The Asian side of the world – II
Chronicles of Asia and the Pacific 2011-2013
Jean-François Sabouret (ed.)
The Asian side of the world – II
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Chronicles of Asia and the Pacific
2011-2013
The objective of this collection *Études Imasie – Pacifique* is to publish the studies, round table discussions and the papers of researchers and members of the Asia and Pacific Network (CNRS)

Copy Editor: Christophe Sabouret

Chief Editor: Director

(Réseau Asie et Pacifique, CNRS)

The English texts in *The Asian side of the world – II* were proofread by Tasha Clavel and Victoria Wong.

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ISSN : 2119-4106
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The focus remains forever and always on Asia; the abyssal Asia with its ancient sources and the present Asia that is conjuring the future and for the long term. The Pacific is an immense and violent region, from which typhoons originate and which shelters the constantly moving tectonic plates, relentlessly threatening islands and continents from powerful earthquakes and destructive tsunamis.

It is a vision that is obsolete today, separating the study of Asia from that of the Pacific. Impossible, even dangerous, to separate these two entities under the pretext that one represents a region of ancient lands and the other, an “aqueous region”, fragile to unwritten and uncertain cultures.

China is presented as the inhabited Middle Kingdom and is becoming a leading maritime power year after year, threatening American domination in this vast Pacific region. Is dying for islands claimed by neighbouring and opposition countries unthinkable nowadays? The powers of the sea and borderlines that pass in the Pacific Ocean are being redefined. The great powers of Asia, playing the “go” game of the sea, are placing their black and white pieces on the vast chessboard.

However, China is not the only country of dynamism in Asia. The great economic, industrial and creative Asia is progressing forwards. Will the country come together or will it fall apart? Border, economic, industrial, religious and ideological complexes; the list is long of reasons of conflict. Nevertheless, the Asia of Confucian values of work and effort is a reality, a global effort, which despite various upheavals, is taking the world upwards.

The Asia and Pacific Network (Imasie) illustrates, in its own way, the immensity of the task that is to be accomplished. Every month, the Network edits texts, known as its editorials, aimed at as many people as possible, not only at specialists of Asia, but also at those who wish to
understand the reason for which this great economic and industrial ma-
chine that is North-East Asia, is leading the world in a dynamic momen-
tum. This is reassuring for some and worrying for others.

These editorials are “still frames” that show the diversity of skills
possessed by France on this part of the world, but also all that remains to
be addressed in depth. An editorial should be able to be produced every
day. The task is immense and exciting as well. Asia and the Pacific are
forging ties with other continents and making waves, exploiting new mag-
netic fields of economics, innovation, science and industry that are organis-
ing themselves around the major cities of Asia.
PART ONE

Regional dynamics and globalisation
Sericulture in Asia: 
yesterday, today, tomorrow

Bernard Mauchamp
Institut national de la recherche agronomique

AUGUST 2011

INTRODUCTION

The term “sericulture” is strictly limited to the production techniques of the cocoons of a caterpillar, the silkworm. In a broader sense, it includes the stages of stifling and reeling to obtain raw silk fleets, which is how raw silk is marketed. Other interventions are necessary for obtaining silk fabric, the ennoblement of silks.

I will limit myself to a restricted definition of sericulture. As the silkworm feeds on mulberry leaves, culture of the mulberry tree is part of sericulture. The breeding of silkworms and the culture of mulberry trees is a saga that shaped the world.

HISTORY: THE SERICULTURE OF YESTERDAY

Tsunami in a cup of tea: splashed by the fall of a cocoon into her cup of tea, Princess Si-Ling-Chi discovered the secret of silk while trying to remove it. She drew out one very long, solid thread. After this observation in 2602 BC, the emperor put his wife in charge of producing this fabulous thread. Si-Ling-chi collected the worms and installed them in a closed room to feed them. With the cocoons obtained, she was able to reel the thread and to weave it. For centuries, this practice remained confined to the courts of the many Chinese dynasties, any person trying to reveal its secrets being sentenced to death, and the material was known only in the form of silk fabrics. These
fabulous fabrics became the basis of commercial exchange, with the same value as currency, and trade routes were opened (139 BC, Han Empire) to areas west of China, in the first form of globalisation. The roads encouraged commercial, cultural and even religious exchanges. The exceptional character of the goods attracted heterogeneous populations, diversifying the exchanges (gold, money, horses, new food products, alfalfa). The “silk roads” crossed the deserts, from oasis to oasis, and the mountains. In the East, the silk road started from Chiang’ an (Xi’ an) and passed to the west either north of the Caspian Sea and then north of the Black Sea, or south of the Caspian Sea towards Baghdad and then to Antioch. This road was not, however, the one the silkworm travelled, and the origin of this fibre remains unknown.

In the 2nd century BC, Chinese emigrants introduced sericulture into Korea, but it did not last there. The silk roads were not the channels for the dissemination of sericulture but, on the contrary, protected the secret, because the merchants wished to keep a monopoly on trade. In the 5th century AD, sericulture reached India, where it settled. Gradually, it spread to most of the countries of Asia, including India, Korea, Japan, Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand.

This is the stage on which the first act of sericulture was played. Let us see who the actors are.

The silkworm

The cocoon that fell into the cup came from a caterpillar, *Bombyx mandarina*, a wild species present in nature. The current Bombyx of the mulberry tree, *Bombyx mori*, is a domesticated form, a species in which the caterpillar does not move and the adult does not fly. Consequently, large numbers of worms and can be bred and various species can be hybridized.

The worms are reared on open trays covered with mulberry leaves, their only food. Over the centuries, several hundred lineages have been selected that are best adapted to the various rearing areas. The monovoltine (one generation per year) and bivoltine (two generations per year) lineages are bred in temperate zones and give the best silks, whereas the polyvoltine lines (several generations per year) are bred in tropical and subtropical areas and give silks of poorer quality.

The worm is fed for about 36 days. It then secretes silk to make the cocoon, inside of which it is transformed into a pupa, then into a butterfly. The cocoon consists of only one thread, which can be more than a kilometer long, and those with a longer thread (1.5 km) are selected. The adult leaves the cocoon by breaking the thread, and this is prevented by killing the pupa.
with heat. Once the pupa has been killed and dehydrated, the cocoons are preserved until the thread is reeled. Sericulturists plan their interventions to the day. All the worms in a breeding stock are the same age, and all secrete their silk at the same time, so that the cocoons can be collected all together.

The *B. mori* worm constitutes more than 95% of all reared worms. Other, wild species produce silk of different quality, such as *tussah*, *tasar*, *eri* and *muga* silks.

The mulberry tree

The most commonly used species, *Morus alba*, is found in China. There are currently several hundred varieties, adapted to the areas and soils in which they are cultivated. The tree is easy to multiply: by sowing, propagation by cutting and multiplication in vitro.

The worms feed on leaves placed on the trays, which represents expensive work for gathering. In addition to the selection of varieties, efforts have been made to control the trees. Feeding branches consists of cutting and giving whole branches to last-age worms, without taking off the leaves. For first-age worms, the leaves are cut into thin strips, which is the only way of feeding them. Use of artificial food containing mulberry leaf powder was not satisfactory. The quality of the food has a direct effect on the quality of silk.

To raise one ounce or nearly 40,000 eggs, a total of 1,200 kg of leaves are needed during 36 days over a final surface of 60 m². One ounce produces 60 kg of cocoons, which produce 5 kg of raw silk.

Breeding farms are either small family units or industrial-type units.

**Sericulture today**

Progress in knowledge led to industrialization, with changes in some techniques. The first advance was separation of the production of cocoons from production of adults for eggs, resulting in two separate businesses, seeding and sericulture, each with its own know-how. The seeder ensures the production of healthy eggs, resulting in at least 98% hatching by a date scheduled by the sericulturist. Studies by Pasteur in France allowed eradication of *pébrine*, a fatal worm disease. The seeder also produces hybrids, resulting in cocoons of a much better quality than that provided by each parent. The seeder provides certified eggs to the local market and even exports them. When the eggs are incubated at the same time, the breeding
stocks are homogeneous, facilitating interventions. Exchanges of know-how between Europe and Asia modernize sericulture. Recent techniques are adopted in the countries where sericulture is established and also benefit family breeding farms.

At the end of the 19th century, Japan, India and China were the principal producers. More than 95% of the world’s silk is produced in Asia. Recent statistics place China as the first producer (with more than 70% of the overall production).

Production of fresh cocoons and raw silk by country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Fresh cocoons (tonnes)</th>
<th>Raw silk (tonnes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>512 700</td>
<td>(2005) 584 220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>126 136</td>
<td>135 462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>9 916</td>
<td>8 051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>3 473</td>
<td>10 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1 031</td>
<td>505</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: www.inserco.org

The market and consumption do not always reflect sericultural activity directly. It is affected by labour costs and risks regression in the long term, as industrialization induces rural depopulation. In the medium term, Chinese and Indian production is likely to decrease in favour of new production centres (e.g. Africa, South America). Its future depends on grants, as the price of fresh cocoons remains low (US$ 2–3/kg). World demand is currently slightly increasing.

THE SERICULTURE OF TOMORROW

Which is the future of sericulture? The example of Europe would indicate that it is compromised, because, although Europe consumes worked silk, it does not produce any cocoons. The probable increase in demand from emerging countries should lead to an increase in production, in contrast to their industrialization. Will these countries become like Japan, France and Italy? Any such evolution implies displacement of the production zones. Currently, silk is used almost exclusively as a textile fibre (e.g. for the sari at the beginning of this article). This activity will be maintained in the future, but other outlets for silk can be found without any great in-
crease in sericultural activities, such as use of silk from cocoons with poorer-quality thread, which does not meet the criteria for textile use.

The true future of sericulture lies in a new destiny for the silkworm: making proteins other than silk by gene transfer in the genome. Japan and China have become strongly implicated in this new strategy since France, which developed the technology in 2000, abandoned these programmes in 2010!

Silk is synthesized in silk-producing glands. As it is proteinic, it is expressed by known genes and sequences. To obtain proteins other than silk from the cells of silk-producing glands, genes of other proteins are introduced into the genome of the silkworm, ensuring that it functions only in these glands. The silkworm is thus genetically modified. During the transformation, the introduced gene is transmitted to its progeny, thus directly obtaining a new lineage. In this way, a medically useful recombinant protein can be combined with silk, impregnating the thread. It can then easily be purified to obtain a product free of any cellular contaminants. The transformation strategy can be used for any kind of gene.

Another application of transgenesis that will have a strong impact on the future of sericulture in India is the production of lineages resistant to the diseases due to baculoviruses. The lineages that give the best silks cannot be bred in India because of their high sensitivity to these viruses. With Indian colleagues, we introduced a genetic construction into the genome of silkworms, which is expressed in all cells and thus blocks replication of the viruses by inhibiting the structural proteins. The lineage obtained is thus resistant to the viruses. Hybrids obtained by crossing with the resistant line acquire this property. This represents enormous progress in the development of sericulture in tropical and subtropical areas.

The production of medically useful proteins and special silks are under way.

CONCLUSION

Sericulture, and therefore the silkworm, was the basis of many major upheavals, which changed the world, such as:
– the silk roads, the first signs of globalisation;
– study of the diseases of silkworms by Pasteur, leading to the advent of microbiology;
– transgenesis of the silkworm in animal biotechnology.

Sericulture, although practised for more than 5000 years, has a certain future in the 5000 years to come.
Inter-Korean tensions: ideology first, at any cost?

Alain Nass
Expert on Asia and Korea

OCTOBER 2011

2010 was the worst year of inter-Korean confrontation for decades. Human losses were heavy in the south, with about 50 military and civilian victims after two major incidents in the West Sea: a ship of the Republic of Korea (ROK) Navy was sunk by an undetected action attributed to the Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK), which then poured artillery shells on Yongpyeong Island. The result of the ROK military response is not known.

The reasons for these events, which have had long-lasting effects on inter-Korean relations, reflect the reciprocal choice for firmness and confrontation made in 2008 and the difficulty of getting out of the spiral of violence dominated by ideological confrontation. As Pyongyang wants to make 2012 the year of consolidation of its regime and a presidential election is to be held in the south, will there be a move towards negotiation and easing of relations or aggravation of the tensions?

THE RISING CRISIS

In early 2008, a new conservative administration took over in Seoul. Determined to break with the liberal approach to the north of the two previous presidencies, it enacted policies contrary to those followed previously. In order to be firmer with the regime in Pyongyang, the administration backtracked on several inter-Korean projects and agreements that were accused of funding the regime, advocated strict reciprocity and stopped automatic aid; it made the DPRK nuclear issue a bilateral priority. At the same time, Seoul strengthened its economic and military ties with its US ally.
The North Korean regime took a long time to express an opinion on this new Government, responding first verbally, asking that all inter-Korean commitments be respected, then denouncing Seoul more and more strongly for its “intransigence and provocations” (controversy over pre-emptive strikes).

In mid-2008, the accidental death of a South Korean tourist who had inadvertently entered a military compound in the North worsened the relationship. The regime refused to apologize, and the Conservatives in the South used this incident to justify their intransigence, to denounce the liberal approach and to suspend the so-called sunshine policy. The incident thus compromised any easing of contacts, the question of a prior apology emerging as a new obstacle.

Starting in 2009, the degradation of relations became overt, with frequent tensions and significant degradation of exchanges (end of joint exploitation of the Keumkang Tourism Resort, blockage of the Kaesong industrial complex). Direct contacts were interrupted, and the flagship programmes of reconciliation (meetings of separated families) were suspended.

In the North, the elite who had supported opening up with Seoul and had benefited from the trade it generated was purged. On top of a failed economic reform, the health problems of the leader speeded up implementation of a viable mechanism for a succession, to fill a possible power vacuum. This process, with its potential instability, played into the hands of hardliners in the regime, who were already concerned about the destabilizing effects of the opening up with Seoul. Their approach was legitimized by the quickly deteriorating relations.

The Seoul Government, better backed militarily by the US and therefore better assured of its security in a crisis, strengthened its intransigent, conditional approach, which was not challenged by the new Democrat US administration[1], which arrived in 2009. Most Conservatives estimated that, with strong international support, firmness was preferable and could force the regime to surrender to the conditions of Seoul in order to survive and avoid collapse.

The Pyongyang regime, however, demonstrated that other, more painful alternatives exist and once again showed its capacity for resilience in the face of adversity, choosing the West Sea as its battlefield. This zone of direct military contact between the two Koreas, where the demarcation line is not agreed upon, had already been the theatre of regular clashes (1999, 2002 and 2009). The mutual desire for revenge and confrontation predominated.

---

1. The Government in Seoul even convinced the Obama administration not to renew the “North Korea” approach of President Clinton, which raised conflict with the Republicans and was traumatizing for the Democrats, who lost the presidential election.
Thus, within a few months, inter-Korean relations again became hostage to the most hardline politicians on both sides of the demilitarized zone, paving the way for a clash.

2010, CONFRONTATION

The sinking of the “Cheonan”

On 26 March, a ROK Navy ship, the Cheonan, patrolling the West Sea near the demarcation line was cut in two by an explosion and sunk, killing 46 sailors of a crew of 104.

The international investigation by the ROK Government, concluded in May that the DPRK had been involved, and debris from a North Korean torpedo (propeller) was found by dredging the scene of the sinking. North Korea has always denied responsibility, international condemnation was not unanimous, and some technical findings of the investigation remain disputed. A team of experts from the Russian Navy made separate analyses, which have not been made public, with other hypotheses.

The event also cast doubt on the effectiveness of US-ROK monitoring of the West Sea, an admittedly difficult but small area, which has been closely monitored for decades, where the water is not deep (30-40 m at the site) and the channels well known. Undetected underwater activity despite the amount of the equipment deployed by the allies (further strengthened by a joint naval exercise involving US Navy ships in the south) is disquieting. It indicates an unsuspected capability of the North Korean military and a highly sophisticated operation that escaped detection before and after the action, despite travelling a long distance in shallow waters.

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2. With the US, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and Sweden
Artillery shelling of Yongpyeong island

In November, contributing to the fatal crescendo of tensions already exacerbated by the Cheonan incident, the DPRK responded to live firing exercises by the ROK in the West Sea by a salvo of heavy artillery on the inhabited island of Yongpyeong, leaving 4 dead, 19 injured and heavy damage. This direct military action against ROK territory was unprecedented since the 1950s and the war.

LESSONS LEARNT AND PROSPECTS

When the new Seoul Government introduced its new approach to the North in 2008, it sought to denounce the “errors” of the Liberal presidencies, using inter-Korean relations as a vector. This internal approach, however, weighed instantly on the still-fragile North-South relations, built laboriously since 1991, the year of the first major inter-Korean agreements.

For Seoul it was also, in full accordance with its inter-Korean principles and its calculations for domestic policy, a means of “rehabilitating” its alliance with Washington, which was considered to have deteriorated under the Liberals. The rapprochement was helped by a good relationship and ideological proximity with the Bush administration. Its military component (joint exercises and planning, scenarios for interventions in the North) reactivated the fears of Pyongyang, confronted by its own weaknesses and the risk of a coordinated external intervention in a crisis, and strengthened the determination of the regime to guard against risk by improving its deterrent capability and emphasizing threat it represented.

The escalation of intransigent rhetoric on both sides reignited military tensions and postures, directed by the North either at the US (missiles and nuclear testing, HEU program) to lure them into negotiation, or at the South. The firmness showed by Seoul quickly reached its limits. Although it may have weakened the regime, it was concluded that that might contribute to an overt crisis or even to collapse, which neither Seoul nor the other players wanted. To be effective, it had to rely even more on the US, which had all the necessary means (vigilance, anticipation, reaction), at the risk of not mastering decisions and reactions in to incident, the US having no interest in the situation getting out of control, as they were also in the front line.

Those incidents have shown once again that, beyond the rhetoric, retaliation is still not a credible option, and the North knows it. Firmness can even be counterproductive: it resulted in the disappearance of relays and contacts between the South and the North forged through exchanges, and
that network would have to be rebuilt. Positions dearly acquired in the commercial field and exploitation of natural resources in North Korea were abandoned, to the benefit of the Chinese, who will be difficult to dislodge.

Seoul lost the initiative in a project in which progress depends more on Washington and Beijing, who are the only players capable of controlling the escalation and dissuading Pyongyang from and who are making efforts to facilitate a return to dialogue.

It would more appropriate and realistic in the short term to return to negotiation and detente, despite the financial (aid) and ideological (accept the regime and discuss on equal terms) costs. History has shown that Seoul will gain room for manoeuvre and status, not only with the North but also the US and its Chinese neighbour, than in any phase of intransigence. This attitude has the advantage of creating trust, influence and dependence in the North, which are useful for reducing tensions and for South Korean interests.

With just one year left before the ROK presidential election, however, the clock is ticking, and Seoul has lost the initiative on the inter-Korean issue, which depends on Washington and Beijing for any progress. Another policy is possible, as now requested by South Korea, but, to be credible, it will be necessary to change the people around the President who are still advocating intransigence.
Anti-Japanese feelings in the Republic of Korea have a long history, dating back for many to the Wako, the Japanese pirates who plundered the Korean coasts during the 14th century. More recently, it derived almost certainly from the painful experience of colonization (1905-1945), but it is perhaps mainly the way in which Japan manages this sensitive heritage that has fuelled the resentment of many Koreans. Since the 1980s, their grievances have focused on issues like history teaching, the fact that some Japanese political leaders offer their respects at the Yasukuni shrine, where Class A war criminals are buried, compensation for “comfort women”, who were forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese military during the Second World War and the territorial dispute over the Tokto/Takeshima islets.

Whereas the conflicting relationship of the Republic of Korea – not to mention the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea – with the old Japanese colonizer is well known, such that some western observers considered that being anti-Japanese was part of being Korean, the relationship with the old Chinese “suzerain” is no less complicated. A recent survey offers a contrasting picture of Korea’s recent relations with its two neighbours.

The survey, carried out every year since 2007, showed that increasing numbers of Koreans consider that the relations between South Korea and China are bad, and the proportion has been growing steadily, from 34% in 2007 to 45% in 20101. Even though a slight majority still views the relationship positively, the figures clearly show a negative trend in the way

1. During the same period, the proportion of Korean regarding their relations with Japan as bad fell from 76.8% to 51.4%. Survey carried out by the Northeast Asian History Foundation, a research institute established in 2006 by the Roh Moo-hyun government to study historical disputes in Northeast Asia.
Koreans see their big neighbour. Should we add that being anti-Chinese is also part of being Korean?

