintains ownership of this knowledge?

Because of the formative role that Ainu subjects played in producing anthropology in Japan, anthropologists were (and are) viewed as directly complicit in perpetuating the enduring myth of Ainu as a dying race. Impacted by nineteenth-century Western ethnographers, Ainu iconography, made scientific and framed in Darwinian discourse, gained attention in Japan as a vehicle of nationalism. Ainu were perceived as vital to understanding the biological racial origins of Japanese. Thus, their protection was, in part, explicitly motivated by the desire to maintain an available Ainu population sample for testing and study.

Resistance to this role as voiceless scientific fodder did not go unrecognized or unchallenged by Ainu. Writing in the 1930s, Ainu poet Iboshi Hokuto produced an article entitled “We Must Not Be Just Material for Scholars Forever,” in which he declared, “We are human beings, not physical specimens.” Resistance to scholarly exploitation was also at the core of Ainu activism during the 1970s and 1980s. The first reparation of skeletal remains was made by Hokkaido University in 1984, though many remains have yet to be relinquished to Ainu communities. The complexity of this situation is exacerbated by Ainu protestors who believe it is in the best interest of Ainu to leave some remains unclaimed, with the understanding that these comprise the sole source of evidence that Ainu are physically descended from prehistoric Jomon populations, and could therefore help further Ainu claims of indigeneity, eventually contributing to greater Ainu political self-determination.

In seeking autonomy from a colonized past, the body itself becomes a site of resistance. Even when ‘properties’ of past subjugation, including Ainu bodies and knowledge, are reclaimed by Ainu, they remain the currency by which power and self-determination are won.

The metaphor of indigeneity suggests there is a trajectory that Ainu Studies, as a form of Indigenous Studies, currently follows. Yet, the assumption of neutrality, and a necessary distinction between academics and activism, is itself a legacy of colonialism.

**CONCLUSION**

Does the recognition of Ainu rights by means of a global indigenous identity address the legacies of colonization, or merely perpetuate them? By asking this question, I do not suggest that Ainu political activism and organization is either futile or disempowered. The conspicuous absence of legal recognition accorded to other minority groups in Japan suggests that Ainu identity as indigenous supersedes Ainu identity as Japanese, as the source of power behind this identity is not produced within the Japanese state. It is important to consider the possibility that the process through which these modes of engagement gain power may reproduce the underlying dynamics of colonization, including the mythology of a timeless and cohesive culture irreversibly diminished by contact with colonizing powers, as opposed to creating a future in which national and cultural identities are not discrete and hierarchical. This outcome is neither wholly good nor wholly bad; breaking away from the myth of colonization necessarily means discarding a belief in the myth of progress.

The metaphor of indigeneity is empowering to indigenous individuals and groups where these individuals and groups are able to willingly invoke this identity to direct change. Yet, the existence of international laws of protection for indigenous populations suggests that ‘protection’ is granted, or bestowed, by a power unquestionably positioned to do so. Where rights and powers attained arise directly or indirectly from the metaphor of indigeneity, it is important to consider the power of this metaphor in shaping and reshaping identities, including self-identities as indigenous and colonizing respectively, at the expense of other, potentially more integrated, identities.

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39 Ibid.  
40 Siddle, *Race, Resistance and the Ainu of Japan*.  
41 Lewllan, “Bones of Contention.”  
42 Ibid.
REFERENCES


NOT SO SINGULAR:
LAICIZATION IN JAPANESE BUDDHISM AND PARALLELS IN SOUTH ASIA

Robert Bowers Curl

ABSTRACT

Modern Japanese Buddhism has a unique problem: its priests get married. Compared with other East Asian Buddhist traditions, this is a source of concern as one of the major prohibitions on priestly behavior is sexual relationships. Considering that Japanese Buddhist priests not only have sex (and children) but engage in other transgressions of lay life, it is a wonder that they have not been cast away by their lay parishioners as poor religious figures. Yet, Japanese Buddhism is not so unique, with its married priesthood of religiously powerful figures, within the context of the greater Asia region. This paper investigates the historical context of Japanese clerical marriage and compares relationship models between the state, the Buddhist sangha, and parishioners in Japanese Buddhism with models in the Sri Lanka Theravada tradition and the Newar Buddhist tradition of the Kathmandu Valley. The paper posits a number of similarities between the models and suggests that in the course of modernization, Japan moved from a model resembling that of Theravada Buddhism to one resembling Newar Buddhism.