At the beginning of the 2000s, when approval of a revisionist Japanese history textbook and repeated visits of the then Prime Minister, Koizumi Jun’ichiro, to the Yasukuni shrine caused a resurgence of anti-Japanese feeling in South Korea, China launched a research project on the history and current status of the northeast border region, known as “the Northeast Project”. One word in the list of research topics in particular drew Koreans’ attention: Koguryo (Gaogouli in Chinese), an ancient kingdom part of which lay within today’s China, was presented as an ethnic regime that was a tributary of the Chinese dynasties and should be part of Chinese national history.

This idea was not new: Chinese historians had already expressed it during the 1980s, but it was the first time it enjoyed such public attention. Koreans’ astonishment at being deprived of a whole chapter of their history was particularly great owing to their attachment to a kingdom which, with Paekche and Silla, had fought for supremacy over the Korean peninsula between the first century BC and the seventh century AD. Although Koguryo probably did not differentiate the Chinese dynasties and its two other “Korean” rivals, for Koreans who look at that period through the modern lens of national history, Koguryo is perceived as the conqueror that proudly defied China and defended the “Korean nation” against “foreign” invaders.

The anti-Chinese sentiment that gained ground in South Korea in the aftermath of this historical controversy was fuelled by the dispute over Mount Paektu (Changbai in Chinese) on the border between North Korea and China. China has recently been seeking to develop tourism, for both economic and strategic reasons. Concern about Korean irredentist claims over the Yanbian Autonomous Prefecture, where most of the Korean ethnic minority lives, prompted Beijing to strengthen loyalty to China in this minority by sharing the economic benefits of tourism around Paektu/Changbai. On the Korean side, however, this move and the Northeast Project are mostly considered signs of a Chinese desire to take control of the northern part of the Korean peninsula if the North Korean regime collapses.

Chinese initiatives around Paektu/Changbai, such as construction of an airport and a railroad and an attempt to have it listed as a World Heritage Site, have infuriated Koreans. For them, in both the South and the North, Mount Paektu is the cradle of their nation. The mythical founder of Korea, Tan’gun, is said to have been born there more than 2000 years ago. Another legend, spread by North Korea, contends that this mountain is also the birthplace of Kim Jong-il. The whole world, or at least the Asian continent, witnessed Koreans’ attachment to the mountain when South Korean female athletes held up signs proclaiming “Mont Paektu is our territory” at
the award ceremony during the 2007 Winter Asian Games in Changchun. This incident in turn exacerbated Chinese hostility towards Koreans, who were already accused of stealing Chinese culture. The event that sparked the controversy occurred in 2005, when the Chinese heard in disbelief that the Gangneung Danoje Festival had been listed as intangible cultural heritage of humanity. This festival is known for its reconstitution of past ceremonies with shamanistic rituals, traditional games and Gwanno masked drama. In order to understand Chinese astonishment at UNESCO’s announcement, one need only pronounce the name of the festival in Chinese: Duanwujie, best known in the west as the Dragon Boat Festival, because of the famous boat races organized in China and other Asian countries with large Chinese communities. China, outraged at being deprived of one of their festivals, responded in 2008 by declaring Duanwujie a national holiday and by having their version of this traditional festival listed as an intangible heritage of humanity in 2009.

Following this bout, many rumours, often groundless, began to circulate on the Internet. One accused Koreans of trying to appropriate Chinese traditional medicine by having it listed as a cultural heritage, when in fact the Koreans wanted to list a 17th century Korean medical book. A flow of sensationalist news, relayed by official Chinese media such as The People’s Daily, reported Korean claims to Chinese inventions: the compass, gunpowder, papermaking, printing and even Chinese characters. The impact of these rumours was all the stronger that some were based on information reported in the Korean media, such as the theory of a Korean origin of Chinese characters.

Although it is difficult to assess the repercussions of these controversies on Sino-Korean relations, the negative trend observed among Koreans is also perceptible among Chinese. According to the same survey, 40% of Chinese now consider relations to be bad, whereas only 6% did so in 2007. Even groundless accusations still have consequences. Hu Mei, director of the film Confucius, released in 2010, admitted that rumours about Confucius being Korean was one motivation for this project. Her case is far from an exception. Tired of refuting false allegations, a Korean student in Taiwan seized the opportunity of a meeting with President Ma Ying-jeou in April 2011 to ask him to clear up the misunderstanding officially. Surprised by the student’s odd demand, Ma Ying-jeou complied and declared that Koreans were also convinced that Confucius was Chinese and not Korean.

The recent disputes between China and South Korea reflect the same rigid national framework for interpreting geographical space, even in the ancient past with Koguryô/Gaogouli or for the cultural heritage with the Danoje/Duanwujie Festival. Even though the declaration of Ma Ying-jeou was sympathetic, more will be needed to ease these disputes. In view of the
The Asian side of the world – II

importance of the interactions that characterize their relations, Koreans and Chinese should recognize the fundamentally hybrid nature of their border regions – which makes exclusive appropriation of the history of a kingdom like Koguryō/Gaogouli by a nation state illusory – and should reassess their cultural heritage by paying more attention to the complex processes of “Creolisation” and intercultural exchanges.
The Chinese periurban environment and globalisation

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JANUARY 2012

Chinese cities\(^1\) underwent profound changes during the period of reforms in the late 1970s. The creation of special economic zones in the south in 1980 and areas of economic and technical development on the outskirts of major towns in coastal areas in 1984 were memorable moments. The real turning-point, however, was at the beginning of the next decade, with the creation of the New Pudong Area in 1990 and the return to reforms initiated by Deng Xiaoping in 1992. At the time, political decisions, such as work contracts, creating a housing market and the reform of State companies, had a major impact on the economic and social fabric of cities, as well as refocusing development, which was previously based in the free-trade zones and the coast, in the cities themselves. These had previously been bypassed by Chinese reforms but now became actors, leaders and models.

Urban areas were thus modernized into megacities in the process of globalisation: extension of built-up areas, redistribution not only of secondary activities but also of part of the population to the outskirts of cities, urban development with the construction of prestigious buildings, a new road grid for cars and functional zoning, resulting in significant commuting; large-scale renewal of residential buildings, expansion of the service sector and gentrification and verticalization of city centres. An urban middle class appeared, with higher salaries, forming a strong consumer society that could buy a house at market price. The aims of this group are now to buy a car or go on holiday in China or abroad.

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\(^{1}\) The words “town” and “city” are used interchangeably throughout this text, as the French word, “ville”, applies to both. In the text, the context should be taken into consideration to determine whether the author is referring to a town or a city.
This overwhelming urban development resulted in the emergence of new, spacious suburbs near the city centre and an internal polycentric system, with distant suburbs relatively independent of the city centre in terms of services. The real unseen changes in contemporary Chinese urbanization, however, especially since the beginning of the 2000s, is the integration of peripheral rural areas, which had hitherto remained external to the urban logic.

These areas outside the city, governed by the central municipality but central city governments, are now undergoing huge economic changes, new residential functions and their own form of urbanization. As part of an ambitious master plan, they are able to accommodate facilities of regional or national interest, a dense network of new roads and motorways, economic zones directly linked to international production networks and the emergence of secondary poles through new cities.

**SHANGHAI, AN INNOVATIVE MODEL**

The city of Shanghai was involved in this process long before most other large Chinese cities. During the past 20 years, it has experienced rapid growth and is often seen as a innovative model of urbanization in China. As part of the “ANR-Suds Peridsud”, a collaboration with the East China Normal University, and following a comparison with five other megacities (Abidjan, Hanoi, Cape Town, Lima and Mexico City), our team of researchers and doctoral students at UMR 8586, Prodig, has chosen to analyse the new trends of Chinese urbanization with the example of the outskirts of Shanghai.

Early on, the authorities tried to orientate the rapid growth of the city centre. The New Pudong Area project, east of the Huangpu River, was the first step to compensate for the city’s extension to the foreign concessions of the west. This area is structured around a new financial centre in Lujiazui, the industrial areas in Jinqiao and Zhanjiang, the Waigaoqiao Port and the Pudong International Airport. More recently, in the southeast, it has also been structured around the new town of Luchaogang, directly linked to the port and deep waters of the Yangshan River. Baoshan and Minhang are also being extended, in the north and south, respectively, and in the town centres.

Throughout the beginning of the 21st century, city development projects affected the entire city and maintained an inclusive logic. It was thus proposed to relocate people and activities through an ambitious polycentric system based on the building of new towns, themselves heirs of the former satellite towns of the Maoist period. The “One city, nine towns” programme
for the development of Songjiang, Shanghai’s main district, and those of nine other new towns (Baoshan, Minhang, Jiading, Nanhui, Jinshan, Fengxian, Qingpu, Luchaogang and Chengqiao) was revised in 2006 to place particular emphasis on three peripheral cities: Jiading, Songjiang and Luchaogang.

These new towns are part of the history of the city’s development and are models of Shanghai’s urban and cosmopolitan modernization. Most combine a previous urban fabric inherited from their town of origin and achievements of the Maoist era; a new town with residential blocks and a promotional image based on foreign architecture (English style in Songjiang, Italian in Minhang and German in Anting), intended only for the wealthy (Chinese or foreign), with economic development zones open to the international community and often a university town accommodating the new Shanghai University campuses, which are now in limited space in the city centre.

**SONGJIANG, A NEW TOWN**

The Songjiang district is not contiguous with the city but about 30 km west of Shanghai. It faces two challenges: very rapid urbanization, which has made land pressure the main issue for local authorities responsible for development; and a very high concentration of buildings for residential and industrial purposes in the northeast of the district, resulting in significant commuting into the town centre, which has now been strengthened by the opening of underground transport.

Across Songjiang, the rapid changes in periurban areas of Chinese towns are illustrated in the concomitant presence of widely varied populations with different or conflicting interests, clearly representing the contradictions deriving from both the former migration policy (registration booklet, restriction of officially authorized migration, maintenance of the rural population in these areas) and the flow that has given rise to economic development, with many migrants working in fields, factories and services such as small businesses, movement of part of the population into the town centre and the arrival of new middle classes and the wealthy seeking a better quality of life. The socio-spatial divide in these areas can be very strong.

Land has become a major issue because of strong pressure from industrialists, property developers and local authorities on former residents, especially (often elderly) farmers, as their children leave to work in the town centre.
PERIURBAN AREAS: THE FUTURE OF CHINESE TOWNS?

In the context of integration into the global economy and urban modernization, the mutation of peripheral areas to the outskirts of Shanghai show the extent to which the current spatial and social re-composition results from China’s rapid urbanization, its sectorial choices and the evolution of its population. Urban areas in the central district under local administration, constraints to social innovation due to the diverse populations and re-evaluation of rural areas economically and socially are the challenges faced by these in-between areas. Urban peripheries are currently laboratories of a post-reformed China that must now find solutions to the contradictions resulting from the reforms themselves. Noteworthy tools in terms of the development process are the policies that take into account the challenges not only for large cities but also for vast urban areas that are also in need of administrative and economic adaptation to the level of the current social fabric in these former blind spots of high-density territorial governance.

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Will the Asia-Pacific region become Chinese?

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February 2012

Is East Asia part of Asia-Pacific? This question about the limits of an area that encompasses parts of East Asia and the Western Pacific contains two unnatural terms and reveals the power relations that frame the regional approach. East Asia – a Japanese concept – emerged in the 1930s and 1940s and was revived in the 1990s, with increasing trade in the area, the spread of Japanese capital and then Chinese capital and the construction of an Asian regionalism, partly driven by ASEAN. Asia-Pacific – an American concept – emerged after the Second World War and during the Cold War, through the US alliance system (hub and spoke) in the region and the increase in trans-Pacific trade with Japan and Australia. Now, Asia-Pacific appears to have been claimed by Barack Obama, born in Hawaii, leading to affirmation of a “manifest destiny” in the region, with island relays from Guam to the Australia, Japanese and Taiwanese allies, in which the US is strongly anchored. Geographical competition between two symbols of power in the region re-emerged in the late 2000s, with two projects: the Asia Pacific Community (APC), led by the Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, and the East Asia Community (EAC), suggested by the Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama.

Although this competition did not survive regional tensions and the departure of the two instigators, it remains a symbol of the power relations that help to homogenize the regional geography, such as reproduction and strengthening of economic, political and cultural competition in the region. Yet behind the symbols, East Asia is already Asia-Pacific, which has been definitely recentred in East Asia and the Western Pacific, even though the term could cover the Pacific basin of APEC in the early years.

During the past decade, the face of the Pacific has been transformed by rapid integration into the political, economic and strategic East-Asian
“regional world”. A new regional consciousness has emerged alongside Pacific identities dominated by the colonial experience and the connection to Australia or New Zealand. Even the Australian identity, traditionally “de-regionalized” from its Asian geography and built-in Britishness, is now a growing part of the Asian region, while maintaining its US alliance.

In 2003, during a speech to the Australian Parliament, Chinese President Hu Jintao stressed the long-standing ties between his country and Australia, starting with the example of the eunuch navigator, Zheng He, a 15th century hero and a symbol of the opening of his country to the Pacific and the Indian Ocean: “In the 1420s, the Chinese expeditionary fleets of the Ming dynasty reached Australian shores. For centuries, the Chinese sailed across vast seas and settled down in what was called ‘the southern land’, or today’s Australia. They brought Chinese culture here and lived harmoniously with the local people, contributing their proud share to Australia’s economy, society and thriving pluralistic society.” Hu Jintao created a distinctively Chinese counter-narrative of Australia’s early history, which includes the South Pacific in an area of influence before the European presence and close to the Asian system of which the centre was China.

Therefore, the Chinese Navy followed in the wake of Zheng He. Since the mid-2000s, the strategic interests of China in the Pacific extend beyond the borders of the South China Sea and its key issues: South China Sea islands, the Taiwan Strait and the Korean Peninsula. The new strategic doctrine of the People’s Liberation Army-Navy (PLA-N) takes into account a presence in the South-East Asian Straits and revolves around a desire to make the South China Sea a “Chinese” sea and expand the zone of maritime interests: “Now, Chinese admirals say they want warships to escort commercial vessels that are crucial to the country’s economy [...] Another element of the Chinese Navy’s new strategy is to extend its operational reach beyond the South China Sea and the Philippines to what is known as the ‘second island chain’, rocks and atolls in the Pacific”, the official said. “That zone significantly overlaps the United States Navy’s area of supremacy.”

Although the principle of a Chinese military threat to the US Seventh Fleet in the Pacific has been mooted by some US and Australian think-tanks, it remains hypothetical, at least in the long term. The Western Pacific is not a priority for China, as it is too far from major trade routes that run along the Asian continent, and the major tensions are closer to the coast.

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The emergence of a “China-centric” Asia-Pacific is based primarily on construction of a political and economic space. Australia, the country closest to Washington in the region, is paradoxically the most important link between China and the Pacific, particularly for the economy. China is the main client for Australian assets, accounting for 26% of Australian exports. The Chinese appetite for raw materials to ensure economic growth is the main explanation of the excellent health of trade between the two states. Between 2006 and 2011, many “giga-contracts” were signed with China, one of the latest in 2010 exceeding US$ 60 billion. Iron, coal and aluminium maintain the economic health of Australia, and “China is today as critical for Australia’s economic security and prosperity as the US is for its military security”\(^\text{3}\). China is also the second largest trading partner of New Zealand after Australia.

The implication of the increasing importance of China in Oceania is the extension of its economic interests in order to ensure special access to raw materials in the region, such as oil and gas from Papua New Guinea, a country that benefited from large investments in 2009 and 2010. The Solomon Islands are also an essential source of raw materials, and China was the leading export destination in the archipelago in 2011, with 60% of the total, far ahead of Thailand (3.5%) and South Korea (3.5%). In the quest for energy, minerals and other natural resources around the world, China has also become one of the largest sources of aid in the Pacific, as in Africa. Beijing is expanding its influence in the Pacific by restructuring its development aid and increasing loans to island states to build infrastructure. Some such loans are particularly important to the annual budget; for example, a loan to Tonga was equivalent to 32% of the annual GDP.

Political issues also influence Chinese choices in the region. The fight against the influence of Taiwan in the region, through “checkbook diplomacy”, remains one of the first issues in Chinese aid. Beijing is competing with other Asian players in the region, some of which have been present for longer, such as Japan, a special partner of Micronesia and a competitor for imports of raw materials. ASEAN members are also present and competing with China, such as Indonesia, an observer in the Melanesian Spearhead Group. Thailand, for example, is the main destination for exports from Vanuatu (57% of the total in 2011), Singapore for several countries and India in Fiji. Island countries are now considering the many possibilities offered by the development of Chinese power and its willingness to influence the

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wider region. Beijing and other Asian countries are now integrated into a regional system that was mainly oriented towards the Western powers but has now adopted a different discourse: “If we deal with the governments of the United States or western Europe, they try to impose a list of thirty-three things to do for democracy and issues of human rights. China comes in and says ‘we accept you as you are’. And it’s a refreshing change”. All the more so since China pays special attention to the leaders of the region: “Over the past few years, the red carpet has been rolled out in Beijing for the leaders of Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Vanuatu, Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia, Tonga, Kiribati and East Timor.” “It is now accepted routine”, claimed an article in The National Interest last year, “that the first official overseas visit by a new head of government from the region is made to Beijing, not to Canberra, Washington or Wellington”.

As stated by Hu Jintao in the extract above, the diaspora obviously plays a role for China as a symbol and a soft power. In New Zealand, the Asian population, primarily Chinese, could become the most prevalent minority in the country by 2040, before the Maoris, and participate into the construction of a new national identity. In Australia, East Asian people accounted for almost half of all emigrants in 2009, with a quarter from Europe, the home of historical Australian immigration. Island states are also home to large Chinese populations, especially Fiji and Papua New Guinea, which play an important role in relations between China and the island states. The diaspora also participates in constructing the official Chinese narrative about the Pacific, as it did in South-East Asia, although the anti-Chinese riots in Tonga and the Solomon Islands in 2006 and in Papua New Guinea in 2009 showed the limits of the diplomacy-diaspora relationship for Beijing and Taipei.

The Pacific is changing quickly, and, in a few years, the Chinese presence has become the decisive factor in this development. In less than two decades, the Great Ocean became the immediate neighbour of the world’s most dynamic economies, Australia depending more than ever on Asian partners. Nevertheless, the idea of a Western Pacific becoming a “Chinese lake” remains largely hypothetical, and Washington remains the strategic player in the region, especially as Japan and Australia also have navies that are undergoing rapid modernization. Chinese diplomacy is, however, already present in the Pacific, with visits, assistance, loans and contracts. This is the new face of the Asia-Pacific.

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Does India have a strategic doctrine for the 21st century?

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JULY 2012

In this period of international economic crises and uncertainty, India’s place among the emerging powers is not in question, in spite of some recent blips in its growth rate and the slow pace of its economic reforms. When some Indian leaders were recently asked about the central tenets of an Indian strategic doctrine in the economic, geostrategic and military spheres, they replied that India preferred to lead by example rather than outlining some grand ideological vision of the world with universalist pretensions, as has often been done by the great powers in history.

Two recent publications\(^1\), however, bring together some well-known experts from the think-tank milieu in India, and several of them are sufficiently close to the corridors of power in New Delhi for this publication to merit close attention. It presents what could be blueprints or alternative scenarios for an overall Indian strategic doctrine in the coming decades to buttress India’s search for power status. The major questions that are being asked are: what economic model should India choose, an increasingly liberal one or a mixed and regulated economy? What should the principal elements of economic and political relationships with developed countries be, especially the US and the European Union? What about neighbours, in particular Pakistan and China, with whom India has a long history of troubled relationships and which led India to develop nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles? What relationships should be developed with East and South-East Asia, referred to in India nowadays as the “Look East Policy”? And finally and not least, what about her relationships with the Middle East?

\(^1\) Menon, R., Rajiv, K., 2010; Khilnani et al., 2012
and with Central Asia, vital both for India’s energy security and also for her complex political and cultural relationships with the great Islamic nations?

We won’t try to review all these questions here, nor will we take a precise position on India’s strategic choices. We will just try to present the Indian perception of opportunities and constraints with respect to the outside world since its independence and to highlight the fact that Indian democracy – and the practice of its democracy – link its internal political equilibrium and choices to questions of international relations. This will be an important element for understanding India’s current and future evolution.

The choices of the years under Nehru (1950-1963) on questions of international economic and political relations were marked by two important elements. Firstly, the experience of British colonial and imperial domination led India’s political leaders, in particular Nehru, to reject capitalism as a model of development and to opt instead for a mixed economy dominated by a powerful economic role of the State. Second, the idea of non-alignment was developed as a strategic doctrine, which meant that India (and many other decolonized countries at that time) decided to maintain an equal political and ideological distance from the two major blocs of the Cold War. However, in the 1960s and 1970s, conflicts with China and Pakistan led India to make a strategic partnership with the Soviet Union, particularly in view of a marked, fairly realistic perception that the US had “tilted” towards Pakistan and was looking for a closer relationship with China, which would be to India’s detriment. This perception led to persistent anti-Americanism within the Indian political establishment during the years of Indira Gandhi’s leadership and the crisis over Bangladesh, in spite of the fascination of India’s middle classes with the prospect of migrating to the US. The world was perceived as a constraint, as a hostile environment, and the Indian attitude was reactive rather than proactive in the modern language of international relations.

This perception was also seen in economic policy, where the choice of model of industrialization was based on the idea that India did not have the capacity to influence the international economic scenario in her favour, particularly as regards exports, and hence had to substitute her imports by a national production system. This led to intellectual closure on the idea of conceiving international economic exchanges as a motor of development – an idea that India finally accepted in 1991, but once again as a reaction to the most important balance of payments crisis of her existence. This opening up was piloted by Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, whose Finance Minister was Dr Manmohan Singh, India’s current Prime Minister. They finally succeeded in getting the Congress Party to accept, for the first time in its history, the idea of an open economic model, orienting India towards greater integration into the world economy. This change was accompanied,
probably for the first time, by both ideological and psychological evolution of India’s elite and middle classes, marked by a willingness to compete with the developed countries on their own ground, in the economic sphere, and also to emulate the success of China and more generally the Asian dragons and tigers, through managed insertion into the world economy.

With the choice of a more open economic model, the other major change in India’s strategic choices was undoubtedly its radically changed, closer relationship with the US. The new US-India partnership was, from India’s point of view, a necessity in order to access US technology and US markets, and was a response to pressure from the Indian diaspora in the US, which was very strong not only in American universities and companies but also increasingly in the US administration. Above all, the partnership was necessary for the influence America brought to bear in getting India out of its nuclear isolation, which prevented her from developing its nuclear energy sector. This new relationship also has important implications for India’s internal political equilibrium. Left-wing political parties and intellectuals in India and also certain regional political parties have traditionally been anti-American. India’s capacity to develop its relationship with the US further will depend on the electoral weight and the media impact of these parties. Often, the regional parties lack a strategic vision of the world, have populist leaders and give important blocking power in the Indian federal system to the states of India that they control. These are oft-cited reasons for the policy blockages in India, which exasperate both the Indian and the international business milieu. The stoppage of the policy for opening up India’s retail trade to international investment and joint ventures, in spite of the approval of the Indian Government, is the latest episode on the economic front.

India also often strongly opposes American objectives and interests (and also sometimes those of the European Union) in international fora, to defend its legitimate commercial or strategic interests. The conflict with the US about Iran, a country that is important for India’s energy security and for its cultural and political relationships in West Asia, is an important example. These divergences of interest will certainly remain major bones of contention not only between India and the developed countries in the years to come but also more generally between the emerging countries and the developed countries, as demonstrated by the failure of the Doha round of trade negotiations and the post-Kyoto talks at Rio de Janeiro. More cooperation between developed and emerging nations in certain areas does not necessarily imply that the world is becoming less conflict-ridden; on the contrary, the strains on natural and energy resources, the protests and political conflict over unequal development both within and between na-
tions, and the confrontations between different ideological visions of the world remain focal points of international relations.

To conclude, India is slowly but surely becoming more confident about her ability to influence the world but has a distinct preference for the methods of "soft power"; negotiating sentences and commas in international treaties, diplomatic dialogue among senior bureaucrats, industrialists and academics, rather than grand policy declarations or universal principles. Is this approach likely to change over the coming decades? Maybe, but with a variable geometry.

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Tourism in the French Pacific collectivities: troubled waters

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DECEMBER 2012

At a time when the clouds are gathering over the French economy and there is increasing discussion of its loss of competitiveness, the economies of her overseas territories have already been languishing for a long time. Their economic system is at the edge of the abyss, with 25% unemployment in the French overseas departments. The high cost of living is a source of social tensions, underscoring extreme socio-economic inequalities. Demonstrations, blockades and general strikes occur one after another. The French Caribbean islands are even known in the American Anglophone world as the “strike islands”! The fire is smouldering, and the State has transformed itself into a firefighter, in keeping with what we modestly call “national solidarity.” We increasingly use the expression “greenhouse economy?” to evoke the economic problems of the overseas territories, a clever epithet to describe a model of development that is isolated, untenable and artificial, based on under-taxation, public transfers, protectionism and degradation of the trade balance. It is paradoxical that in the process of emancipation, New Caledonia is becoming more and more economically dependent on France. This situation explains why local debates focus on politics rather than economic aspects, which are fundamental for the viability of the new entity, independent of or associated with France, except that economics is a political argument: for the non-independentists, in proving that independence will be a catastrophe, and for the independentists, in benefitting from stipends from the State.

2. Poirine.
At the heart of the problem lies the question of prices and salaries. On the one hand, there are the permanent agents of the State and local collectivities who benefit from “additional payments” as compared with Metropolitan France. The snag is that this “high cost of living bonus” does not apply to everyone. Thus, we acknowledge the high cost of living for some but not for others. Consequently, the overseas societies experience far more inequality than the Metropole. The other aspect of the problem is the question of prices. There is great opacity in setting them. What is certain is that the local elites of European or mixed origin are not interested in autonomous development because their prosperity depends on control of export and import flows by their commercial companies. Autonomous development would penalize them by reducing trade. Those with capital find industrial investments unattractive, preferring real estate, land or commerce.

These symptoms are related to a sickness called “the Dutch syndrome”, which is applied to economies that receive a sudden boon. It was called so because The Netherlands was one of the first states affected, after the discovery of natural gas. The sectors involved (export, tourism, etc.) see an increase in costs induced by the rise in prices due to increased revenues and internal demand. Tourism in overseas France is one of the main victims of this syndrome, because it cannot be protected (except by subsidies or tax relief). It is therefore the first to suffer from the reduction in its profits, provoked by rising costs and the impossibility of adjusting their prices to offset them. It is also a victim of another aspect of the Dutch syndrome: the high salaries in the State and territorial public sector tend to become the salary reference. The qualified workforce is attracted by the booming sectors, in which the rates of pay are higher.  

The signs of bad health in the tourism industry in French Polynesia and New Caledonia – excluding Wallis and Futuna, a restricted destination where the number of tourists is not even measured – are numerous. First of all, these two destinations are those that have seen the least progress in numbers of visitors over the past 30 years. While the number of tourists multiplied more than three times in Fiji, the Northern Mariana Islands and Guam, it has progressed only slightly in the two French collectivities of the Pacific. For more than 10 years, the industry in New Caledonia has stagnated at around 100,000 tourists. In the Asia-Pacific zone, the numbers have increased annually by 6.7% since 2000, while it has decreased by more than 3% per year in French Polynesia (252,000 tourists in 2000, 162,000 in 2011). New Caledonia and French Polynesia have lost the market share in the competition between tropical destinations that attract tour-

ists. The only satisfactory note is the spectacular progression in the number of cruise ship tourists in New Caledonia (21 000 in 1998, 237 000 in 2011), on ships from Australia offering short excursions.

Another index of the difficulties facing the tourist sector is the decline in the number of foreign visitors. Hidden beneath the obvious stagnation in tourist numbers in New Caledonia is an alarming loss of competitiveness for this destination, translated by an increase in French visitors from the Metropole or French Oceania. Despite of its distance, Metropolitan France has become the principal source of tourists, and the number of Japanese tourists in particular has dropped considerably (35 000 in 1998, 18 000 in 2011).

“Affinity tourism”, people coming to visit friends or family, has grown and accounts for the majority of Metropolitans, followed by Wallisians, Futunians and Tahitians, who choose non-commercial accommodation.

The widespread failure of hotels in French Polynesia is also symptomatic of the tourism crisis in overseas France. In Tahiti, Moorea, Huahine and Bora Bora, hotel closures have accelerated, demonstrating the failure of, and the damage caused by, the policy of non-taxation chosen by successive governments in order to combat the competitive weakness of France overseas. Failing to confront the vicious circle of the high cost of living, investments in numerous sectors were partially exempted from taxation from 1986 (Pons law). In French Polynesia and New Caledonia, a local system was added to the national measures. Far from combating the Dutch syndrome, the tax-exempt capital was diverted from real tourism investments and instead poured into real estate operations masquerading as hotel projects. As the withdrawal of tax-exempt status was not defined, private investors sought to sell off their property at the end of the obligatory period of exploitation (5–10 years). Thus, the fiscal tool, unable to compensate for these structural handicaps, went astray.

French Polynesia and New Caledonia are among the most expensive destinations in the world. Accommodation, excursions and restaurants are poor value for money. Shopping is limited and expensive. Nightlife is almost non-existent, and few activities are available for tourists. The hospitality is often poor. Competing islands in the Pacific have a more up-to-date choice of hotels and quality entertainment for significantly less cost. Knowing the potential for tourism in New Caledonia and that the names “Tahiti” and “Bora Bora” are the universal materialization of the idea of paradise on Earth, the current waste of opportunity is clear. How long will

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5. Chauchat.
The South Seas have to compensate for the many flaws of French Polynesia, in order for it to be a dream destination worthy of marking an important moment, such as a wedding or a retirement?

The conclusion is not that the only solution to developing tourism is independence. Hawaii, with its 7 million tourists per year, proves the contrary. But only bold structural reforms can reverse the situation. In order for this to happen, the relationship between France and its overseas territories must evolve. The statutory immobility of the overseas departments does not indicate any significant evolution in the short term. Autonomy for French Polynesia and New Caledonia would favour economic restructuring, but they have to want it. In French Polynesia, despite the seriousness of the situation, the local community is not ready to welcome hundreds of thousands of tourists. As for New Caledonia, nickel mining and public transfers ensure its prosperity for the time being.

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In the Asia-Pacific region, the year 2012 was marked by repeated demonstrations of diverse forces by, on the one side, China, the emerging superpower feared more and more by its neighbours. Lee Kuan Yew, former adviser to Chinese decision-makers, said recently that Asia needs a reinforced US military presence more than ever in order to contain the “hegemony” of one of the oldest empires in the world. The forces on the other side other side include Japan, India, Viet Nam and the Philippines. The tension over Senkaku/Diaoyu Island between China and Japan, instead of being reduced, became greater and greater at the beginning of the year of snake, with closer and closer confrontations between military and quasi-military aircraft and ships belonging to China, Japan and the US. Not to mention the arms race among the main competitors: China, Japan, India, Viet Nam, the Philippines, the two Koreas and Taiwan.

One conflict can masque hide others. The sovereignty claimed by both Japan and the Republic of Korea over Tokto/Takeshima Island has opposed two neighbours with a traditionally good relationship because of their alliances with the US. The dispute over Huangyan Scarborough Shoal Island between China and the Philippines was one of the major events in the region last year. And the constant conflict between Viet Nam and China over the Paracels and Spratley islands indicates that no solution will be found in the near future. The most unthinkable was the third nuclear test set off by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, despite warnings from the international community, including Beijing. Last but not least, India, another emerging regional superpower, is clearly in competition with her neighbour to the north. China recently took control of Pakistan’s maritime port city, Gwadar, an operation considered an immediate threat by India. New Delhi is now increasing its arsenal of nuclear weapons, espe-
cially ballistic missiles that can reach all Chinese cities, and fleets of submarines and aircraft carriers. Furthermore, India is accelerating deployment of an ambitious space arms system. India is also in permanent territorial conflict with China, and the topic of Tibet, the government in exile of which is still in Dharamsala, sours the relationship between India and her neighbour on the other side of the Himalayas.

All this appears to lead to a question by geopolitics observers: Will the Asia-Pacific region become a theatre of regional military conflict between China and one of her neighbours in 2013?

The clouds are certainly gathering over the region, and the risk for a conflict becomes greater and greater. But the configuration of the power games among the different players, which might be compared with that in another period, the Fighting Kingdoms in ancient Chinese history, between 500 to 200 BC, is so complicated that the numerous geopolitical tensions finish by cancelling each other out, and the long-term strategic priorities of different players often overcome short-term considerations of “saving face”. Before coming to a quick conclusion, we will take a closer look at the current situation.

**First of all, the major player is the US and its relationship with China.** During the first mandate of the US president, Barack Obama, the bilateral relationship between Washington and Beijing was normalized. Economic exchanges between the two countries continued to increase, and the level of US bonds held by China reached a new level by January 2013, US$ 1,264 billion, with a net growth of US$ 441 billion in the first month of the year compared with 2012, according to the US Treasury Department, the trend appearing to be confirmed. Consequently, the Chinese and the US governments have reached a consensus that, despite many others divergences, a healthy, pacified bilateral relation is of benefit for both countries. In contrast, the US is “returning to the Asia Pacific region” with the deployment of armed forces that have returned from Europe, Iraq and Afghanistan. This paradox is interpreted by Chinese hawks in the Army and in Government as the latest version of the strategy of containment defined during the Cold War. But this time, the enemy in the sights of the Pentagon is a different one: yesterday it was called the Soviet Union, while that of today and the future is called China, with her emergence in terms of both economic and military power, and is considered a major challenge of the new century for the unique superpower after the end of Cold War. Obama in his second mandate will certainly continue this “fuzzy strategy”. Thus, Hilary Clinton unambiguously declared before leaving office that the US would support Japan in any conflict and oppose any unilateral attempt to change the right of Japan to Senkaku/Diaoyu Island. The message appears to have been well received, because both China and the US voted for reso-
lution 2094 of the Security Council of the United Nations, which condemned North Korea for the third nuclear weapon test. Another signal from Beijing, of interest to specialists in international problems, was the promotion of Yang Jiechi, former Chinese Ambassador to Washington and former Minister of Foreign Affairs, during the session of the National Assembly of People’s Representatives held in March to State Secretary in charge of diplomatic affairs in the new Government under the leadership of Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang. This shows, to some extent, that Beijing is not yet ready to engage in a serious conflict with Japan that would immediately involve a military intervention against the largest political and commercial partner on other side of the Pacific Ocean, aware of the importance of the good relationship with Washington. In private, some Chinese decision-makers recognize that, although the reinforced US military presence in the Asia-Pacific region does not please China, no another world power is capable of maintaining peace and stability in this very unstable area or to pay the enormous bill for this objective. Apart from the US taxpayers, who could offer the luxury of covering this huge but necessary budget? Nevertheless, the Chinese hawks continue to prepare their conventional and non-conventional arsenal, in both inner and outer space, in preparation for a direct or indirect military conflict with the US. Two crucial activities are priorities: to keep purchasing Russian aircraft such as S-35 (to balance the US F22 and F35) and submarines, and to develop regular Internet arms and test their capacity to attack the web sites of the governments of the US and other western countries, their armies and their strategic industries: an intensified war in a virtual space in contrast to the apparent peace in the traditional space. The hawks also continue to provoke the US with radical speeches, but these remain at the verbal level, as smart players of a conventional war of nerves.

The next actor is China, another major emerging power in the region, which is at a time of transmission of power inside the country. President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Li Keqiang have just taken control of the Chinese Communist Party and the central Government with a new team, younger than the previous one. A large, long political show has begun, as expected by both local and outside spectators. Firstly, the freshly built leadership team must gain legitimacy to succeed the previous team and rule a country with 1.3 billion inhabitants without an election. Attainment of such legitimacy, however, looks like rare earth today in this vast country that is becoming more and more difficult to control. One resource that is still available and has proven to be useful in the past by Milosevic in the former Yugoslavia and more recently by Putin in the Russian Federation: nationalism. This game requires an imminent, permanent outside enemy, and one has fallen precisely at this moment: Japan. As a result, the Sino-
Japanese dispute over Senkaku/Diaoyu Island has hardened since last September. It is curious that the Chinese authorities have suddenly taken such a radical position, declaring that they are ready to go to war with Japan, whereas they were ambiguous, prudent and silent in the past three decades with regard to this issue, when a number of nongovernmental organizations in Taiwan, Hong Kong and the mainland tried to defy the Japanese authorities by going to the Island on their own initiative. Although the actions were peaceful, they were aggressive in the mass media, as such stories are widely reported by local journalists, placing the Beijing Government in an embarrassing situation. In the 1990s, Deng Xiaoping, the former Chinese leader, said that he preferred to wait for leaders of future generation of the two countries to find a solution to the problem of Senkaku/Diaoyu Island, convinced that the leaders of his generation, in China as well as in Japan, did not have enough political wisdom to settle it.

The radical talk of the new leadership team is being addressed more to an internal than to an external audience. Mao Zedong, leader of first generation of Chinese Communist Party, “the great helmsman”, took power in the country through the People’s Liberation Army. He did not need to prove his legitimacy because he had a strong belief in jungle law, as had many Chinese emperors. Deng Xiaoping, leader of second generation and “the small helmsman”, also did not need to prove his legitimacy as he was the leader of both the Army and the Party, directly under Mao’s leadership. Jiang Zeming, leader of the third generation, was appointed by colleagues of Deng; and Hu Jintao, leader of the fourth generation, was appointed directly by Deng. The legitimacy of the last two was not contested inside the Party or the Army. While Xi Jinping’s case is different, for his candidature is the fruit of numerous negotiations and compromises inside the black box. Many young lions from aristocratic “red” families such as his, but more ambitious and daring, will want to take his place by any means. The case of Bo Xilai, author of an aborted coup d’État in 2012, was only one of the known episodes. A nationalist campaign therefore seemed to be necessary to win the battle of legitimacy after the 18th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party held last autumn, during which the new leader was officially appointed. In western countries, people are used to opinion polls, while many others considered them dangerous drugs of a democratic regime and to be forbidden in China. The risk of such campaigns is to control them at the right moment in order to avoid turning it into an endless auction. The state of the art consists of stopping it at a relevant moment, at a relevant place and by a relevant person.

There are always crisis and opportunity (the basis for the word “crisis” in Chinese). This time, North Korea is creating a new crisis in the region with a third nuclear weapon test on 12 February 2013, offering a
good opportunity for China, Japan and the US to forget their divergences and join to find a solution to the regional “troublemaker”. North Korea, with a totalitarian regime, needs to permanently provoke the international community in order to keep the people behind the young, green leader Kim Jong-en, to divert people’s attention to outside issues instead of the multiple internal crises. That is how the country exists. The last provocation was nevertheless a good reminder to Washington, Tokyo, Seoul and Beijing that the imminent, most dangerous threat is not Senkaku or Toktot Island, both no-man’s lands, but Pyongyang. Despite divergences in terms of strategic interest, the greatest common denominator is still maintaining peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. Any action that could lead to a military conflict among these major partners would seriously compromise not only their common interests but also their own interests. This is the unavowed consensus of these principal actors, and it is the prospect of a nuclear threat from North Korea that curiously reduces the tension, due to increased nationalism between China and Japan.

The second element is that China, more than any other country and at any other moment, needs a peaceful environment in which to develop her economy in the context of the worldwide financial crisis, which has already strongly affected Chinese exports, pillar of the world factory. Third, the Government in Beijing also needs sustainable economic growth in order to resolve a number of problems of high priority, such as social injustice and inequality, which continue to have negative effects on society, with several hundred thousand riots in the country every year. Fourth, other important issues must be faced, such as widespread pollution of water, air and the environment, and the toxic food scandals, which revolt Chinese urban and rural populations more and more. Fifth, one deep concern of the Government is the durability of the interethnic conflict. Only political and social reform and a reform of the legal system can help bring solutions to these high-priority problems in the short, medium and long term. The new leadership is, however, like previous ones, afraid of the side effects of such reforms, which will inevitably end the one-party regime in the country. Some sociologists have openly raised another delicate question, to which the answer remains uncertain. In a war between China and Japan and the United States, should the young men in military service in the Chinese army, all from single-child families and most from poor families excluded from the economic miracle, be ready to offer their lives to defend the interests of the rich and powerful social classes, represented by both Party and Government officials, whose wives and children have already emigrated from the country with all of their capital to countries considered to be potential enemies, such as the US, Japan, European countries and Canada? A war against Japan is thus unimaginable at the moment. What is more, Ja-
pan has been investing heavily in China over the past 30 years, creating numerous jobs in the country. It would therefore be very difficult for Chinese consumers to boycott Japanese products, in response to political leaders’ nationalist speeches, which are addressed more to Chinese than to Japanese people.