INTRODUCTION

Modern Japanese Buddhism is occasionally marked as being unique or singular in its expression, especially in the context of the “problem” of its almost completely married priesthood. While it is certain that Japanese Buddhism is a unique tradition with its own adaptations to its particular culture like any form of Buddhism, it is possible to find patterns within its history that appear similar to those of other regions in Asia. This paper explores the pressures Japanese Buddhism confronted during the Meiji period and posits that the massive changes brought on by government programs of modernization that Japanese Buddhism experienced caused it to shift from a pattern resembling the Theravada tradition of Sri Lanka and Thailand to a pattern more closely resembling Newar Buddhism in the Kathmandu Valley. Specifically, the state/sangha relationship that used to be defined by state intervention in sectarian issues and attempts by government to control the Buddhist community, along with deep clerical involvement in government affairs, gave way to the state having a much weaker relationship with the sangha. Additionally, there was a marked change in parishioner expectations of monk behavior resulting in a laity preference for monks that marry and engage in everyday life.

In order to demonstrate these links, I will first provide background on the relationship between state, society, and monks in the Theravada traditions of Sri Lanka and Thailand and in Newar Buddhism. Next, I will provide a narrative of Meiji-era Buddhist history based heavily on the account provided by Richard Jaffe in his book Neither Monk nor Laymen: Clerical Marriage in Modern Japanese Buddhism. Finally, I will compare the pre-Meiji state of Japanese Buddhism with the Theravada tradition, and the current state of Japanese Buddhism with the Newar tradition, while suggesting that the shift Japanese Buddhism experienced in the Meiji period can be construed as movement away from a Theravada model towards a Newar model. Additionally, I will attempt to demonstrate that the claim that Buddhism is in decline in Japan must be reexamined and understood by virtue of its altered relationship with society and government.

THERAVADA IN SRI LANKA AND THAILAND

From the legendary conversion of the Sinhalese by Mahendra, son of Emperor Asoka, the tradition of Theravada Buddhism in Sri Lanka has been linked closely with the identity of Sri Lanka as
a cohesive nation. It should come as no surprise that, despite the Buddhist ideal of detachment, Sri Lankan Buddhism has found itself buried deeply within the secular concerns of the world. Nowhere is this more evident than in the great land holding monasteries of Sri Lanka, which at times behaved more like noble landlords than a community of ascetics. Michael Carrithers, in the 1984 book *The World of Buddhism*, in a section appropriately titled “They will be Lords upon the Island,” details the extensive connection between the Sri Lankan sangha and their roles as landlords. According to Carrithers, “…it was the Sangha’s involvement with productive agriculture which set the seal on the monk’s entanglement as landlords in Sinhalese society.”¹ The monasteries could order irrigation trenches to be dug, withhold water from people who missed rent payments, and generally behave as a conventional noble who had been granted land by the king. But the power of the monasteries to control the lives of the peasants did not wane with the end of the growing season. As Carrithers states, “the real strength of this vast edifice of landholding is revealed in its…possession of legal power.” Evidence found in Sri Lanka “…sometimes also included clauses implying that monastery functionaries were responsible for the administration of justice as well, if not for capital punishment.”² The Sri Lankan Buddhist sanghas that had control over the life and death of their attendant followers can certainly be said to have been endowed with great secular power. Thus, the holding of land was a practical expression of the Sri Lankan sangha’s power, while the sangha acted as the guardians of Sri Lanka morality and law. Carrithers writes:

*In other words, over the political realm, the monks reign both as exemplars and as preachers. The precedence awarded the Sangha betokens the precedence of their moral principles, so that the king rules by the Good Law…and under his moral sovereignty, backed by the sangha’s moral sovereignty, Sri Lanka is the Island of the Good Law…*³

In other words, without the sangha the king has no moral authority to govern. Without a sangha to bestow legitimacy on everything from coronation rituals to merit-making opportunities, wherein the entire kingdom of Sri Lanka was symbolically given over to the sangha (and then promptly returned),⁴ the king’s claim to rule was baseless. This relationship, however, is not to be understood as one sided, as the king had the responsibility of protecting the sangha and keeping it cleansed. “Much of later Sri Lankan history concerns the efforts of kings to keep the sangha ‘pure’ and well disciplined…and even the prosperity of the nation depended on its morality.”⁵ The takeaway from this is that one of the ways to characterize the Theravada tradition in Sri Lanka is by its close sangha/state connection, to the extent that both were mutually dependent on the other, even while jostling for the position of primacy.

The Sri Lankan sangha is still firmly entrenched as a major power group within Sinhalese society and government. “The secular engagement of the Sri Lankan sangha with the state is seen in monks in modern times moving towards political engagement, even so far as to guide their parishioners politically.”⁶ The tradition of strong state/sangha connection is alive not only in Sri Lanka but in Thailand as well. “A distinctive feature of traditional Buddhism in Thailand…is the organization of the Sangha as a national institution virtually under state control.”⁷ As in Sri Lanka, the modern nation of Thailand continues to have a strong connection between the Buddhist sangha and the state. This particular modern relationship had its beginnings in the 19th century when a king undertook a cleansing and reorganization of the sangha. “After that, state and religion in Thailand became even more closely associated than before, and attempts have been made to justify government policy by Buddhist principle.”⁸ The sangha in Sri Lanka and Thailand, both in the distant past and in modern times, not only served their society’s religious needs, but more concrete secular needs such as supporting a particular political ideology.

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1  Carrithers p. 115
2  Carrithers p. 116
3  Carrithers p. 118
4  Carrithers p. 118
5  Carrithers p. 110
6  Carrithers p. 122
7  Bunnag p. 188
8  Bunnag p. 187
NEWAR BUDDHISM IN KATHMANDU

Wedge between India and Tibet, the Kathmandu Valley is home to a form of Buddhism closely resembling late Indian Buddhism before its disappearance. Mixed with elements of Hinduism and the caste system, Newar Buddhism has several contrasting elements with the Theravada tradition. The primary one being that “The monks are not celibate, renunciatory monks who out of vocation have abandoned their families. Rather they are hereditary married monks who live outside the monastery, have professions, and live within society.” In other words, the Newar monks would, according to Theravada definitions, not be considered monks at all, despite having undergone similar ordination rituals and occupying a similar place in Newar society. From a Theravada perspective, these are not monks but householders who have given up an ascetic life. From the Newar perspective, however, they are seen as “householder monks.”

The tradition of householder monks is not a recent development in Kathmandu; “The institution of householder monks was probably already well established...by the 11th century.” Yet it was not the only local tradition, as “at that time there was a coexisting tradition of celibate monasticism.” Indeed, a system of celibate monkhood coexisted with the married monkhood in Kathmandu. Thus, this type of householder monk (whom Theravadans would not consider a monk) has existed for almost a thousand years, at times in concert with the celibate monkhood. It cannot be seen as a recent development in response to some sort of doctrinal challenge.