In Japan, the new Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, who returned to the Government several years after having been defeated by the opposition party, has his own preoccupations. The first is to reconquer the electorate lost by his Liberal Democratic Party. To do so, he must plan and apply a long-term strategy, giving the image of a hardline, radical man who will no longer bend under foreign pressure, especially political pressure from China, and rhetoric close to that of the extreme right.

Within this strategy, Shinzo Abe attempted to review the relevance of the Tokyo Judgement after the Second World War, provoking outcry from the US, the Republic of Korea and China. Shinzo Abe is an excellent agitator and demagogue, with no taboos or complexes. His nationalist, populist talk easily attracts large audiences, because, unlike Germany, the war crimes have never been punished and the war criminals are still honoured openly by a number of right-wing politicians. The ground is fertile for the growth of extreme right parties, especially during the economic crisis into which Japan has been plunged for more than 10 years. The ecosystem of Japanese politics demonstrates once more the fragility, the absence of maturity of the imported democratic system and the difficulty of developing a healthy civilian society as in European countries.

Another extraordinary phenomenon is the culture of face, a specific Asian issue to which Japan, the Koreas and China are strongly attached, because they share the same fundamental values of the same civilization. For example, it is unthinkable that a Japanese right-wing politician could do something like Willy Brandt, Prime Minister of Germany, did on 7 December 1970, when he fell to his knees in front of the tomb of Polish victims killed by German Nazis. It is impossible to imagine, even in political fiction, a Japanese Prime Minister falling to his knees in front of the memorial to the victims of the Nanking Massacre perpetrated on 13 December 1937. Several thousands years of the culture of face explains why Japanese, Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese people cannot recognize their faults, as such behaviour would be perceived as weakness by the public, and the consequence would be fatal for a politician’s career. The speeches pronounced by Shinzo Abe since he returned to the power on the Tokyo Judgement in respect to the US, about Senkaku Island in respect to China and about Tokto Island in respect to South Korea are logical results of the Asian culture of face. Psychologically speaking, the refusal to recognize war crimes and the assumption of a victim image for the two US atomic bombs exploded over
Hiroshima and Nagasaki in summer 1945 represent the collective unconsciousness of a certain category of Japanese people. The high rate of support, up to 60%, from the public for Shinzo Abe is not surprising after his hardline, polemical and controversial speech about the dispute over Senkaku/Diaoyu Island pronounced in the US and widely covered by the local and Japanese press. He represents the personal face of a politician who refuses the image of having been beaten during the last election, which matches the collective complex of face in his electorate, who reject the image of a nation that was beaten during the Second World War.

Like China, Japan has his own priorities to manage, which are much more important than no-man’s islands: firstly, the reestablishment of the domestic economy, which has been plunged into recession for a long time; second, renewal of traditional technology, such as that used in the television industry, in order to match the needs of the new generation of worldwide consumers more closely; third, to take back the place of second economic superpower after the US, consolidate it and seriously prepare its entry into the United Nations Security Council, one of the major obstacles being China’s veto. All this in the context in which regional and world economic power is defined more and more by the number of nearby newly industrialized countries, such as South Korea, China and India. But the imminent threat, or nightmare, for Japan in terms of security is a North Korea armed with nuclear weapon, launching missiles into both Japanese airspace and maritime space.

While the emergence of China presents a long-term threat for the country, resolution of this issue needs more time, more patience and more wisdom in both countries, which are so interdependent in terms of domestic economy that any military conflict will immediately have a double-edged effect. China is still the workshop closest to Japan, with a large pool of low-cost, competent, competitive labour. It is also the largest market for Japanese products and one of the largest suppliers of energy and raw materials, such as rare earths, which are essential for the computer and mobile phone industries and for the electric car industry. Last September, when some nationalist politicians in China called for a boycott of Japanese products, especially Japanese cars, one of the leaders of the civil nuclear sector in China said in private that construction of the future park of nuclear plants planned by the Government for 2020, consisting of about 60 reactors, will depend on the supply of critical equipment from Japanese companies like Mitsubishi. A gem of black humour during several episodes of toxic, thick fog over more than 50 large Chinese cities between the end of 2012 and the beginning of 2013, when the crisis over Senkaku/Diaoyu Island reached its apex, was that people who had called for a boycott on
Japanese products rushed to electronics shops to buy air cleaners made in Japan to install them in their beautiful houses.

In the Republic of Korea, passage of the leadership occurred peacefully and calmly, despite some contestation about election fraud. This was seen in the context of reconstitution of Korean identity, a historical process started the day after the closing ceremony of the Olympic Games in Seoul in 1988, as occurred after the Tokyo Olympic Games in 1964. The reconstitution of Korean identity met major obstacles: the division of the nation since 1945, and the end of the Japanese colonisation. So the dream of a renaissance of the Korean nation will take longer than expected, especially after the experience of the fall of the Berlin wall. Nevertheless, South Korea did not hesitate to demonstrate strong determination in claiming sovereignty over Tokto/Takeshima Island against Japan and over the White Mountains against China, at least symbolically, as South Korea knows that its true enemy is neither Japan nor China but her neighbour to the north, inside the frontiers but beyond the 38° line. North Korea is no longer content to be a simple pawn controlled by China in the face of challenges from the US and Japan on international and regional chessboards but has begun to negotiate greater autonomy and independence from her traditional supplier of energy, food and financial aid. The exit of Pyongyang from the six-country talks presided over by Beijing marks a break in the traditional relationship between China and North Korea, the little brother. Consequently, big brother must review its policies towards the little one, who no longer wants to dance to the conductor’s baton in Beijing. All this completely changed the configuration of the power games in the region, at a very bad moment for China, which was obliged to approach the position of the US and of Japan to contain North Korea, the permanent ‘troublemaker’, with a young, impetuous, unpredictable leader.

Viet Nam is a country that knows historically how to deal with its immense neighbour to the north in political, economic and military affairs. For example, there is a respectful, cordial relationship in terms of cooperation between the two Stalinist parties, because both face the same challenge: how to perpetuate the regime in their country in a vital space that is reduced daily now that the Soviet bloc has disappeared. But it is another story between the armies, with a very cold, even glacial, contentious relationship from time to time. Often, the Vietnamese army takes a hardline position vis-à-vis China on the Paracels and Spratley Islands, while the Party keeps maliciously silent. As the country does not have the military budget of the Chinese Army to build an aircraft carrier, the chiefs of the Armed Forces decided to buy half a dozen Russian submarines that could secretly attack the aircraft carrier of the Chinese fleet, an asymmetric but pertinent strategy. The Vietnamese Army masters “The Art of War” and
“Thirty-six Stratagems” better than the Chinese Army, as proved during the war between the two countries in 1978, when the Chinese invaders lost a lot of face. Today, the Vietnamese strategy is to defy the threat of its big brother-enemy and to use its geographic advantages in terms of proximity to the disputed islands to apply sovereignty de facto, by intensive exploitation of either petroleum or tourism, and to continue to develop its silent fleet of submarines.

The Philippines Government has made another choice, relying on the protection of the US Pacific Fleet to prevent a military attack from China in the dispute on Scarborough Shoal Huangyan Island. The choice is both clever and economical, because the US forces are more dissuasive than any other, allowing the Philippines people to sleep tranquilly on the waves of the Pacific Ocean.

**India is one of the three regional powers, with China and Japan.** The country, propelled by rapid economic and demographic growth, became such an important geostrategic pole in Asia that its potential cannot be ignored. For many years, India has tried to find a place on the international scene to match its ambition, real power and importance in terms of civilization. India is today a declared competitor of China in every respect, including political, economic, social, cultural and even military and is intent on joining the Security Council of the United Nations. It also has a huge arsenal of nuclear weapons, a fleet including aircraft carriers that controls access to the Indian Ocean from the Pacific Ocean side, and a very ambitious space exploration programme. India is thus a non-negligible potential enemy, which could present a real threat to her large neighbour to the north of the Himalayas. China is in a delicate situation today, with Japan, South Korea and Taiwan to the east, the ASEAN countries to the south in an immense island chain from east to south that China would have to break if it wanted to send its marine force beyond its maritime space, and by India to the west, capable of launching an attack against her historical enemy at any moment. The strategic alliance between China and Pakistan, the brother-enemy of India, is one of the solutions imagined by China, which has just taken control of the city port of Gwadar. This “purely commercial” operation by Beijing is a nightmare for New Delhi, which is very sensitive to any presence of the Chinese Navy in the Indian Ocean. This delicate situation shows Chinese hawks that they could not fight two military conflicts, on the east and the west front. The actual tactic used by China is therefore to multiply economic exchanges with India and to implicate India more and more into the BRICS, so that it can reduce tensions with India and postpone any future conflict. Two further contentious issues between China and India are disputed territory in the Himalayas, which has led to military conflicts since 1960, with an unsettled frontier, and the
problem of Tibet and the Dalai Lama, with a government in exile based in Dharamsala, in India. On the first issue, negotiation between New Delhi and Beijing appears to be fruitless, although it is still under way; on the second issue, no one can predict when or how a solution will be found in the short or medium term.

Having drawn a geopolitical and geostrategic map of the Asia-Pacific region, we now have some elements for reflection. Firstly, the configuration of the diverse powers in the region, which resembles the “Fighting Kingdoms” of ancient China, could serve as a mechanism for balance in the area. Second, the actual situation could encourage the actors to stack their cards in order to create new alliances among themselves, or crossed alliances. For instance, India, an ally of the Soviet Union during the Cold War, is now being approached by the US and Japan, while Pakistan, the brother-enemy of India and a historical ally of the US is renewing and reinforcing this alliance after the event of 11 September 2001. But there is nothing to prevent this country from making a strategic alliance with China for several decades. North Korea probably left the six-country talks after its third nuclear test in order to be considered a more important partner by Washington, with which Pyongyang prefers to have direct negotiations rather than being manipulated by Beijing. Third, there are many points of tension among the major actors of the region, but some of them might be reciprocally annulled when the parameters are unpredictably changed. Thus, North Korea, the “troublemaker”, has reduced the tensions between the major actors by testing nuclear devices and missiles, creating a new tension in the region, which modified the risk map in several countries. North Korea, with its new leader, looks like a black horse in the geopolitical game. Nothing, however, can predict sunshine in the Asia-Pacific region in 2013, the year of the snake, which symbolizes wisdom and pragmatism. Clouds may gather suddenly anywhere; cyclones and depressions can cause collateral damage, but scientists know that the tension is lower in the heart of a typhoon while the coefficient of security is larger. On the horizon of 2013, the clouds will disappear one after another, for the simple reason that, after the succession games in the different capitals, the nationalist shows must mark a pause so that everything can return to its normal place.

One question of perspective in conclusion. Some researchers in geopolitics who are specialized in affairs in the Asia-Pacific region in French and other European universities have proposed the scenario of an Asian Union, based on the European Union model, for eradicating all factors that might lead to war. This is, of course, a good initiative, and the scenario is an ideal one. But the conditions are far from being present. Looking at Europe’s more than 60 years of experience, a beautiful success story despite actual difficulties, we find that one of the basic conditions for success
is that all member countries have the same fundamental values. This is not the case, however, in the Asia-Pacific region. Let’s take China for example. Since 2008, when Ma Ying-Jeou, the Kuomintang candidate, won the presidential election in Taiwan, tensions with the mainland decreased, and the bilateral relationship between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait began to warm up. But President Ma, who has just renewed his mandate, avoids discussing the possibility of reunification with the mainland or of political dialogue; his only aim is to develop commercial exchanges, for he knows better than anyone else that the people of Taiwan, even though they consider themselves Chinese, would refuse to join the regime of the mainland, because their fundamental values are totally different. The strategy adopted by President Ma is to wait for changes inside China. The case is similar for the two Koreas. The Asia-Pacific region was one of the major theatres of the Cold War, and, although the Cold War has finished everywhere else, no one can predict its end in this region. In this context, how can people imagine integration of the largest continent in the world? Another problem is religion. India and Pakistan have been in permanent religious conflict since 1947, when India was divided into two countries with well-defined religious frontiers, unlike the European Union, to which the Catholic religion has contributed substantially. The last problem, but not the least, is where the frontiers of a future Asian Union should stop? Would the US, Australia, Central Asia, West Asia and the Middle East eventually join the map of the Asian Union? And what role would they play?

In conclusion, the perspective of an Asian Union should not be ignored, and the main actors in the region should learn from the European Union’s experience and that of the African Union to prepare a common future, with a long-term strategic vision. Dreaming of an ideal is the first step towards that ideal. However, people need time and the necessary conditions to make the ideal a reality, step by step. On the first page of the historical novel The Three Fighting Kingdoms, Shi Naian and Luo Guanzhong wrote: “The trend of the evolution of the world is that when a country is divided, it find its unity in the end. When it is unified, it will find its division again.”
The regional challenge
of an emerging India

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JUNE 2013

June: “Can India become a great power?” asks the influential British weekly newspaper, *The Economist* (30 March 2013). This question puts into perspective the overall impression that economic growth in India has not extended into the field of diplomacy. India’s identity internationally is the subject of lively debate and its diplomacy provokes confusion, multiplying the great differences and apparent contradictions. The difference between, on the one hand its great status in southern Asia (all the states of the Indian subcontinent) and the other, the role of a peripheral player at international level, particularly illustrates India’s difficulty in reconciling diverging interests from its foreign policy.

**ORIGINS OF INDIA’S TROUBLESOME RELATION WITH ITS PERIPHERY**

The tense relations between India and its direct neighbours stems from the colonial era. British India had secured the defence of the subcontinent by controlling more or less the peripheral territories directly. From Iran to Burma, via Afghanistan and Tibet, an arch of buffer states served as a line of defence against external threats. After independence in 1947, the new leaders of India, including the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, took an opposing stance to the imperialist foreign policy of its predecessors, advocating for and defending non-interventionism, the Third World and non-alignment in terms of the two Blocs. “Asiatism” (or Afro-Asiatism) was promoted in order to forge ties between the former colonial states that wished to reform an international system that was considered unequal and discriminate.
Since its creation, however, India has been confronted with a tense regional security situation. Conflict broke out with Pakistan over Kashmir and the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1950, forcing New Delhi to apply a similar regional policy to that of its British predecessor. New Delhi attempted to exclude extra-regional influence from its neighbours, wielding the role of hegemonic power in the subcontinent. India’s foreign policy was thus openly contradictory; it criticised internationally that which it practised in its region. The researcher, Mohammed Ayoob, diagnoses this pathology, common to former colonial states, as the “schizophrenia of the Third World state”. In the decades after independence, the difference between regional and international politics continued to grow until reaching its peak in 1979 during the Soviet military invasion in Afghanistan. Regional and international policies surfacing at this moment in time collided with and paralysed Indian diplomacy; New Delhi was incapable of preventing the invasion of Afghanistan, a country that is a friend, neighbour and non-aligned (regional partner), and illustrated that it itself was also incapable of criticising the Soviet military intervention for fear of losing crucial military and economic assistance from the USSR. By the time Soviet troops finally withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, India had lost all credibility among the non-aligned nations for not having denounced the invasion of one of the fellow nations, and for not preventing the creation of the Pakistani-American axis alongside the Afghan Mujahedeen, which incidentally allowed Islamabad to rearm itself and use this leverage to break up the regional status quo that New Delhi had nurtured. As the Cold War was winding down, India’s leadership in the region was being deeply challenged from within and at international level, its diplomacy was inaudible and marginalised. The Indian model inherited from the Nehruvian era was struggling to keep up with a changing world. Overall reforms were needed and not just in foreign policy.

FROM CRISIS TO THE “REDISCOVERY OF ASIA”

During the 1990’s, India bore the brunt of the upheavals that shook world order. Its Soviet partner had disappeared, leaving Delhi isolated on the international arena, even more so than at the end of the Cold war, which was a fatal blow to the non-aligned movement, of which India was the historical leader. At the same time, India was threatened by bankruptcy in 1991, which revealed the extent of the sclerosis of its authoritative (state-led) and self-centred economic model that it inherited from the Nehruvian era. The Rao Government was forced to engage in liberalising re-
forms and gradually open up the Indian market to foreign competition. This new policy required novel diplomatic practices to foster this new outward-oriented economic paradigm. In this perspective, India (re-) discovered its ‘extended neighbourhood’. In seeking to participate in the “Asian miracle”, India brought itself closer to Asia and the Pacific, and notably to South-East Asia. Central Asia, the Persian Gulf, East African seashore and their natural resources, which attracted Indian investors. Isabelle Saint-Mézard interprets this as “a subtle return to Asia”, which was perceived as that which would “ensure prosperity”. Drawn by its newfound economic ambitions, New Delhi opened up its regional outreach beyond the Indian subcontinent.

It is worth questioning the impact that this new policy had on South Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the direct neighbours of India. Being some of the world’s poorest nations, they did not have the same (power) attraction as the “extended neighbourhood”. Does the rediscovery of a larger Asia come at the price of neglecting southern Asia?

**INDIA’S DIFFICULT ODYSSEY IN ASIAN REGIONALISM**

India’s new economically-driven foreign policy in the 1990’s intended to integrate the country into the flourishing Asian regionalism. This eastward push was in sharp contrast with the few efforts made to regionally integrate the country into southern Asia. India occupies a prominent place through its military, economic, cultural and demographic weight and geographical centrality. New Delhi is showing little will to promote a meaningful multilateral dialogue, which would destroy India’s natural influence in its bilateral relations with its neighbours. Despite the fact that the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was born from a Bangladeshi initiative, India is still reluctant to strengthen this Association, restricting it to a simple dialogue forum, as explained by Jérôme Grimaud.

The launch of a new approach to regionalism in the wider Asian region was perceived by some to be a game-changer. The importance of the economy and the scale of an enlarged Asia, the intermediary between South Asia and the international system, had a potential to break away from India’s traditional foreign policy that was divided between regional and global spheres. This new strategy has increased the growth of political and commercial interaction between India and its outer region. Raja Mohan believes that India, with its newfound confidence, “is crossing the Rubicon” and is ready to re-establish its dominance in southern Asia, as did
British India before 1947. Nevertheless, as of today, India has yet to play its leading role. In Central Asia, India is only welcomed as an observer and not a fully-fledged member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. In South-East Asia, India is a marginal actor in ASEAN, when compared to China, Japan and South Korea. In the Persian Gulf, India is a passive observer, keeping a balance between Iran and its Arab rivals. India’s ambition to play a stronger political role in its extended neighbourhood has been hampered by its inability to establish itself as a natural leader. New Delhi’s all-out diplomacy in all directions since the 1990’s has blurred India’s aspiration and its positioning in international affairs, making the country look like a maverick with no clear plans or declared goals. Perceived as unreliable and unpredictable, New Delhi has only obtained a second-ranking partnership.

INDIA’S RISE AND SOUTH ASIA: STEPPING STONE OR STUMBLING BLOCK?

One of the main factors inducing India’s quizzical international identity is its inability to act as a meaningful and acknowledged leader within southern Asia. Despite enviable economic performances, as well as increased international acknowledgement, New Delhi has had what it perceived to be as natural leadership challenged by its regional partners. This was specifically the case for Pakistan, which constantly tried to counterbalance India’s supremacy by supporting external powers such as the United States of America and China in affairs relating to South Asia. During the 1990’s, the “Gujral doctrine” tried to promote cooperation in southern Asia, aiming to break the regional deadlock. India proposed unilateral concessions (mostly trade oriented) to its SAARC partners (except Pakistan) so as to build trust in the region. The initiative was taken up by successive governments, but safety measures have hampered the efforts that have already been made. However, it seems clear to New Delhi that the threat is coming from its neighbours, not from their force, but from their inherent weakness.