By what means does a Newar become a householder monk? The ordination requirements are quite different from those of the Theravada traditions. Newar ordination is only open to young prepubescent boys who are the sons of other monks. These adult monks are in turn members of one specific caste the Śākya or Vajrāchārya. The boys are welcomed into the fold of monkhood over a four-day period, beginning with an ordination rite. At the end of the ordination rite, the boys become fully ordained and true monks. Over the next three days, the new monks participate in a wide variety of rituals. At the end of the fourth day, the boys disrobe and return to their normal existence. However, for the rest of their lives, they are able to act and are treated as if they are full-fledged members of a Buddhist sangha. The vast majority of the boys will never become household priests and be initiated into the secret esoteric traditions of true clerics. Indeed, most grow up, get married, have children, and retain their day jobs. However, during any period of ritual worship that requires them to act in their roles as monks, they are able to do so and are treated as if they had never renounced their vows. “Thus, Newar Buddhism is not a ‘Buddhism without monks’ as some observers have held, but a Buddhism with monks who have turned householders without giving up their identity as monastics.”

While these householder monks are most certainly “Buddhist” in a Newar context and participate in ritual festivals, they do so with some reluctance. During several of the major festivals where they are required to act in their role as fields of merit for peoples’ donations, on occasion they will not appear in person but rather send their children to receive donations, citing feelings of discomfort with receiving gifts from members of lower castes. The reluctance to fulfill their monastic roles also makes them a poor choice for tending to the ritual needs of the laity. Therefore, it is important to reiterate that the majority of (sometimes reluctant) householder monks do not perform the services typical of actual priests. The reasons for this are twofold. First, only those of the Vajrāchārya subcaste are able to act as priests. Second, only a handful of those in the Vajrāchārya subcaste actually go on to take the necessary additional esoteric ordination rites that allow them to perform as priests. This role is usually hereditary since the roles of

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9 Von Rosspatt p. 282
10 Von Rosspatt p. 294
11 Von Rosspatt p. 292
the clients (yajamāna, Newari: jajmān) these priests serve are likewise hereditary. Nevertheless, the role of the priest is extremely important, as the priests perform the day-to-day rituals of Newar Buddhist religious life, including life-cycle rituals, funerary rites, and the very important fire ritual (homa). It is important to keep in mind that the actual priests who perform rituals for their clients are, just as the householder monks, married individuals who gave up their monastic vows as children. This means that, from a different Buddhist perspective, householder priests are living contradictions; on the one hand, they are fully capable of acting as monk-priests, but on the other they have ceased being monks officially. Yet the Newar lay community does not appear to consider them incapable of performing their duties as priests and does not consider them unusual.

Despite having given up their vows, the relationship these monks have with their parishioners as figures with religious power is just as real as in the Theravada tradition. However, Newar Buddhism’s relationship with the state stands in stark contrast to the Buddhism of Sri Lanka and Thailand. Nepal has, to put it mildly, suffered a series of challenges since the 1950s and is just now beginning to take steps toward stability, along with the recent introduction of Internet technology and other conveniences. It is not surprising that in this context, Newar Buddhism has struggled to find its place. The modern state has done little to protect Newar Buddhism from challenges to its religious existence; “Most of the land endowed for religious purposes over the centuries has come under governmental control or been misappropriated, thereby effectively depriving Newar Buddhism of the material basis that traditionally secured the continuation of its cultures and practices and upkeep of its monasteries.” While it would perhaps be overstating things to view this as a direct state-sponsored threat to Newar Buddhism, it is certainly indicative of a larger trend. In short, rather than having a strong state/sangha relationship as in Sri Lanka or Thailand (where the modern state and the sangha continue to have a tight relationship that extends into the political)

the Newar tradition does not maintain such a close relationship. While it is certainly true that the former king of Nepal engaged in the ritual celebrations of the Buddhist community and it was possible to see a kind of jostling for position between the king and the sangha during these rituals, the king was not granted any “moral authority” from the Newar sangha to govern the country. The Nepalese king’s duty was to protect all the religions of the Kathmandu Valley, rather than just Buddhism. In this context, it is important to note that the king himself was not Buddhist, but rather Hindu. Thus, unlike the Theravada traditions from which the identity of the state and the religious identity of Buddhism are almost inseparrable, there does not appear to be such a deep connection between the former Hindu monarchy of Nepal and Newar Buddhism. Newar Buddhism’s defining qualities do not include a rooted relationship to the state.