In power since 2004, Manmohan Singh’s government has tried to breathe new life into “regional connectivity”. India wished to share its country’s economic growth with its neighbours in exchange for national borders to be relaxed, so as to allow a greater flow of trade and social contact. Borders are difficult to redraw, “but they can be made insignificant”, explained the Indian Prime Minister. Like his predecessors, Manmohan Singh is having to face diplomatic bureaucracy, and inherit the British Indian tradition, which is deeply ingrained in many practices that are de-
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termined to maintain the country’s prerogatives in regional affairs. Furthermore, this stance has been coldly received from the other SAARC members, fearful of India’s growing economic influence. Intra-regional trade represents 5% of global trade, an increase of 4% since 1990. India’s inability to trade with its neighbours impedes its capability to trade beyond southern Asia. Trade with Burma is severely dampened by Bangladesh’s opposition to allow transit through its territory, jeopardising a potential corridor towards South-East Asia. The same goes for trade activities to the West; Pakistan’s obstinate refusal to allow for transit through the country closes any meaningful prospect of establishing a trade route with Afghanistan, Iran, Central Asia and beyond. Without its economic tool, Indian diplomacy in this outer region can only remain marginal. Since 2001, India has tried to develop a strong economic and political presence in post-Taliban Afghanistan by actively participating in reconstructing the country. This move was denounced by Islamabad, which criticised India for its supposed willingness to help Afghanistan, using this opportunity rather as a ploy to influence and destabilise Pakistan, giving credence to its refusal to allow transit through its territory. India is therefore developing an expensive and much longer alternate route via Iran to reach Afghanistan. The Afghan example illustrates India’s willingness to bypass the regional constraints. India’s growing economic influence and importance on the international arena do not signify a stronger leverage within its region, but instead heighten the tensions among its neighbours. In 2007, Manmohan Singh shared that he dreams that “one day, we can all have breakfast Amritsar, lunch in Lahore and dinner in Kabul, whilst maintaining our national identities”. Yet, during his term as Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh has been to Kabul twice and has yet to go to Pakistan. In forgetting southern Asia and projecting itself beyond the region, India risks playing only a peripheral role in Asia, as it does on the international arena.

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The Korean Peninsula: source of incompréhension

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JULY 2013

“KOREA” NO LONGER EXISTS!

The English term “Korea” designates something that is both complex and blurred. Although it is familiar, as it is omnipresent in the media, it is associated with diverse fields: technological achievements, world records, a global menace and cultural strangeness.

Between the Middle Ages (Koryŏ Kingdom, 935-1392) and the pre-modern period (Chosŏn Kingdom, 1392-1897), Korea was a structured political entity, rooted in a fixed territory, a readily recognizable peninsula, with a certain ethnic, cultural and linguistic homogeneity. It was divided by internal quarrels among factions, but these characterized its political culture. Korea was therefore clearly distinguishable from its Chinese and Japanese neighbours, but for westerners it was a discreet entity in northeast Asia. During the 20th century, however, this view was shattered: even though Japanese colonization brought about only slight changes, as the entire Korean territory was colonized and its international recognition was not increased, the mentality of Koreans and the sense of “Koreanness” changed radically. Part of the Korean population resisted the occupiers or simply left the peninsula as economic refugees and adventurers, to settle in the Japanese archipelago and Manchuria and also in Russia (then the USSR) and North and South America. The arrival of Korean diasporas in various locations overturned the world view of Koreans, who forged ties outside the peninsula. At this stage, “political” Korea existed only in resistance movements far from the peninsula, with a government in exile that was not recognized by the international community after liberation in 1945.
Economic Korea was exploited, and cultural Korea was scorned on the peninsula. Korea existed only through the repression and negation that it underwent. It became a phantasm; people died for it.

The end of the Second World War, in summer 1945, saw the partition of Korea at the 38th parallel. This arbitrary division, by the then-Allied forces of the Soviets and the Americans, was initially a temporary measure to facilitate the demilitarization of the defeated Japanese but endured in the context of the Cold War that began after the War. The opposing Communist and capitalist blocs had a zone of contact in Korea, which was formalized by the establishment of two distinct, antagonistic states in 1948. All the ideological debates of the time took place on the peninsula, both north and south of the demarcation line. Hopes for construction of a new, politically unified, modern Korea were dashed. The Korean War (1950-1953), which was so costly in terms of human lives and was a real ecological and psychological disaster, also meant that this objective could not be attained at the urns.

In the second half of the 20th century, a “unified” Korea existed only in people’s dreams. There were now at least three Koreas: the Democratic People’s Republic in the north, the Republic in the south and a scattered diaspora, which, depending on where it was geographically and when, was influenced by one of the two competing Korean states. “Reunification” was stated to be the official objective in both the North and the South, but no action was taken after the Korean War to make this a reality, as reflected in the absence of a peace treaty after the armistice of 1953 and the persistence of a tightly closed frontier zone! The “Sunshine policy”, led by South Korean progressives for a decade (1997-2007), resulted in some inter-Korean cooperation, which was largely economic and symbolic. This opening was unilaterally reversed in 2008 by the conservative government of Lee Myung-back, on the basis of the view that it had been a “failure” in terms of economic advantages and profits for the South. There is now no patience, no mutual respect and no frank, cordial mutual aid: confrontation at global level and mutual mistrust at regional level have blocked all attempts at conciliation since the beginning of the 2000s.

It makes no sense to speak of “Korea” today. The Koreans themselves no longer call themselves or their country by this name, using various words in Korean depending on their place of residence for the past 50 years. South Koreans use the term Han’guk (Han country) and North Koreans use the term Nam Chosŏn (southern Chosŏn) to refer to South Korea. A South Korean will use the term Puk Han (northern Han) to designate North Korea, while a North Korean will use the term Chosŏn, or Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. Even the members of the diaspora refer to themselves in different ways (Koryŏ saram in the ex-Soviet Union and
The Korean Peninsula: source of incomprehension

Chosôn-jok in China) and to their “motherland”, indicating the complexity of positions regarding the concepts of Koreanness, orthodoxy and tradition. When one speaks of Korea in Korean, one has to position oneself ideologically, unlike in English, in which the ambiguous word “Korea” retains a certain flexibility. Korean speakers are trapped: there is no alternative but to take a quasi-ideological or even diplomatic stance in speaking of Korea and of that which is Korean, when other lexical possibilities are forbidden by education and the media, as in North and South Korea.

OVER-PUBLICIZED EVENTS IN THE NORTH AND UNDER-PUBLICIZED EVENTS IN THE SOUTH

Korea is often referred to in superlatives by the media. But what are they referring to? Korea creates sensationalism. Journalists are generally interested in what is happening in North Korea, or more precisely the threat that it is supposed to pose. It is true that the North Korean Government excels not only in aggressive and threatening declarations, as occurred last winter, but also in the expert orchestration of missile launchings and nuclear tests, which maintain the suspense. It knows how to create a sensation, take extreme positions, ensure sudden reversals, make waves in its international relations and defy the United Nations. It thus maintains its position by occupying traditional media space and also, more recently, by using cybernetic space to increase its influence both domestically and internationally. By sending out information that is “alarming” for global security, journalists around the world do a huge favour not only to North Korea but also to the big powers, which want to maintain the status quo on the Korean peninsula. The North Korean threat is a used to justify American military strategies in the Asia–Pacific region, including possible remilitarization of Japan. China prefers to have North Korea, even if it is slightly fanatic, at its door rather than a pro-American state, especially as China benefits economically from North Korea, as long as other partners are not welcomed there.

In an atypical case of family succession in the leadership of a socialist people’s republic, the North Korean regime makes the world tremble, with its arms exports and the parades of its huge army with official commemorations of the glory of its leaders. The regime has not deviated from its basic tenets since the death of Kim II-sung in 1994, the Father who became the “eternal President”. Everyone predicted the collapse of the regime, as the country was coping with an unprecedented economic crisis in the 1990s after the fall of the Berlin wall and the end of support from the Soviet bloc; but, against all expectations, the regime has survived. The objectives of the
North Korean power elite are to build an antinuclear shield, to be self-sufficient and to impose a single ideological system, all of which justify some collateral damage. The millions of deaths resulting from the great famines and chronic malnutrition, which are sacrifices to allow the elite of the Labour Party of Chosôn to live better, the eradication of all “anti-revolutionists” by purges and sending them to labour camps to be re-educated over three generations, and the consequences of the absolute worship of the Kim leaders in terms of violations of human rights, with application of the death penalty, incited certain North Koreans to flee their country (25,000 refugees in the South) but not yet to overthrow the regime. Kim Jong-un, grandson of the “eternal President” and son of Kim Jong-il, “eternal General Secretary of the Labour Party of Chosôn”, appointed at the end of 2011 after the death of his father, has taken the reins of power. Serendipitously, in 2012, the grandiose festivities commemorating the 100th anniversary of his grandfather’s birth enabled him to consolidate his power over the people. Nevertheless, his lack of experience within the system and his youth are obstacles. The recent internal inspection campaign of the entire administration in spring 2013, coupled with the international campaign against external enemies, indicate that he is regaining power and changing North Korean politics, which remain to be evaluated.

Paradoxically, the extensive knowledge available about South Korea, the 11th world power in 2011, which has been analysed in detail by researchers, does not give it its rightful place in the media: much more is written on North Korea, about which little verified information is available. In South Korea, the division and the North Korean question are secondary issues on the political agenda, because South Korean’s internal divisions and South-South antagonism between the progressive and the conservative camps are of much greater everyday interest for South Koreans than the North Korean threat. Even during the highest points of the media storm about the North Korean threat during the past few months, the calm and even the indifference of the disillusioned, realistic South Koreans contrasted with the agitation at international level. The new President of the Republic of Korea did not panic or yield to provocations. Park Geun-hye, elected at the end of 2012 and representing the conservative camp, is the daughter of the famous General Park Chung-hee, who led the military dictatorship that was responsible for economic development in the 1960s and 1970s; her mother was assassinated by the North Koreans in 1974. In the South, according to observers such as Koen De Ceuster at the University of Leiden, there has been a change in the concept of national identity, which until 2007 left a place for North Korea in the hope of reunification but which now is tending to a vision of a nation reduced to the South Korean State alone. The words are already available to express this categorization of Koreanness,
and South Korean public opinion, disappointed by and even scornful of the North, adheres less and less to a hypothetical project of reunification, which would probably be very expensive economically and symbolically.

The “Korean economic miracle” and the technological prowess of Korean chaebols (conglomerates) are sometimes headlined in newspapers, although this information is often perceived as negative in a period of economic crisis in terms of competition and market shares. Thus, some journalists are becoming interested in South Korea through more neutral subjects such as education and South Korean soft power. The phenomenon of “the South Korean cultural wave” (hallyu) gained recognition in France through the unexpected success of the singer Psy, with his parody clip Gangnam Style, which made a buzz on the Internet. The passion of a young public for Korea, based initially on exported television series on the Internet, manhwa (Korean comics) and K-pop (Korean pop music), has now extended to online video games and vocations: more and more French university students are registering for Korean studies. For the past 5 years, the South Korean Government has actively promoted a policy of “nation branding”, with the aim of promoting the image of South Korea abroad and correcting “false ideas”. It thus proposes an orthodox vision of what should be known and said about “Korea”. This policy has had a huge impact because there are not enough specialists on Korea in the world to cope with the demand and especially to moderate the point of view that the South Korean Government is trying to impose.

SPECIALISTS ON “CONTEMPORARY KOREA” AND THE MEDIA

The question of how researchers in the social sciences specializing in contemporary Korea should react to the demands for expertise from the media and the public is a delicate one in view of the context described above. They are usually asked to comment immediately on sensational events, such as the long-range missile tests, and not on long-term evolution, which is less “sexy” for the public. As they are not specialists in arms or in international politics with regard to military economics, their opinions appear dated: either “out of date” or “visionary”. They are often disappointing, as they do not whip up the excitement of the media on North Korea, cannot predict the future and do not provide “scoops”. North Korean and South Korean perceptions is a study in itself, and other approaches can be used, particularly by outside observers. Researchers should not take sides and should make their analyses as neutral as possible, while retaining their critical judgement and resisting both North and South Korean pres-
sures. Thus, the so-called ineffectiveness of the Sunshine policy, accepted by part of the South Korean political sphere and public opinion, can otherwise be interpreted in terms of the North–South interface on the Korean peninsula. The realization by all the protagonists that the situation was evolving much more rapidly than predicted, because of the policy of building closer relations begun at the beginning of the 2000s, resulted in a certain introversion and the end of a “romanticization of the Sunshine policy”. According to Valérie Gelézeau, lecturer at L’École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS), we are seeing a phenomenon of “re-bordering” Korea, after a phase of “de-bordering”.

The future of knowledge about contemporary Korea will be based not only on accepting the two Koreas and their “normality”, without prejudging their orthodoxy and the obvious but socially unrecognized existence of North Korea in the south and of South Korea in the north, but also by the choice of ideologically independent research topics. To do this, collaboration with researchers from the diaspora will be essential, as well as direct contact with researchers in both North and South Korea.

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On 20 May 2013, Lee Hsieng Loong, the Prime Minister of Singapore, officially opened the Marina Bay Financial Centre, which, with its three towers, has doubled the office space of the business centre at Raffles Place. Responding to the development needs of a banking and finance sector representing 12% of the city-state’s GDP, this centre is part of Marina South, a major city-centre extension project using land reclaimed from the sea. Marina South is overseen by the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), the powerful government body in charge of redevelopment and territorial planning, and the enormous Marina Bay complex is its flagship component. Designed by the internationally famed architect Moshe Safdie, the 20-plus hectare project is home to the 5-star Marina Bay Sands hotel, whose three 55-floor towers are topped with a one-hectare terrace and a swimming pool; among its other exclusive components are the lotus-shaped ArtScience Museum, a luxury shopping mall with a canal network designed to mimic Venice, but of the Orient, and a vast casino, whose controversial programme defies the consciously moralistic credo of a state that sees itself as a standard-bearer for “Asian values”. Carried out the by the private company, Las Vegas Sands, winner of a public call for tender, the project was the outcome of a sovereign decision taken at the instigation of Minister Counsellor Lee Kuan Yew, founder of the People’s Action Party, Singapore’s ruling political party. This project, distinguished by its size, cost – 8 billion Singapore dollars – and level of technical prowess illustrates the state’s determination to further advance in its development after the “Asian crisis” in 1997.

Town planning in Singapore is marked by an institutional division of labour and there seems to be a reflection of Marina Bay in the creation by the Housing and Development Board (HDB – responsible for housing estates and
new towns) of a complex of seven 50-storey towers – The Pinnacle@Duxton – a kilometre or so from Marina Bay Sands. Among the features that the projects have in common are the procedures of an international architecture competition (as opposed to the HDB’s usual in-house design monopoly), and physical interconnections via planted terrace-walkways (500 metres long at the 26th and 50th levels). Containing 1,848 housing units, the atypical The Pinnacle@Duxton estate is evidence of the public sector’s determination to promote the city-centre residential function through new forms of land development. Completed in 2009 to replace two 10-storey rental slab blocks built by the HDB and inaugurated in 1964 by Lee Kuan Yew, who was Prime Minister at the time and now the inspirer of this new project, the venture conjures up the history of the site – the Tanjong Pagar nutmeg plantations, the port extensions, the various developments of Chinatown and the pioneer HDB apartment blocks and their demolition – in the Heritage Garden at the foot of the towers: a focus on local identity that enhances the site’s tourist interest.

The exceptional nature of these projects should not obscure the fact that the highly individual hypercentre that they are helping to shape is part of the comprehensive strategic approach the Concept Plan has been implementing since the early 1970s, the overall aim being to make the city-state a distinctive territory in its own right. Major port and airport facilities, industrial and research centres and new towns housing the greater part of some 5 million inhabitants are the major components of this territorial structure. In terms of land use, the city core is the matrix, with the rest of Singapore functionally integrated by motorway and public transport networks. In this respect, the remodelling of the centre of Singapore and its rescaling as part of a global metropolis reveal the special role of urban planning and development under the international status of a micro-state of scarcely 700 square kilometres, including its small islands.

During the pioneer years of accession to independence (the 1960s) and the launch of the first Concept Plan (the 1970s), Singapore’s physical and territorial forms of development – the creation of the Jurong free port and industrial zone, a new-cities policy necessitating an enormous operation to free up central land for new international service functions – and the links that its “global city” set up between these facilities and its economic receptivity to the world market, seemed destined to widen the gap between the city-state and the neighbouring capitals. Other cities were certainly undertaking prestige operations – Phnom Penh’s “Olympic” Stadium neighbourhood, Jakarta’s triumphal Jalan Thamrin axis – or adapting to changing economic and urban functions: the Silom-Sathorn retail and business centre in Bangkok, for example, and the satellite city of Petaling Jaya in Kuala Lumpur; but in the face of signs of urban crisis – uncontrolled population shifts, slumification of retail centres, expansion of shantytowns – they failed
to implement an overall planning approach, either because of property speculation (Bangkok and the Litchfield, Whiting and Bowne master plan) or because of the outbreak of war (Saigon and the Doxiadis plan).

Since the late 1980s, however, the massive change in urban forms triggered by the economic rise of eastern Asia and the contributing role of the region’s large cities is being demonstrated through major projects. An evident feature is the urbanistic vocabulary “codified” by Singapore: firstly, that of the new centrality, now to be seen taking shape in Sukhumvit/Asoke in Bangkok, with its vertical triptych of international hotels, office towers and shopping complexes rounded off by condominiums and serviced by air routes and underground lines. Secondly, that of large-scale developments such as the Multimedia Super Corridor in Kuala Lumpur, incorporating the new central business district, the new administrative city/new technology city pairing (Putrajaya/Cyberjaya), together with the new international airport, in an overt attempt to compete with Singapore. Drawing directly on foreign investment, this project-based urbanism is gaining the large metropolitan areas of former socialist countries now receptive to the globalised market economy, as evidenced by the reclamation of new central spaces – the Thu Thiem peninsula in Ho Chi Minh City, the former Beng Kak lake in Phnom Penh – and their conversion to the new scale and vocabulary of metropolisation; the development of new towns and neighbourhoods such as Camko City (a South Korean development) in Phnom Penh, Ciputra (an Indonesian development) in Hanoi, and Saigon South (Taiwanese investments) in Ho Chi Minh City being another expression of this trend. All of these initiatives bear the stamp of the internationalisation of urban production to which Singapore contributes with its experience and its capital, and for which it is, in many respects, the front-runner.

In terms of its variety of urban forms, not to say the scale of its projects, Singapore casts useful light on new trends in neighbouring cities; there are good grounds for believing that when it comes to comparing the geographical advantages that underpin the economic attractiveness and influence of this major port at the end of the Strait of Malacca, these concurrent developments demonstrate what seems Singapore’s compulsion to impose its progressive image – as a financial and business platform of the first rank, and a high-tech’ industrial hub – by an on-going enhancement of an urban system fortified by exceptionally tight control of land use and the institutions involved. Singapore, then, appears to be facing the future of permanent remodelling implicit in the planned extension of Marina Bay and the replacement of the old Tanjong Pagar port facilities with the new Waterfront City project. A way, in short, of warding off Arnold Toynbee’s prediction that the city-state of Singapore had only a limited future in the era of large national entities.
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PART TWO

National challenges and strategies
SEPTEMBER 2011

Located 300 km to the southwest of the northernmost point of Borneo, Brunei Darussalam is of modest size: 400,000 inhabitants (one tenth the population of Singapore) and 5765 km² (eight times the surface of Singapore and the equivalent of Delaware), embedded in Sarawak, which is divided by the Limbang Division. Non-citizens represent some 35% of the resident population, who consist of Malaysian Malays (9%), overseas Chinese (8%), indigenous Malaysians (1%), Filipinos and Indonesians (17%).