JAPANESE BUDDHISM IN THE LATE EDO AND MEIJI PERIODS

The story of Japanese Buddhism’s evolution into its current form cannot be understood without first exploring its form in the Edo period.

Buddhism arrived in Japan in the 6th century and spread from a practice of elites in the court to the entire country. Buddhist sanghas grew in power, and were even considered threats by secular leaders interested in power. Oda Nobunaga’s rivalry with the warrior monks of the Tendai sect, resulting in his famous destruction of their Mt. Hiei temples and the killing of almost 3,000 people in 1571, is probably the best-known example of this type of antagonism. However, with the defeat of Tokugawa’s enemies and the beginning of the Edo period’s political stability, Buddhism entered into a long and productive partnership with the Japanese state.

The first part of this partnership was based on the Tokugawa government’s attempts to take a census of the nation’s population and its efforts to control population movement. In order to accomplish these goals, the Tokugawa government enlisted the help

12 Von Rosspatt p. 293
13 Von Rosspatt p. 296
14 Bowring 2005
of Buddhist temples. Each individual living in a Japanese town was required to register with their local priest, while a ledger of this registry was kept in the local temple. If an individual moved, their move would be recorded and their new domicile would be entered into the record of their new local priest. Whenever a family experienced a birth or a death, this too would be recorded in the temple ledgers.

The second part of this partnership involved the Tokugawa government’s attempts to police sectarian law by providing secular punishments for sectarian law violations. If a priest were caught breaking one of their precepts (especially the ones regarding sexual conduct with women) he was to be beaten, stripped of his robe, forcibly laicized, and quite literally thrown out of the temple. The punishment for these crimes sometimes changed, so that one recorded forced laicization involved the convicted monk being forced to crawl around his temple three times on his hands and knees while practically naked, and another speaks of crucifixion. The purpose, however, was always the same, namely to keep the sangha free of individuals who would break their vows while enjoying their elevated social status. At first, the secular punishments for sectarian crimes may appear harsh. However, becoming a priest in Edo Japan was no small matter. Indeed, once one was ordained, the initiate’s name was changed to a Buddhist name, and all connections to their previous life were wiped away, including class affiliation. They ceased to use their secular names and were recorded in a second, separate register unconnected to the register of common subjects. Jaffe writes of the special privileges afforded the clergy:

> When in attendance at the local magistrate’s office, Buddhist clerics were allowed to sit one level higher than commoners. ...They would be allowed to have an assigned seat at the daimyo’s residence during his New Year celebration. In recognition of their role outside of secular society, the clergy were placed primarily under the control of their...head temple.\(^{16}\)

Thus, Buddhism was brought into the administrative circle of the Tokugawa regime. This high status and deep connection to the state was visible on many levels besides the temple registry duties of monks. Sect power was measured, in part, by the respect and status bestowed upon by the shogunate. Leaders of sects would grudgingly compare notes on how each of them were received by the shogun, taking offense if they were required to walk certain distances rather than being allowed to ride in the palanquins to the entrance of the shogun’s chambers.

During this long period of stability, the Buddhist community was often the subject of harsh edicts from the bakufu, especially regarding the problem of secret marriages resulting in hereditary passing of temple abbothood. Dubbed nikujisaitai (肉食妻帯, literally "meat eating and marriage") due to its connection to the breaking of the vow against meat eating, it was considered a problem by both Buddhist leaders and the shogunate. The concern of Buddhist leaders revolved around doctrinal matters, while the shogunate was concerned primarily with the abuse of inheritance laws. The shogunate took great pains to try and prevent the passing of abbothood from father to son, and the Buddhist leadership was more than happy to accommodate.