The few written sources and archaeological discoveries indicate that Brunei appeared at the end of the 10th century as a commercial monarchy, characterized by camphor trade and integrated in the South China Sea maritime networks. Through Quanzhou, Brunei was introduced to Islam in the middle of the 13th century. Trade with China continued to develop in Brunei under the Yuan dynasty, when new competitors emerged in eastern Java. In 1292, the Mongol raid in eastern Java\(^1\) opened the way for consti-

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\(^1\) In addition to Japan and East Java, the Mongol squadrons attempted to conquer Tonkin but got no further than the South China Sea and the small Sunda Islands. The Mongol army recruited its soldiers among the conquered populations: the captains and crews of the ships sent to South-East Asia (supervised by Mongol generals and officers) were mostly from southern China. Similarly, the Mongol armies that ransacked Pagan (in Burma) and then swarmed over the northern Indochina Peninsula consisted mainly of soldiers from various Thai ethnic groups, recruited in what is now southern China. This increased the speed at which Thai peoples moved into the Peninsula and founded kingdoms such as Siam and Lanna in the 14th century.
tution of the Majapahit kingdom, which gradually extended its network of tributaries to Brunei. After resumption of an ambitious maritime policy by the Ming dynasty in 1370, Brunei once again played the Chinese card to release itself from the Javanese, but this time jointly with the Malays, whose trade networks concentrated around Malaka. Like his Malaka counterpart, the Maharaja of Brunei became Muslim at the beginning of the 15th century. The decline of Majapahit and the conquest of Malaka by the Portuguese (1511) allowed Brunei to control most of the ports on the western coast of Borneo, Sulu and Manila. But its expansion was curtailed by the Spanish attack of 1578. Slow commercial erosion in the 17th and 18th centuries gradually deprived Brunei of its suzerainty over its riverine dependencies. These internal tensions attracted foreign predators, first in the south, where the Brookes seized the whole of Sarawak in one half century (1840-1890), and then in the north, where the North-East Borneo Company lays its hands on Sabah over three decades (1877-1904). Saved in extremis by the British from absorption by Sarawak, Sultan Hashim gave up his sovereign rights in 1906.

Over three decades, the British gave Brunei the means – by granting loans – to found a modern state. Following the discovery of oil in Seria in 1929, Brunei paid back its debt is in the middle of the 1930s. After massive destruction during the Second World War, the transfer of Sarawak and North Borneo to the United Kingdom followed by the administrative merger of Brunei and Sarawak gave rise to a nationalist movement. Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III (1950–1967) thus defined a new Brunei paradigm: he laid the basis for a welfare state in 1954, conceptualized “Malayness” (Melayu Islam Beraja, or Malay Islamic monarchy), signed a treaty with the British and promulgated a constitution (1959). The proposal to enlarge the Malaysian Federation with Singapore and the three British territories of Borneo met with staunch opposition in Brunei. The Brunei Popular Party (Partai Rakyat Brunei, PRB), which favoured a federation of West Borneo, won all the seats in the first general election and instigated an uprising in December 1962, which was put down by British troops. In June 1963, the Sultan refused to integrate with Malaysia. On 4 October 1967, Omar Ali Saifuddin abdicated in favour of his eldest son, Hassanal Bolkiah. Maintenance of the state of emergency, self-government (1971) and oil revenues subsequently made it possible to prevent political turmoil.

On 1st January 1984, independence began under the most favourable auspices: oil ensured between 40 and 60% of the GDP and 90% of exports. Adhesion to the Association of South-East Asia Nations (ASEAN) in January 1984 was immediately followed by establishment of diplomatic relations with the west, with multiple partnerships in the field of defence. The Sultan affirmed his solidarity with the Muslim countries, attending the Rabat sum-
mit at the time of Brunei’s admission to the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and invited Yasser Arafat to Brunei. After extending its fishing rights to 200 nautical miles from the base coastline, however, relations with Viet Nam, the Philippines and Malaysia soon became complicated.

Brunei voted in favour of the United Nations intervention in Kuwait, ensuring maintenance of a regiment of British gurkhas close to its oil installations. The country forged diplomatic relations with more and more countries outside its immediate geostrategic environment and normalized its relations with the main regional military power, China, in September 1991. Although it supported the ASEAN declaration on the South China Sea in 1992, it made its fishing zone an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in July 1993, to the dismay of Malaysia. Internal negotiations with ASEAN resulted in formation of the BIMP-EAGA triangle (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area) in March 1994. In August 1995, Brunei held the second ministerial meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum. The Sultan normalized relations with the ASEAN candidate nations Viet Nam (1992), the Democratic Lao People’s Republic and Myanmar (1993). During the Asian financial crisis, Brunei shows exemplary solidarity with its neighbours: in addition to the Singaporean dollar, to which the Bruneian dollar is pegged by a fixed parity and a currency board, the Sultanate supported the Malaysian ringgit (August 1997) and granted US$ 1.1 billion as an emergency loan to Indonesia (November 1997), with a second tranche in 1998, and contributed US$ 500 million to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout of Thailand. Brunei’s support was rewarded by hosting the 20th South-East Asia Games in Bandar Seri Begawan in August 1999. In addition to this positive regional insertion, Brunei increased its activity within multilateral organizations: in 1995, it provided aid to Bosnia and the Middle East as a member of the OIC and joined IMF. The Sultanate contributes extensively to United Nations agencies and to the Commonwealth, while regularly denouncing Israeli policy.

At the threshold of the third millennium, Brunei’s success in integrating the concert of nations was illustrated by hosting (November 2000) the 8th APEC Summit, state visits by the presidents of the Republic of Korea and China and signature of a trade agreement with the United States. One year later, it welcomed the 7th ASEAN and 1st ASEAN + 3 (ASEAN + China, Japan, Republic of Korea) summits. Brunei is a recognized partner in regional security, including a joint exercise against piracy carried out by its maritime police and Japanese coastguards in August 2002. The Sultanate has 32 embassies abroad and maintains diplomatic relations with more than 100 countries; it entered the Asian Development Bank in April 2006 and the International Labour Organisation in January 2007.
The ASEAN nevertheless remains the preferred forum for Bruneian diplomacy. In accordance with the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) calendar, customs tariffs between the ASEAN-5 and Brunei were reduced to less than 5% in January 2003. In December 2005, Brunei also integrated the China and ASEAN Free Trade Area (CAFTA), abolishing most customs duties between China and ASEAN - 6 in January 2010. The ASEAN continues to receive assistance from the Sultanate, extended to security and humanitarian aid. In October 2004, 10 Bruneian officers left for the Philippines to participate in supervision of an agreement with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). In 2008, Brunei asked to direct the international team in charge of monitoring the cease-fire in Mindanao after the withdrawal of Malaysia. Brunei granted emergency aid to Indonesia (Aceh in 2005 and Yogyakarta in 2006) and to Myanmar (after the Nargis cyclone in 2008). It contributes the safeguarding the Borneo rainforest: since February 2007, more than 60% of Brunei territory has become part of the “Heart of Borneo” project, aiming to preserve one third of the surface of the island.

A brewing conflict with Malaysia erupted at the beginning of 2003, when the M and L oil and gas concessions that Kuala Lumpur had just granted to a consortium directed by Petronas-Murphy were found to overlap with block K and especially block J, the exploration of which Brunei had allotted to a consortium led by Total-Fina-Elf. Six years later (March 2009), a border agreement was finally signed between Brunei and Malaysia, and exploitation of the exploitation of the blocks was specified in September 2010.

On 1st January 2011, in line with current technologies and volumes, Brunei had 15 years of oil reserves (1.35 billion barrels) and more than 30 years of gas (400 billion cubic meters), not counting the deep-water deposits made accessible by the agreement with Malaysia. Hydrocarbons provided Brunei with a GDP of some US$ 15 billion in 2010. Its GDP per capita of US$ 35 000 make it the second richest ASEAN country after Singapore. Although it generates surplus budget and current accounts, its urban topography (no business district, under-occupation of the sea front, etc.) reflects different choices from those of the Persian Gulf emirates (including Kuwait): reduced financial risk and immigration limited to a maximum of about 35% of the total population. In view of the degree of social protection for citizens, their high standard of living, the rule of law and the apathy of political life (a named legislative council was re-established only in 2004), the opposition is inexistent.
Sake, a Japanese exception

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November 2011

Sake has as important a cultural connotation in Japan as wine in Europe. However, this beverage is not well known outside the Far East. Contrary to popular belief, sake is not a strong distilled beverage; it is in fact “rice wine”, produced by fermentation of rice in water, and the alcohol content is usually between 12 and 17 degrees. Sake, also called nihonshu in Japanese (meaning “Japanese wine”), is one of a number of beverages made from rice, but the exclusive appropriation by Japanese culture is an interrogation.

Sake is one of a number of similar drinks found throughout East Asia and could represent any rice civilization, but only in Japan has it been almost exclusively appropriated as an identity product.

Japanese rice wine

In the Far East, rice wines are ancient products and are found almost everywhere, from China to Nepal, including the Indochinese peninsula, Indonesia, the Philippines and Korea. For example, haungjiu (“yellow wine”) is a rice wine produced in several provinces of eastern China, and a few ethnic minorities in South-East Asia still produce fermented rice beverages made from rice porridge.

What distinguishes sake from other cereal fermentations is a process known as “multiple parallel fermentation”. To produce sake, brewers use a mould called kôji, which transforms rice starch into simple sugars, and yeast, which transforms the sugar into alcohol, instead of the malt used in beer. As cereals do not contain the amylase necessary for converting starch to sugar, the rice must undergo a process in which starch is converted into sugar by kôji and the sugar is converted into alcohol by yeast. In sake production, these two processes take place at the same time rather than in
separate steps as in beer production, so that sake is said to be made by “multiple parallel fermentation”.

The kôji ferment was discovered in China, and its use has been dated to the Han period (206 BCE-220), although the technique may have been discovered before. Cereal wines and particularly rice wines spread, like Chinese civilization, throughout East Asia. Sake brewing is estimated to have been introduced in Japan around the 4th century.

Despite its cultural role and a strong relation with the divine, rice wines have slowly been replaced in East Asia by distilled beverages. Japan is the only exception, in a curious inversion between the present and the golden age of rice wine in the 13th century, mainly due to the history of the country. The Japanese archipelago was first invaded only in the middle of the 20th century, and contacts with the rest of Asia were restricted, such as during the Edo period (1603-1868). Japan therefore had specific practices with regard to the use of alcoholic drinks.

Japan made this beverage a national product and improved the fabrication process from the 16th century. Japanese manufacturers invented rice grain polishing techniques, improved the fermentations methods and used a process similar to pasteurization. These new techniques made it possible to increase the alcoholic content, which allowed transport and commercialization. This cultural appropriation of rice wine by Japan was so successful that other rice wines now seem less developed than sake.

AN IDENTITY PRODUCT

The importance of sake in Japan is strongly linked to the Shintô religion, a polytheistic cult with multiple deities dominated by the sun goddess Amaterasu. The practices of Shintô are strongly influenced by rice cultivation in space and time. Shintô has a major influence on Japanese identity at all levels, national and local. Sake has a central place, being drunk during rites and given as a gift during ceremonies. Sake is regarded as sacred because it is a mixture of rice and water, two major sources of deities. Life is born from their marriage, which occurs during fermentation, which inflates the mash and produces heat. Sake has therefore become the drink of rites of passage, beginnings and endings. It is drunk in spring during the feast of cherry blossoms and during wedding ceremonies, where it symbolizes the couple’s union.

As a consequence, the fabrication of sake is still considered to be almost religious; shrines still have their own paddy fields and breweries. Sake is also important in Imperial symbolism. As the symbol of the State and the unity of the people, the Emperor is the high priest. During the year
after his enthronement, the new Emperor takes part in a ritual called *daijôsai*, during which he is united with his Imperial ancestress Amaterasu and shares two meals and two cups of *sake* with her.

*Sake* has therefore been the main alcoholic drink consumed by the Japanese during most of their history, which explains the importance of the imagery with which it is associated. For example, *sake* has an important role in the *Man’yôshû*, the oldest existing collection of Japanese poetry, compiled around 760 during the Nara period. With time, the number of the drinkers increased, as *sake* changed from a festive drink of the elite to a popular daily beverage. It was, however, the emergence of an urban society in the modern period and the development of industry and transport at the end of the 19th century that made *sake* a national beverage. In the absence of other drinks that could compete with *sake*, these economic and social changes led to an increase in the consumption of the only rice-wine category until the middle of the 20th century. At the end of the 1930s, before the beginning of the Pacific war, *sake* represented about 80% of all alcoholic beverages consumed in Japan.

**An anachronistic drink?**

Despite its cultural role and its special place in the imagination of the Japanese, *sake* adapted to modern life only with difficulty. Between 1945 and the beginning of the 21st century, the behaviour of Japanese consumers changed radically, *sake* having fallen from the most widely consumed drink to represent about 10% of total consumption, while that of beer and other beverages increased. This evolution changed the position of *sake* in Japan and also the geography of the productive regions.

Although the national market for *sake* is in difficulty, the situation is much better overseas because of curiosity of western consumers about this product. Real Japanese rice wine is not well known, but *sake* has a good brand image, combining “made in Japan”, quality and exoticism. At present, only 1% of the annual production is exported, but the demand is increasing, especially in North America and the United Kingdom. Like *sushi*, *sake* has come to represent a certain urban food globalisation.

In consequence, Japanese consumers have become more interested in their traditional drink, as for many traditional Japanese foods products. The Japanese adapt drinking *sake* to their new meal structures, and in this way *sake* is becoming the Japanese wine, as in western meals. *Sake* is now served during international summits, obliging producers to ensure its quality. The overall quality is therefore increasing, and, with the recent creation
of geographically specific labels, the territorial dimension of quality is emerging as an important factor for sake consumers.

The categories of sake are based mainly on the degree of polishing of the rice grains used. The best sake conserves only the central part of the grain. The main categories are: daiginjō (less than 50% left), ginjō (50-60% left) and junmai (“pure rice”). The most famous sake are from the northwest Honshû, mainly because of its rice production and pure water; and from central Japan, mainly in Hyôgo and Kyôto prefectures, because of their long history. Local water sources explain the locations of breweries.

Thus, sake is absolutely not an anachronistic drink. Nowadays, Japanese rice wine competes with other western beverages. Its taste reflects the water source, special varieties of rice and the earth. Now is the best time to seduce Japanese and overseas consumers again and to perpetuate the exception that Japanese rice wine represents in the geography of beverages.

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The Philippines: a never-ending democratic transition

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APRIL 2012

On 25 February 2012, President Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino, son of former president Corazon “Cory” Cojuangco Aquino and of the assassinated senator Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino II who was killed under the Ferdinand Marcos dictatorship, opened commemorative ceremonies for the EDSA people’s revolt. EDSA is the acronym for a wide artery of the capital, the Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, where over 1 million people mobilized in February 1986 to force the departure of the dictator Marcos. The EDSA uprising, which preceded the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests and the more recent Arab Spring wave of protests, is still remembered as the symbol of a determined, militant citizenship, ready to defy the tanks and to offer flowers to soldiers. Nonetheless, 26 years later, have the Philippines really changed?

Aquino, who was elected in May 2010 with a strong mandate, has officially been in power since 30 June. Since then, he has steered the country like a captain in a dense, omnipresent fog. His ascension to power and his inaugural speech, pronounced in Filipino rather than in English to the pleasure of most of his citizens, was taken as a signal that the long democratic transition that had started in 1986 might reach completion of. But, two and a half years later, he has yet to put in place a genuine governance programme that would allow implementation of the necessary social, political and economic reforms, starting with the public administration.

The Filipino State is fragile, if not to say in a bad shape. The economic inequalities between rich and poor are among the greatest in South-East Asia. Transparency International ranked the Philippines 117th out of 159 countries on its corruption perception index in 2005. The situation worsened in 2009, when 58 people, including 32 journalists, were killed in broad daylight in a political massacre before imminent national elections in May 2010. The killings took place close to Ampatuan, a small town in the
province of Maguindanao on Mindanao Island. The massacre shook the entire country and the world of international journalism. On 23 November, a convoy of journalists, lawyers and human rights activists, as well as the sister and wife of a candidate for governor who wanted to challenge the absolute control exercised by the Ampatuan family clan were heading for the local office of the Electoral Commission to register the opposition candidate, when they were intercepted by a hooded, armed militia. These paramilitary soldiers executed the entire convoy and even passers-by. This was the worst massacre in the history of journalism and led Reporters Without Borders to name the Philippines as the most dangerous place in the world to exercise the profession of journalism, more dangerous than Afghanistan and Iraq.

THE PHILIPPINES: A NEO-PATRIMONIAL STATE

How should we view the Filipino political regime? A heuristic way to describe the Filipino State is as a neo-patrimonial regime, in which an oligarchy constituted of large landed families dominates and controls most of the political sphere. This economic elite largely overlaps with the political elite. Supported by a failing political system that allows the dominant class to keep power, the oligarchy has been able to ally with and manipulate the politicized, personalized bureaucracy. In such a State, the objective of political power is not the common good of the population but the private interests of the landed oligarchy. Although the Spanish colonization created this oligarchy, the American era (1899-1947) allowed it to consolidate. After independence, the important landowners kept their privileges until the Marcos dictatorship, when the dictator presided over the creation of an oligarchic super-clique, placing his relatives and partners in powerful positions. The Marcos cacique regime clearly illustrates predatory patrimonial governance: looting of the State and of the State treasury was discretionary and oriented to support the private patronage network.

Marcos was deposed in 1986 after the EDSA popular upheaval. The uprising was organized to support a military mutiny that opposed the presidential election fraud organized by the ageing dictator, who had taken the risk of organizing elections. A new sense of hope was experienced throughout the country with the coming to power of Corazon Aquino, widow of the opposition leader Benigno Aquino, murdered in 1983. But the hope didn’t last long. Strong pressure was rapidly exercised on Aquino, who restored the oligarchy’s privileges after failing to implement reforms.
The Philippines: a never-ending democratic transition

Walden Bello, a left-wing intellectual who is a former political dissident and today a member of the Filipino Congress, describes the Philippines after EDSA as a two-faced system. On the one hand, it is a democratic organization in the formal sense: it has elections and equality in voting. On the other hand, it is excessively expensive and maintains the socio-economic order, allowing the elite to change seats periodically. Within this system, the Filipino population is manipulated and sidelined by struggles between and within elite factions. Therefore, it is not surprising that the various regimes that followed the EDSA revolt have not been able to bring the promised prosperity, reduce inequalities or stop the massive Filipino exodus. About 10 million people, or 10% of the population, live outside the country, and 3,000 Filipinos leave the country every day. Ironically, there is a lot of media coverage of the shy, non-charismatic “Nonoy” Aquino, not with regard to his programmes and projects but about his love affairs and his passion for weapons and sports cars. This reality has a reason: it is still difficult to find any Government efforts or programmes to clean up the public administration, remove the omnipresent corruption and to budge it from its inertia. Many have reported, however, that the nominations to several key positions are promising, notably for social affairs, the interior, the poverty control agency and the human rights commission. Furthermore, two peace negotiations have been launched, with the Maoist-inspired armed revolutionary movement led by the Filipino Communist Party and with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front on Mindanao Island. Aquino has also established several initiatives, like the truth commission, to shed light on the financial scandals and abuses of power of former officials, in particular Aquino’s predecessor, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2001-2010).

Luckily for the new administration, the economy is prospering, not due to a fair, exhaustive development strategy but because the Philippines, like many other countries in the region, is being carried by the large wave of growth crossing Asia. Also, the Filipino diaspora and, most of all, the 10 million migrant workers continue to send back massive amounts of foreign currency to the country, with a record set in 2010 at over US$ 21 billion. The three economic sectors in the country that contribute to an annual growth of over 5% are natural resources, particularly mining, agriculture and the service sector, consisting essentially of the multiple call centres of the large transnational companies that are mushrooming all over the archipelago. The Philippines are gradually taking over India’s title of the world’s call-centre capital due to the fact that the country has a qualified work force with good knowledge of English and of western culture, particularly American culture.
While the popular revolt in February 1986 was festive and was seen as a collective liberation, the atmosphere 26 years later is more wary. Benigno Aquino’s mandate for his second year seems to continue his predecessors’ policies rather than introduce change. The population is still waiting for the promised reforms and Government programmes to reduce chronic poverty, hunger, arbitrary tribunals and the endemic corruption. The Philippines are a good illustration of the difficulties and contradictions inherent to unachieved democracy grafted onto an oligarchic structure of power. It is not only a suspicious electoralism and a failing democracy subject to sudden, unpredictable crises but the continuity with the past that is the most shocking feature in respect of the nature of the political struggles of the past two decades.
Today, the French language has lost its influence in Viet Nam. Being sad or indifferent about it doesn’t change anything. Anglo-Saxon, Chinese and Korean cultural productions have invaded the media space. This process is inevitable, despite the vitality of bilingual classes and the passionate commitment of teachers to French literature, continuing a long tradition. We sometimes hear an echo, fading increasingly as time passes: an old man with a weary body and a lively spirit, sitting on a bench on the shore of Hoan Kiem Lake, recites “Oceano Nox” by Victor Hugo and Lamartine’s “Le Lac” to us without omitting a single verse. I had a grandfather who resembled them. He was of mixed race and he recited Kim Van Kieu and the century legend to me. Like all children and adolescents, I sometimes tired of it. “Cain fleeing from Jehovah, the story of Kieu and Kim again”, I often thought, shrugging my shoulders. The old man was a little bit monotonous and rambling. The first time I came to Viet Nam, walking around with a smile, I thought I saw him, although he was long dead by then, coming to meet me, a fragile silhouette of one of those early morning walkers, when there is still fog on the lake. It was he who approached me, asking if I was French. And he also spoke to me about Voltaire, Victor Hugo and Montaigne; he still had hundreds of verses in his memory and recited them to me with shining eyes, probably those of his youth, when he was a professor, as he told me. I also thought he must have grandchildren, who perhaps also found their grandfather a little bit monotonous but were more polite than French children. I assumed they were not supposed to show anything.

These little old men that we run into in the parks of Hanoi, Hue and Saigon are becoming fewer and fewer. Today, I am cross that I did not pay more attention to them, didn’t take the time to understand what they wanted to tell us, with their obsession for Racine and Nguyen Du. For not having understood before that we French and Vietnamese people are...
Incredibly lucky in this difficult world of the 21st century to have this fabulous heritage of shared humanity in common. We could say a collateral benefit from nearly a century of French colonization.

In 2010, I went to the archive No. 2 in Dalat, where documents of the Superior Residence of Hue are kept. I discovered a particularly moving document, a story from colonial times, almost nothing, yet it tells us much about the issues among people in 1930 in Annam. It is a letter dated 18 August 1930 from the French Resident in Faifo, addressed to the Resident Superior of Annam at Hue. The Resident of Faifo warns about the influence of a book that is “very widely read and commented on by native teachers and, I believe, misinterpreted by all these insufficiently prepared young minds”.

It is a completely forgotten book, and I had great difficulty in finding it. It is entitled “Peasants, the history of a village before the revolution” and was published in 1892. I ended up finding an electronic version on an American university website. The author, Claude Delon, was the publisher of textbooks for schools and popular works. Although this book seems to have had some success in France, as there were several reprints of it, in Annam it seems to have been more than a best-seller in the schools, a real firebrand. It was passed from hand to hand, secretly, revered as a sort of guide, which disturbed the colonial authorities.

What did it contain? A description of the way of life in the countryside during the old regime. A critical view, of course, with miserable peasants and powerful lords, despised peasants and arrogant nobles, people suffering from famines, epidemics, wars, arbitrary seigniorial justice and ignorance. Although the vision of the author was not Manichean, we also see small landowners, artisans and penniless noblemen. It is more the system that is put into question than the people. In the last part, we see the peasants wondering, discussing, criticizing and analysing the causes of their misery. And finally, after a description of the peasant revolts, the announcement of the abolition of privileges and the moments of joy that follow. In conclusion, because of the Revolution, the emergence of an egalitarian world, where there are neither lords nor servants.

The letter from the Resident of Faifo to the Resident of Hue was written on 18 August 1930. The date is not trivial: it was written only 1 month before the bloody crackdown of peasant uprisings in the region close to the Nghe Anh. On 13 September, a demonstration by starving peasants who came to Vihn to protest against taxes were bombed by aircraft, which

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1. Now called Hoi An
French traces in Viet Nam

caused 3,000 deaths. Thousands of arrests followed, mostly of students and teachers suspected of spreading communist ideas.

On reading some passages from the book, I imagined the teacher dressed in a black tunic, from Hue or Quand Nam, who became excited when reading these lines. The human condition in rural France under the old regime was not so different from that of the peasants of Annam. He received it from a colleague, a friend; once read, he will pass it on to another colleague, another friend. They read it fervently. They discover a France distant from them but near in its aspirations for justice, liberty and happiness for all. This is one of those books, like “Les Misérables” or “L’Assomoir”, which will shape his thoughts, make it more lucid and aware. A little teacher in a black tunic, with a heart bursting with generosity and dreams for the future, is holding this book with a pink cover. He will probably die 15 years later fighting in the long war ahead for the Vietnamese people. I like to think that it was in one of these books that he learnt the word “people” and the importance of taking control of their destiny.

This is a powerful image of the French-speaking world for me. A teacher with a pure heart, passionate about his work, a man who deeply loves his country and is just as deeply moved by the universal thought of the Enlightenment. Today, 80 years have passed. The little teacher must have great-grandchildren, who live in Saigon, Danang or Hanoi. Young people like all young people today. Maybe one of them is studying in a bilingual class at the Chu Van An or Nguyen Thi Minh Khai high school. Maybe he was told about this great-grandfather who loved the French language, who knew Victor Hugo and Kim Van Kieu by heart, and who went into hiding one day because he had read a small book with a pink cover in which he read the history of the peasants of France. I imagine this child on his bicycle. He will become a doctor, a lawyer or a teacher; he will sacrifice himself to help his descendants.

The most beautiful sentence probably ever written on the dual culture of Francophone Vietnamese intellectuals was written by Nguyen An Ninh, who said “The oppression comes from France, but the spirit of freedom, too.”

2. “The processions of protesters, who, following old customs, were marching to ask justice from the great chief, the Resident, who, for them, was the ‘father and mother’, to beg for his help and his mercy, you know how they were welcomed: with guns and bombs... But behaving like that they did not want to threaten French sovereignty. They were unarméd.”: commentary from Pham Boi Chau, questioned by Andrée Viollis (Andrée Viollis, Indochine SOS, 1935).
Buddhists and Muslims of Arakan: religious conflict or national identity crisis?

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November 2012

On 28 May 2012, a young Buddhist was raped and killed by assailants who were immediately identified as “Rohingya” Muslims by the Burmese authorities of Sittwe, in Arakan (Rakhine State). In the weeks that followed, the mutual resentment of the two communities —“Rohingya” Muslims and Buddhist Arakanese, which had festered since the end of British colonization, exploded into incendiary brawls, leading thousands of people of both faiths to flee their homes. Despite the curfew imposed by President Thein Sein on 10 June, the conflict continued, amid propaganda from both sides, and Burmese Buddhists across the country joined their “peers” in Arakan with little hesitation. Another fact, still little discussed, is the silence of the opposition leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, on the conflict and, in direct contrast, the almost unanimous “xenophobic” voice of the Burmese, from the Government to the former opposition leaders, towards the Muslims of Arakan.

As a new episode of the conflict between the Buddhist and Muslim populations in this western region of Myanmar, the current situation has the “merit”, little noticed until now, of offering a preview of Burmese nation-building after the dictatorship. Currently, the issue that raises most interest, in both the Government and the international community, is economic openness (the “last frontier” of South-East Asia). Beyond the huge needs in terms of development of infrastructure and services, however, the lack of national unity is still the main obstacle to recognition of the country both regionally (ASEAN) and internationally. The country’s diversity is not really religious, as in its population of about 55 million in 135 ethnic groups...
(the official figure), 89% are Buddhist, 4% Christian, 4% Muslim and 1% animist. The Burmese, the main ethnic group, account for only 69% of the population. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar, so named after the 2011 elections, is just emerging from more than half a century of military rule over a territory with boundaries inherited from the British colonization and borders are inhabited by ethnic groups with expansionist ideas.

During the past 50 years, national unity was primarily military, enforced notably through “Burmanization” or “Myanmaification”\(^1\), especially in areas near the borders, under the reign of the dominant ideology, which is Buddhism and the Burmese language taught in an educational system that leaves no room for minority languages. What differentiates “Burmanization” from “Thaiization”, with comparable pillars (Buddhism, nation and monarchy), is that the latter is based both on the development of the frontiers of the country, led by the Government, and an ideology – *kwam pen thai* or “Thainess” – taking into account regional differences, thus integrating the existing interactions between different populations\(^2\). As the authoritarian head of the Tatmadaw, the Burmese military forces, was removed during the “democratization” of the country, many of the concerns of the State are now transferred to a more popular consciousness. Thus, the need for a national ideology (still inspired by an underlying Burmese identity) gradually appeared, which could be shared to some extent by all the peoples of Myanmar. However, Burmese society has few bases for building such an identity.

Historically, the Burmese kingdom was mostly dominant in the region, but its influence fluctuated and was based on vassalage relations and exchanges (mainly economic) with the surrounding populations. The Arakan and Burmese kingdoms were regularly in conflict, the latter often having succeeded in different periods to extend its influence over the Arakan, especially just before it was annexed by the British in 1826. The symbol of Arakan sovereignty, the Maha Muni Buddha, was transferred to the Burmese capital of Amarapura with 20,000 prisoners in 1785, an enduring symbol (the statue is now in Mandalay) of the animosity between Burmese and Arakanese, which is still seen in numerous stereotypes. It was thus a Buddhist territory drawn under the influence of the Burmese kingdom, as was fitting, since Alaung Hpaya, an 18\(^{th}\) century king, portrayed himself as an “embryonic” Buddha whose task was to unify all Buddhist territories\(^3\). However, by integrating Arakan into its sphere of influence, the Burmese

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2. Ivanoff, 2011.
Buddhists and Muslims of Arakan

kingdom gained a border region that acted as a buffer between two major groups, one Muslim and one Buddhist. As the kingdom of Arakan was a maritime power, it was a crossroads and a meeting place with close relations with other powers of the Indian Ocean, including the Muslim sultanates of Bengal. The Muslim world clearly influenced the Arakanese king Mrauk-U (1430-1784), so that the kings dressed like Bengali sultans and coins were embossed in both Arakanese (very close the Burmese) and Persian. And, in accordance with the prevailing model of “galactic polities” \(^4\), the region remained a buffer space that was not administered directly by the Burmese central Government, like other regions, such as the various Shan principalities and the Kachin territories, which also acted as links with other sub-regional groupings such as those towards China and Thailand.

Despite the discontinuous relationship between power and territory caused by British colonial rule and perpetuated by the military authority, “Burmanization” – this time as an inclusive (“bottom up”), non-discriminatory process – of new spaces continued in the form of hierarchical interactions between the Burman majority and other populations. Its objective is “recycling” otherness in a broader concept of society, e.g. by standardizing local cults and integrating ritual practices in a system identified as “Burmese”, which can thus be linked to the Buddhist universe (which itself includes other cults such as possession by spirits, nat). This process is continuing on the frontiers of the Burmese social space (e.g. in Ayeyarwaddy and Tanintharyi) and is not exclusive; instead, it can push its limits to include new natural and social environments \(^5\).

The opening up of the country reveals the double reality of state-building and social constructions “in the field”, with no real correspondence between the two that could lead to the development of a “national community” \(^6\). For the majority of Myanmar’s population, the most noticeable sign of governance shift remains freedom of opinion in the country’s newspapers, seen also in less censored access to the Internet (including social websites such as Facebook and Twitter), on which torrents of anti-Muslim and anti-Buddhist propaganda were dumped. The Internet and the oversudden freeing of the press, however, do not reflect the way in which the people who socialize the territory appropriate it. Burmese opinion on the new episode in the Arakanese conflict therefore crystallizes quite “naturally” around the differences between Buddhism and Islam. It is clear that the sudden surge of Burmese solidarity towards the Arakanese, who they

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still mistrust, is largely due to a desire to defend a territory that is part of the Buddhist cosmogony, against a Muslim minority (about 800,000 Rohingya in Arakan). The Rohingya’s ethnic “label” was first internationalized in the 1950s after the claims of the Mujahids (Bengali intellectuals who wished to join Arakan to Pakistan before it was separated from Bangladesh) and then after two major refugee crises in 1978 and 1990–1991. The “threat” of a Muslim invasion, considered serious by the Burmese immigration services since the 1970s, is reinforced by the fact that the Arakan border opens onto Bangladesh, a territory that is barely larger but is home to more than 140 million Muslims. The claim of a Buddhist identity is an expression of legitimacy over the territory rather than a religious ideology.

The greatest risk incurred by contemporary Myanmar in the process of opening up is slipping out of the population’s control, initiated by the fast forward leap from dictatorship to democracy, is the ideologization of social values that denies the reality of a much more complex and nuanced identity than a religious Buddhist, Christian or Muslim identity for the country’s populations. It is high time to try to solve the paradox of this nation that was artificially united “from the top down” even though it is on a territory built “from the bottom up”, a seen in the examples of interethnic trading networks, rituals and historically constructed borders. Deprived of this vision, all the stakeholders in Myanmar – civil society, the Government and the opposition embodied by Aung San Suu Kyi – are already in an impasse and are forced into silence in the face of the simplistic prospect of a religious conflict, which has already given rise to numerous extremist reactions in both Buddhist and Muslim circles. The Government’s response and the attention it will pay to the development of its regions in order to reconcile local “cosmographies” and the national community remain to be seen.

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The miners of Chikuhô and pneumoconiosis

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MARCH 2013

On 26 December 1985, 84 former miners and the family members of 39 former diseased miners from the region Chikuhô in Kyûshû, supported by a group of lawyers already linked to other famous cases of pollution, such as that of Minamata, filed a lawsuit against the State and six big mining companies. These miners were victims of an incurable, particularly atrocious illness called jimpai in Japan and pneumoconiosis in English, which causes a slow death by asphyxiation in people who have breathed silica or coal dust. After nearly 10 years of proceedings, on 20 July 1995, the Fukuoka district court ordered the six mining companies to pay 197 million yen in damages to about 104 victims but did not recognize the responsibility of the State. After settlements with Mitsubishi, Sumitomo and Furukawa, the Fukuoka High Court, on appeal on 19 July 2001, ordered the three remaining companies and the State to pay 1.91 billion yen. On 27 April 2004, after a settlement with two other companies, the Supreme Court of Japan finally pronounced against Nittetsu and State and granted a total of 566 million yen in compensation to the complainants.

This suit resulted in a large amount of documents. These records, kept at the University of Kyûshû, consist of preparatory documents assembled by the defence, statements of witnesses (miners, experts, executives), statistics and surveys, inspection sheets and biographical data on victims. These documents are especially valuable for the historian because they starkly reveal the extent of the social invisibility of this disease. Historical writings also show this invisibility. The history of occupational health is generally absent from the labour history of Japan. In addition, there is a surprising lack of any mention of pneumoconiosis in the abundant literature on the social history of coal mining. Examples include the thick vol-
umes on the history of Fukuoka Prefecture, in which the history of mining occupies several volumes, the descriptions by Ueno Hidenobu, who was a miner himself, of the poor living conditions of the inhabitants of Chikuhô, and a description of the very difficult working conditions and the violent customs in mines by Sakubee Yamamoto, who worked as a miner for 50 years, in a series of 700 illustrations that were recently classified as World Heritage by UNESCO. It is surprising to note the absence of any mention of lung disease due to dust, while explosions of firedamp or coal dust and their victims are thoroughly discussed; it is as if pulmonary illnesses never played a significant role in these mining communities and their memory. Beyond this surprising absence of pneumoconiosis in the social history of coal mining in Japan and despite a large number of scientific studies that demonstrate the reality of this epidemic, the social invisibility of the disease has resulted in what is certainly massive under-recording in official statistics, even though the Pneumoconiosis Act of 1960 institutionalized mechanisms for screening and financial compensation by social insurance.

To understand the mechanism that fuelled the invisibility of victims of pneumoconiosis, even after its institutional recognition in 1960, as illustrated by the very existence of this trial, it should be understood that recognition of this disease depends on a medico-legal definition, and the first symptoms occur long after dust begins the destruction of the lung. Regular medical visits, interpretation of radiographs and clinical examinations and a decision to grant financial compensation to a worker depend not only on medical decisions but also on administrative ones, i.e. standards and practices that are the result of a power struggle between an industry that has always been able to impose its medical expertise and workers in a position of great weakness.

The weakness was particularly that of the labour unions. After the Meiji Restoration in 1868, large reserves of coal were discovered and developed rapidly to provide the energy needed for the emergence of a modern, industrialized nation. Trade unionism was therefore severely repressed until 1945. But the rise of unions after 1945 was followed immediately, in the 1950s, by a decline of the mining industry and an overabundance of labour, which drastically reduced the unions’ bargaining power. In addition, unions emphasized the problem of unemployment, rather than occupational health, as the industry underwent successive rationalization plans. The boom, called Jimmu (Jimmu keiki), which saw the production of coalmines increase by 40% in 1956–1957, represented the last period of prosperity for coal. From 1959, the industry began to collapse. Throughout this period, the major industrial groups continued their strategy of investing in other activities, rather than putting money into an industry that was inherently unstable. In Chikuhô, between 1956 and 1959, 22,900 workers
lost their jobs. In 1970, there were only five mines in this region, from up to 256 after the Second World War.

Apart from the weakness of the labour movement, account must be taken of a kind of cognitive barrier against certain risks. Mine labour was subjected to an environment in which there was pervasive violence and a perception of risk monopolized by explosions. Large mines owned by the big industrial groups and much smaller units with little capital owned by local entrepreneurs always coexisted. Safety standards were rarely observed in the small mines, called *tanuki bori* (holes of *tanuki*, a wild canid widespread in the Japanese archipelago), which operated with networks of shallow galleries. But all mines in the Chikuhô basin were at particularly high risk for penetration of gas and water, due to the activity of the crust and the volcanic nature of the region. In addition, mine operators tended not to invest adequately in their mines to improve safety and, on the contrary, tried to increase production with the existing facilities and workforce. Thus, the accident rate in the mine area was remarkably high. The total number of deaths in the Chikuhô region can be estimated to have been over 11,000 in the large mines alone in the period 1922-1965; reliable statistics are not available for the small mines.

Security was so badly neglected in both the smaller and the largest mines also because the work was always associated with a very low social status. At the beginning of the industrial revolution, there was widespread use of forced labour, and with industrialization of extraction after the Meiji Restoration mining attracted *buraku* populations from neighbouring regions of Kyûshû. The *burakumin* were used as *hitoguri*, who woke miners and sent them to work or acted as supervisors. In addition, after 1930, Korean workers were used extensively to replace the women and children who could no longer work in the galleries after the reforms inspired by the International Labour Organisation. The Koreans were often sent to areas in which gas accumulated, due to poor ventilation, where the Japanese would not go. During the Second World War, Koreans, and also Chinese, represented up to half of the workforce in some mines. In addition to their low social status, workers were subjected to a particularly oppressive system called *naya-hamba*. In this system, a subcontractor, known as *nayagashira*, watched the workers under his authority day and night, housing and feeding them in a sort of barrack dormitory called *hamba*. Before and during the Second World War, in some small, notoriously violent mines, this system included supervisors (*rômugakari*) who were sometimes associated with the local underworld. The *nayagashira* was generally responsible for recruiting workers, often at his own expense. Once he hired a group of workers, he assigned them to a vein on the orders of the company. Even within the same mine, the coal on some walls could be removed relatively
easily, while that on others was harder, leading to large wage differentials. The power of the *nayagashira* was all the greater because they not only calculated and paid the wages of the miners but also sold them the equipment they needed for work and often lent them money. They were present in all aspects of their daily lives. This left miners in perpetual debt, both financially and socially. In the region of Chikuhô, a miner could be subjected to corporal punishment, according to the mine in which he worked and the seriousness of the offense, even after the war. In extreme cases, a miner who escaped was even hanged or beaten to death with a sword or a knife as an example to the others.

The fact that the pneumoconiosis trial occurred nearly two decades after the closure of most mines in the region clearly demonstrates the barriers to recognition of the disease. Such a trial would not have been possible as long as the workers were employed by a mining company and were members of a local community that depended on the coal industry. Most miners began to sue the mining companies and to make their disease socially visible once the companies had abandoned the Chikuhô region and when they had become entirely dependent on public welfare. The paradox of this situation is that, if the miners of this region and their families had been able to achieve a social citizenship that medical expertise, funded by industry and the Government, was never able to give them, their victory finally came in a world that was already disappearing.
Is India a closed society? According to Pitirim Sorokin, one of the first theoreticians of social mobility, India at the beginning of the 20th century was the closest example of the ideal of a closed society, that is to say a society in which the status assigned at birth lasts throughout life.