The fall of the shogunate government in 1868 signaled a quick end to the favored status of Buddhism. Due in part to the ideological underpinnings of the Meiji Restoration, Buddhism soon found itself under attack from both the laity and members of the government as an “old evil” of the past, with the understanding that Shintoism would replace it. Jaffe writes:

> The Meiji Restoration temporarily brought...hard line Shinto and Nativist scholars...to positions of power in the newly established Department of Rites. Seeking to provide an ideological foundation for the new government, Meiji leaders distanced themselves from the Buddhist institutions that had given support to the Tokugawa government.\(^{17}\)

Indeed, the fact that Buddhism had been a pillar within the Tokugawa government’s power structure was a key reason that the

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15 Jaffe p. 23
16 Jaffe p. 17
17 Jaffe p. 58
new Meiji government turned on the sangha. However, this was not the sole reason, as Nativist scholars sought to expel Buddhism as a “foreign” influence (because of its Chinese origin) while raising Shintoism (seen as a proper “native” Japanese religion) to greater heights. The entire construction of the new religion of “state Shinto” is beyond the scope of this paper, but Jaffe and other authors have covered this extensively. It is sufficient to note that for the purposes of constructing a new “Japanese” national identity, leaders of the Meiji government felt it important to construct an all-inclusive religious identity that united the people under a single banner. Shintoism, with its supposed connection to the imperial line stretching back to the mythological beginnings of Japanese history, was the perfect candidate to take the place of Buddhism.

Because of the push to marginalize Buddhism, the religion found itself under attack from the state rather than being supported by it. The Meiji government quickly did away with the temple registration system, severing the main connection Buddhist leaders had day-to-day government administration. Instead, the new central bureaucracy implemented a new citizen registration system known as the koseki (戸籍, literally “housedoor registration”), while the place of registration moved from Buddhist temples to Shinto shrines under the purview of the new bureaucracy. The Meiji government did not stop with the removal of the Buddhist’s power over the census; in addition, the new government passed a law eliminating the special registry for Buddhist priests, forcing them to register under the new koseki system as commoners (or as nobles, according to their previous class status). In essence, the government engaged in a campaign of forced laicization against the Buddhist clergy. Buddhist clerics became liable for carrying a protection charm from their local Shinto shrine marking them as a citizen. They became susceptible to the military draft. They also lost their Buddhist names gained in ordination. By the time the Meiji government had completed these tasks, the only thing legally separating a monk from a commoner was his affiliation with a particular sect.18

As if the forced laicization of monks were not a severe enough blow to traditional Buddhist orders, shortly after the forced laicization of monks, in 1872 the government issued a proclamation declaring that nikujikisaitai was not only legal, and thus no longer subject to harsh punishments, but it encouraged monks around the country to marry. This caused a massive uproar within the Buddhist hierarchy and many sect leaders spent long periods of time in Tokyo pleading with the government to rescind the order.19 While the government did bend slightly to accommodate sectarian desires, complete cancelation of the order was not forthcoming. The Meiji leaders at the Ministry of Doctrine saw sectarian restrictions on marriage as backward, and in their race to show Western powers that they were a modern nation, vigorously encouraged clerical couplings.

The reader is likely to be amazed at what appears to be a complete 180-degree turn in Japanese Buddhism’s fortunes. While during the Edo period the sangha was a protected and cherished member of the state’s order, the Meiji government cast Buddhism out and forced numerous changes upon the sangha that did not appear to be in its best religious interests. Instead of helping police the sangha, as it had in the past, the state endeavored to change and even destroy it. In fact, at some points the state actually prevented the sangha from policing itself, citing the national interest in modernization.20

Without the state’s support of the sectarian code of discipline it enjoyed in the Edo period, clerical marriage spread inexorably through the ranks of the Buddhist priesthood. Sect leaders could do little more than issue proclamations and watch helplessly as the number of temple families living openly increased. In time, the conversation about clerical marriage changed from the need to eliminate it as an evil, to a conversation centered on what the Buddhist sects could do to recognize and care for the pitiable state of temple families. By the year 1900, there were calls not only from new Buddhist lay organizations to encourage, and in some cases demand marriage, but there were also internal pressures from within Buddhist sects to integrate temple families into Buddhist

18 Jaffe p. 95
19 Jaffe p. 148
20 Jaffe p. 152
clerical life. The first call for Buddhist clerical marriage normalization in Japan was written in 1887 by a former monk, and soon thereafter members of the clergy joined his call for marriage normalization.\textsuperscript{21} By 1937, almost all monks were married.\textsuperscript{22}

Today, Japanese temple families are, by and large, the norm for Buddhist clergy. Approximately 90% of monks are married, and these monks continue to engage in temple practice and are considered by parishioners to be as capable in their religious duties as unmarried clerics. It is interesting to note, however, that 73% of Japanese people express a preference for married over unmarried clerics.\textsuperscript{23} Moreover, clerics engage in family life while still taking vows of chastity at ordination, despite the fact that married clerics will likely go home that very evening to share a bed with their spouse. This means that, in a different sense than the householder monks and priests of Newar Buddhism who officially “give up” their role as monks but continue to serve, married Japanese Buddhists are nonetheless living contradictions doctrinally. Various sects provide different answers to these questions, from explanations centered around modern Buddhists living in the Last Age of the Teaching and being therefore unable to live up to the high standards of monkhood laid out during the time of Siddhartha, to claims based on the necessity of their founder’s marriage to a woman who stood in for a Bodhisattva. In addition, Buddhist clerics are now assured that their son can legally and officially inherit their roles should they choose to do so, another radical change from the Edo period.

This is a massive and complete reversal from lay preferences and expectations during the Edo period, where clerics convicted of violating their precepts were considered outcasts. In essence, the practice of Buddhism as a religious device for lay members has not changed, though the sectarian machinery behind it has. Buddhist monks are still called upon to officiate funerary services, go on retreats to Mt. Koya, and provide consultations on difficult matters just as their predecessors did for a thousand years. Yet nowadays they often do it with the help of a temple wife and look forward to their sons officially (and legally) inheriting their roles. To reiterate the two main points of our discussion: 1) The Meiji state engaged in a campaign of forced laicization, in which the Buddhist clergy were stripped of their special legal status and made to register with local authorities as commoners or other class of layperson. 2) After the campaign of forced laicization, the state decriminalized meat eating and clerical marriage, which had been punishable by secular proceedings under the Tokugawa state.

\textbf{CONCLUSION}

At this point several things should have been clear: Japanese monks are not the only Buddhist monks in Asia to practice marriage; and there is a clear distinction between the relationship of Buddhism to the state in Theravada and Newar traditions; reflects the massive shift in the relationship between Japanese Buddhism and the Japanese state in the late 19th century.

These three facts make clear that Japanese Buddhism during the Edo period enjoyed a relationship with the state resembling Theravada Buddhism’s relationships with the Sri Lankan and Thai states, with strong connections between the government and sangha. These relationships resulted in significant secular power and secular status for the sangha, as well as occasional government intervention to “cleanse” the sangha. Additionally, monks who broke their precepts were not considered able religious figures by the layity. In contrast, after the Meiji Restoration and its subsequent series of laws that amounted to forced laicization, Buddhism transitioned to a model that resembled Newar Buddhism. The links to the state weakened to the point where it provided little to no protection for the sangha, breaking down discipline in the sangha, yet without an accompanying loss of status as figures with religious power. In the same way as the householder monks (and more specifically, the householder priests) of Newar Buddhism, Japanese monks are free to engage in lay life and continue their role as religious figures despite their existence as living doctrinal contradictions. Moreover, their sons are entitled to inherit their temple and client base should they choose to, just as in the Newar tradition. To wit, it

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  \item \textsuperscript{21} Jaffe p. 168
  \item \textsuperscript{22} Jaffe p. 234
  \item \textsuperscript{23} Jaffe p. 2
\end{itemize}
appears that Japanese monks are not so singular in their ability to get married and at the same time be regarded as having religious power by their parishioners.

The illusion that Japan’s married clerics are somehow singular in Asia is a popular myth that continues to the present. Examples in both the popular press and in scholarly writing point to a persistent belief that Japan’s phenomenon of monks who are married is a very “Japanese” tradition, consistent with a unique, long past. The historical genealogy of this belief can be seen in the late Meiji period, when apologists from both the lay context and priestly context began to build their case that married monks were fully in line with the “Japanese” spirit. While this spirit of nationalism can be understood in its historicized context of the project of building a kokutai (国家, national body or national identity), it seems suspect to repeat these notions in the current age when an ample body of evidence shows that married monks in Nepal are considered full and proper members of the sangha by their society. What is unique in the Japanese context, beyond the non-trivial fact that the monks in Japanese Buddhism continue to take vows of celibacy during their ordinations, is the fact that this widespread “problem” of nikujisaitai combined with the pressures of modernization during the Meiji period resulted in rapid change in the relationship between the sangha, government, and society.

This doctrinal contradiction related to marriage is not a small matter, as pushes to eliminate nikujikisaitai from Japanese Buddhism continue to the present day. It also may be confusing to consider that Newar monks do officially give up their vows of celibacy while Japanese monks never disrobe and “officially” return to lay life. However, I urge the reader to focus on the similarities of how the monks are perceived in both cultures. In both the Newar tradition and in the Japanese tradition these figures are considered monks. It appears, then, that the married Japanese Buddhist monk (despite the breaking of his vows of chastity) is every bit as religiously powerful and Buddhist as his Newar counterpart (despite the Newar having given up his robes officially). Rather than a reduction in status that should come with “giving up” renounced life, modern Japanese Buddhists appear to have the same status as religious figures for their parishioners, just as Newar householder monks and priests continue to do.

Japanese Buddhism is still in a state of transition, as the doctrinal fights over nikujikisaitai have still not been entirely resolved. However, it seems unlikely, with a majority of the clergy having families, that there is any way to recork the bottle. It is up to the reader to decide if Japanese Buddhism’s transition to a Newar-esque model has left it in a stronger position to answer the religious concerns of 21st century laity or if it has done irreparable damage to the integrity of Buddhism.

24  Sueki 2012; Inoue 2012
25  Nakamura 2011
GLOSSARY

Dīpaṃkara – Sanskrit name of the Primordial Buddha, a Buddha that existed before the commonly known historical Śākyamuni Buddha. In an age before the historical Buddha attained his enlightenment, Dīpaṃkara Buddha gave the historical Buddha a chance to begin his spiritual journey towards Buddhahood.

Śākya – The name of the original historical Buddha’s tribe, contained within his name of Śākyamuni. This name has been taken by one of the two householder monk castes in Newar Buddhism to refer to itself.

Vajrāchārya – The second of the two castes involved in the householder monk system of Newar Buddhism, and the only caste able to take additional esoteric ordination to become full priests able to perform the fire ceremony for their client parishioners.

yajamāna, Newari: jajmān – A Newar Buddhist term that refers to a Vajrāchārya priest’s collection of client parishioners that is typically inherited patrilineal.

homa – The original Sanskrit name of an important fire ceremony connected with Esoteric Buddhism, performed for client parishioners in the Newar tradition by their Vajrāchārya priest. This practice continues within Japan in the Shingon tradition of Mount Koya, where it is known as goma (護摩).

sangha – The term for the Buddhist community, traditionally encompassing practicing monks.

nikujisaitai – Literally “meat eating and marriage”, a word that was coined during doctrinal debates in the Edo period to describe the transgressive practices priests were engaging in despite their vows.

bakufu – Literally “tent office” (幕府), used to describe the government of the Japanese shogunate.

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