CLASS, CASTE AND STATUS

India comes so readily to mind as an example of a closed society because it is often seen through the frame of caste. As Max Weber reminded us in The Religion of India: The Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism, castes are a special case of status groups (Stand). In contrast to the frequent situation in which social honour is directly connected to class position, the notion of caste modifies the relationship between social status and class. According to Weber, castes are a closed status group in the sense that they impose highly constrictive professional, religious and social obligations. It is not class – defined by the possession or non-possession of material goods or professional qualifications of a certain type – that defines status, but rather the status given at birth that defines class. In such a situation, social mobility is extremely difficult to achieve for an isolated individual. Only the group as a whole can see its status evolve.

But Sorokin’s assertion is slightly misleading, as Indian society is not completely closed. There has always been a strong congruence between
caste and class, but the congruence has never been perfect. Since the independence of India and particularly the policies of “reservations” (a government policy that imposes quotas), the dissociation of caste and class has actually increased, although the congruence still remains very strong. The secularization of the country, moreover, delegitimized use of the criteria of caste in the common sense. Although this delegitimization remains relative, it nevertheless opened a breach in the principles that guarantee the Indian social order. Indian theodicy, which Weber described as the “the most consistent ever produced by history,” has been challenged by an ideology of merit, according to which the worth of an individual no longer depends on his birth but on his professional success.

The consequence of these two developments leads to a blurring of the definitions of status. While caste is a closed status group in Weber’s sense, status in India is not defined only by caste. It also depends on the prestige of one’s occupation. Thus, in India, there are two scales of value of social status, in which status is defined by the ritual purity of one’s caste as well as by the prestige of one’s profession. These two scales of social status are independent and possess their own logic. The assessment of an individual’s status thus depends on the use of one scale or the other and is profoundly relative.

**DISCRIMINATION, SOCIAL MOBILITY AND THE CLOSURE OF INDIAN SOCIETY**

This opening, or breach, remains nonetheless tenuous and owes a great deal to the reservations policy, which opened paths of mobility for people from the “lowest” castes. The levels of social mobility in India remain much lower than those of most western countries, as suggested by the work of Divya Vaid and Anthony Heath, two sociologists at Oxford. They defend the idea that Indian society is characterized by its “stickiness” and “higher levels of inequality of opportunity”, and their conclusions bear on “the closed nature of Indian society.” The very low level of mobility is partly a reflection of the salience of discrimination on the basis of caste and the persistence, particularly strong in rural areas, of the practice of untouchability.

A study on a sample of 565 villages in 11 states showed that, in one tenth of these villages, people considered to be untouchables still do not have the right to wear shoes, new clothes or sunglasses, nor do they have

the right to use an umbrella or own a bicycle. In half the villages, these people do not have free access to the community infrastructures that provide drinking-water. Similarly, more than 40% of schools practice untouchability during school meals, so that children from the “scheduled castes” and the “scheduled tribes” have to sit separately from their classmates. Police statistics, which do not account for all crimes, show that every week, 13 people in these groups are murdered, five of their houses are burned down, six people are kidnapped, three women are raped and 11 people are attacked; a crime is committed against a member of these groups every 18 minutes.

On the basis of this experience of extremely violent discrimination, many members of these groups, particularly the scheduled castes, have developed a strong political identity. This increase in political awareness became more acute in the interwar period under Ambedkar, the first “untouchable” to have studied in the United States and England and the main author of the Indian Constitution. He also initiated a movement against the caste structure, which continued beyond his death in 1956 and is today the structural force behind the struggle against discrimination.

SOCIAL MOBILITY AND TIES TO THE GROUP OF ORIGIN

The closure of Indian society combined with the weight of caste discrimination thus leads to specific kinds of experience of upward social mobility. In spite of all their successes, upwardly mobile Dalits continue to be considered “untouchable”. Anil, the son of a landless worker from a small village in Gujarat who is now a graduate of an Ivy League university and a consultant for an international firm confessed hesitantly and almost guiltily his discomfort on returning to the village of his birth:

“When I go back [the situation of the people there] is very bad and I am still... when I go back, I still remain... It is quite a contradiction in me. When I go back I still... As far as the higher caste people are concerned, I still remain as a lower caste person. Even though I am a big guy in Mumbai where my caste doesn’t matter, when I go back, I become the ‘untouchable’, and that I don’t like.”

This extract reveals all the contradictions of social mobility in the Indian context. As acceptance by their new group proves difficult, upwardly mobile Dalits often oscillate between two strategies. The first, predominant among those working in the private sector, consists of concealing one’s caste, in trying to erase all marks of belonging to a subaltern group and in appropriating for oneself the values and modes of thought that are prevalent among the upper classes. The second consists of claiming strong ties with the group of origin and predominates among people working in the public sector.

The relationship to the group of origin is often expressed slightly differently by top civil servants and scholars who, having benefited from reservations to secure their job, find it more difficult to conceal their caste. The weight of this stigmatized identity often means that they prefer to invest their efforts for social recognition within a caste group with which they share an experience of discrimination rather than within a peer group with which they share certain class attributes but who are always tempted to define them by their caste.

These people often conceive the preservation of their links with their group of origin as a moral obligation, and many decide to set up schools, micro-credit organizations, libraries, scholarship systems and so on. Such enterprises are in keeping with the ideology, notably defended by the political leader Kanshi Ram, that upwardly mobile Dalits should “pay back to society”. Dinesh Bhongare, professor of psychology at Mumbai University, uses such terms to talk about his own activities:

“In addition to my profession, I have [stress by the interviewee] to involve myself in other social activities. I cannot altogether ignore this social responsibility. So, I am conducting some guidance programmes for socially disadvantaged people, helping them, organizing some social awareness programmes, community programmes, counselling, etc. That’s the kind of activity we conduct. Our priority is not earning money. So, compared to other professors, we are compelled to organise these kinds of activities. We cannot compromise on this.”

In addition to the revealing shift from the pronoun “I” to “we”, this excerpt clearly shows how social commitment follows a moral imperative. The personal dimension of the commitment gradually fades and gives rise instead to the identification with a group that ultimately motivates and guides the moral standpoints as well as the actions (“we are compelled to”) of the individual. It is the Dalit collective identity that dictates the modality of action, and this caste identity informs all aspects of the narration of the interviewee’s life story.

Personal interests do not of course dissolve through attachment to the group of origin. This ethos of dedication and commitment cannot be completely dissociated from a position of domination on the part of the socially
mobile people within the Dalit community. In a society that is still structured by caste relationships, it is extremely difficult, and in some contexts impossible, for someone who has emerged from a caste considered by some to be “untouchable” to be assimilated into dominant groups still headed by so-called upper castes. Breaking off relationships with the original group in an attempt to fully integrate the destination group is an extremely risky gamble that can result in isolation and lead to humiliation rather than bring symbolic benefits. The hypothesis that most upwardly mobile Dalits prefer to be dominant among the dominated rather than be dominated among the dominant may also partly explain the perpetuation of ties with the group of origin. This brief glimpse into the specific issues raised by the experience of upward mobility in the case of India provides one example of how, even despite a radical change in professional status, caste identity continues to structure the way people situate themselves in the social space. Whereas social mobility generally implies a strong process of individuation, of loss or confusion of belonging, this does not seem to be the case with the Dalits who experience this kind of mobility. We therefore see that the distinction discussed in our introductory comments between social status as defined by caste and social status as defined by profession could be examined more closely in the way that Dalits experience their success. One way in which caste identity can be considered a structuring trait is continued consideration of upwardly mobile Dalits as “untouchables”, despite their success.
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The Lok Adalat (“people’s court”) is regularly celebrated in the Indian media as one of the most successful alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and is a relatively recent addition to the “justice for the poor” debate. Conceived in response to the flaws of postcolonial or transitional judicial systems, the aim of this international movement, supported by the World Bank and many other international organizations and donors, from the United Nations Development Fund to local nongovernmental orgnaizations, is to bring “access to justice” to the most vulnerable by restoring an “indigenous” legal system that is better suited to the poor. This bottom-up approach caters to the needs of the voiceless and is centred around communities to raise awareness of rights and bring justice to the needy. The Lok Adalat, and its Indonesian counterpart the Adat Council, are nonadversarial, informal, neo-anthropological approaches to law that attempt to reconcile the different features of a “hybrid institution” by mitigating the weaknesses of the formal system while using the strengths of former normative traditions.

This return to an idealized past, praised for its many intrinsic virtues, has not always been welcomed by the people themselves. The revial of Lok Adalat or Adat is not exactly a natural phenomenon. They owe as much to political decisions, with concrete social objectives, as they borrow from past legal traditions. While they avoid the torments of the formal institutional process, which they denounce as inefficient, they do not serve as stimulus for reform of the system, nor do they provide victims with the quality of justice expected.

The Asian “access to justice scene” is a superb laboratory, as fascinating examples of tensions, evolutions and hopes for improvement have been seen in recent years. This short opinion piece rapidly presents some of the main discussions that have stimulated the “justice for the poor” debate in India, China and Indonesia and reflects on the flaws and successes of the formal and informal justice systems in post-colonial and transitional, fast-growing economies.
As early as the 1950s, a few years after India’s independence, some members of the Indian National Congress ruling majority expressed their disagreement with the legal reform proposed by the modernists, as they considered that it borrowed too much from the legacy of the British colonizer. To bring harmony and conciliation, to the disdain of reformers such as Dr B.R. Ambedkar (the father of India’s Constitution), they proposed that the traditional panchayats be restored, and nyaya panchayats, or judicial panchayats, were established as part of the 1950s panchayats revival. However, this modern version of the Indian tradition was quite different from its predecessor in many respects: nyaya panchayats were to apply statutory law rather than traditional norms and were not composed of cast leaders but of elected representatives. Not exactly informal but not yet as formal as official justice, the naya panchayats did not appear to meet the expectations of the rural population, and they rapidly died. Some socially inclined lawyers argued that this failure was due to the unsuitable level of formalism, which did not meet the objectives set forth by the proponents of informality: an inexpensive, expeditious, conciliatory system based on customary norms. However, the idea of an indigenous justice better suited to the needy was still very much in vogue in intellectual and judicial circles, and this, as we will see, progressively led to adoption of the Lok Adalat model.

Indonesia offers another example of a planned revival of customary norms. In post-colonial Indonesia, a plurality of traditional, colonial and Islamic norms coexisted. Village or traditional customary law (Adat) had been officially suppressed from 1874 to 1935 and was then re-established for a short period until the new republic was formed. Recognition of Adat law was viewed as a contradiction to the construction of a modern nation state and was therefore a default legal source. A politically useful reactivation of the legal tradition was therefore not seen until the early 1990s.

More formal means to deliver justice to the poor appeared progressively at this time throughout Asia, and in India in particular. In the early years after the emergency period, Indian reformers were eager to actualize the promise of constitutional rights, resulting in an Indian version of “public interest litigation” (PIL). PIL originated as a rights advocacy strategy in the US civil rights movement of the 1960s, and the term has been used world-
wide to describe the many ways in which general grievances have been judged by the courts and the compensation awarded to victims of the State. It is probably in Asia, and precisely in India, however, that PIL has found its most sophisticated, although sometimes ambiguous variation. This “judicial democracy” revolutionized Indian politics, and the extraordinary solutions the Indian population sought differed from the general meaning of PIL. Initiated and led by judges, Indian PIL questioned the traditional separation of powers and the distinctions between adjudication and legislation. Full of popular rhetoric, the Indian PIL was nevertheless a legal and political revolution that led to many social improvements. But it has also progressively shifted from the poor to the middle class and thus moved closer to the US PIL; it is hence at the centre of a controversy on “judicial excess”.

Interestingly, the Indian PIL has been the trigger of many other forms of public interest litigation in Asia. For example, a PIL is appearing in China. The nascent Chinese approach, however, differs widely from its Indian predecessor, as it also covers general grievances related to the complicated implementation of social and economic rights. In this authoritarian one-party state, the absence of a truly independent, professional Chinese judiciary may partly explain this key difference, but other Chinese specificities come into play so that the current situation appears to be unique.

**BOTTOM-UP AGAIN**

Nevertheless, the more formal approach did not give all the expected results for the many poor who were awaiting their day in court. With enormous populations and relatively few legal means, India, Indonesia and China, are, in different contexts and with different tools, resorting again to more informal or traditional bottom-up techniques to quench the thirst of aggrieved citizens for justice.

In India, the first *Lok Adalat* was held in 1982. The purpose of this semi-institutional justice is to solve petty disputes before they reach already extremely congested courts. Serving as a sort of arena for mediation, the *Lok Adalat* “court” consists of educated social workers, university law teachers and retired judicial officers who give the poor proper guidance, hence bringing reconciliation and harmony to the community. This “ban-yan tree justice” has been progressively institutionalized, so that a “*Lok Adalat High Court*” was established in 2000. However, the applicable law remains rather vague, so that parties must be represented by counsel. From traffic accidents to pensions and divorces, the *Lok Adalat* hear thousands of cases throughout India. But are they delivering justice?
In Indonesia, the 1999 post-Suharto regime instituted a broad process of decentralization, in which the reconfiguration of village structures was based on reactivation of the Adat Council, giving authority to village heads to resolve disputes. But here again, despite the noble aspiration to bring justice to the village, lack of clarity on applicable norms and their hierarchy, the immense variety of traditions across Indonesia and the disconnection of the Adat system from the formal judicial system in the absence of a real possibility to appeal a decision do not give credit to this reactivation of the past.

**The Sirens of Tradition**

These alternative dispute resolution mechanisms borrowed from a recreated past are generally regarded as a success by international donors and local authorities but too often turn out to be the expression of second-rate justice. While these “access to justice” solutions can bring some social cohesion at the local level, they do not necessarily participate in broader democratic objectives, as they tend to reproduce the old systems of domination and exclusion of the weakest. This “bread for the poor”, with the aim of providing the needy with speedy, costless justice and thus responding to the flaws in the formal system, are also the paternalistic expression of a reluctance to share the benefits of growth, as if the poor in the emerging giants will have to wait for another phase of development in order finally to obtain justice.

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Feminising and “modernising” political life: Comments on cases in India and Pakistan

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AUGUST 2013

“Paradox” is a word that is often used when it comes to qualifying the position of women in public life in countries in south Asia. For instance, many find it surprising that India was led by a woman in the 1960s, as was Pakistan in the 1980s, ahead of many European countries. It is considered a paradox because gender equality still appears as a distant objective in these countries, as shown by the declining gender ratio (in favour of men) or cases of violence against women. Obviously, such “surprise” is fuelled by stereotypes. Yet, it remains intriguing that Indira Gandhi in India or Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan were able to lead their party and their country. The paradox can be understood by emphasising the exceptionality of such women, who were the respective daughters of former Prime Ministers, Jawaharlal Nehru and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, and who owe their access to power only through ties to their family and background.

However, since the 1990s, women have been actively encouraged to engage in politics. In India, a quota of 33% of women in local government bodies was introduced in 1992. A similar step was taken in Pakistan in 2000, followed two years later by a quota of 17% in legislative assemblies. The possibility of adopting a quota of women in legislative assemblies in India has also been under discussion since 1996, but which had yet to be passed. Even without quotas, the number of female Members of Parliament is regularly increasing, and had furthermore exceeded the 10% bar in the last elections in 2009. The increased participation of women in politics is generally presented as a positive fact and as a sign of social modernisation and democratisation. However, caution should be taken when interpreting a recent “discovery” of the importance of gender equality. The concern for
the political representation of women in the sub-continent dates back to a long time ago, and as exceptional as they are, the rise of Benazir Bhutto and Indira Gandhi might not be as paradoxical as they seem. Similarly, the politics of quotas that exist in the two countries are the result British practices in colonial times that overtook the egalitarian ideal. The history of the feminisation of politics as a step towards democracy and “modernity” therefore needs to be rethought.

WOMEN’S REPRESENTATION WITHIN THE PARLIAMENTS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN

Women were major actresses of the Indian political life during the first half of the 20th century and they engaged themselves both in nationalist and feminist movements. In the 1920s, following an intense lobbying by feminist organisations, women obtained political rights that were similar to those of men in most provinces of colonial India. However, since the vote was by consensus, very few actually had the right to vote. In 1947, British India became independent and was divided. In both India and Pakistan, the post-independence period was marked by the withdrawal of women from politics. In India, the percentage of women in parliament decreased in the 1960s and 1970s (figure 1), and they were more poorly represented in Pakistan, in spite of quotas (figure 2). The level of quotas was low (approximately 5% of seats until the beginning of the 1980s), being more of a ceiling than a trampoline. It was not until 1977 that a woman was elected at the National Assembly for the first time, winning a non-permanent seat. Moreover, after the elections in 1988, the quotas, which were only a temporary measure, were abandoned and no longer applied.
Source: Indian Election Commission data.

Source: Pakistani Election Commission data

With the exception of the Pakistani elections in 1988, there were never more than 10% of female Members of Parliament in India or Pakistan before the 21st century. The reasoning behind the political inclusion and exclusion of women is, however, more complex than these figures suggest. Women do not form a homogeneous group, with some having been marginalised, notably women from religious minorities (Muslims in India, and Christians and Hindus in Pakistan) and low-caste women in India (in the Other Backward Classes category). These graphs/figures, furthermore, hint to a rupture at the end of the 1990s and beginning of 2000, which could be related to the international context. The Platform for Action issued from the World Conference on Women, organised by the United Nations in Beijing in 1995, called for quotas, and in 1990 and 2000, almost 100 countries had adopted such measures. However, in south Asia, the issue of women’s participation in politics was addressed much earlier and consid-
erred not only as a matter of gender equality, but also as a matter of modernity and national identity.

**WOMEN’S POLITICAL REPRESENTATION AND MODERNITY:**  
**FROM JAMES MILL TO PERVEZ MUSHARRAF**

One of the many arguments used to justify the colonisation of the Indian sub-continent was the superiority of the British civilization. This argument was based on the idea that women would be better protected by the British than by Indian men. This idea was portrayed by James Mill in his *History of British India*, published in 1817. Women’s rights thus became a major public issue in the colonial society, involving many actors, from the government to social reformists, and from the early 20th century, feminists and nationalist movements. By the end of the 1920s, the British were defending women’s participation in politics and their representation in assemblies through the seats reserved to them. Certain nationalists challenged the political rights of women in the name of the “Indian culture”, but the main nationalist movements (the Congress Party and the Muslim League) supported women’s right to vote. Leaders of independent movements, such as Jawaharlal Nehru (for the Congress Party) and Muhammad Ali Jinnah (for the Muslim League) justified their position by arguing that women’s equality was a fundamental step in the process of modernisation that would lead to independence. Following independence and the division in 1947 in India and Pakistan, gender discrimination was prohibited by the Constitution. The consensus of these (brief) discussions on women’s equality supported the importance of this measure. An important argument was that by giving all political rights to women, India and Pakistan were demonstrating their greatness to the world. In addition, in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, gender equality was seen as a way to counter those who criticised Islam for the status it gave to women.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the issue of political representation was less discussed in public. The issue resurfaced in the 1970s, in the context of the internationalisation of women's rights. In 1975, India and Pakistan participated in the World Conference on Women, organised by the United Nations in Mexico. Following this, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discriminations against Women was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1979. The Convention introduced the principle of positive discrimination for women, paving the way for quotas. This shift of paradigm in the representation of women political representation led to the conference in Beijing in 1995. The Platform for Action,
issued from this conference, affirmed that women’s participation in politics is not only important for equality, but also for strengthening democracy, improving governance and social peace.

This rhetoric reappeared in India in the early 1990s. The adoption of quotas for women in local political institutions in 1992 was part of a broader plan designed to deepen democracy. Similarly, an important argument supporting the adoption of quotas in assemblies was that India would show the world how modern it was. One of the outcomes from this argument was that those who opposed the law were labelled “archaic”. Therefore, the status of women is not only used to signify modernity vis-à-vis the rest of the world, but also within the Indian society. This was similarly the case in Pakistan, where the quotas of 33% of women in local institutions, and 17% in legislative assemblies, were established at the beginning of 2000. Pervez Musharraf had brought this into effect, following his rise to power as result of a military coup in 1999. After his coup d’état and the attacks of September 11 in 2001, Musharraf wished to embody “enlightened moderation” and was eager to distinguish himself from “radical Islam” by defending women’s rights in politics.

Thus, in both India and Pakistan, despite the political mis-representation of women, the association between the idea of modernity and women’s participation in politics is one that dates back to a long time ago. It is nevertheless important to remember that quotas, as they were conceived by the British, were part of a vast identification programme of social groups, defined by their “cultural specificity” or “vulnerability”. Quotas were initially a tool to respond to social diversity, but also to essentialise the differences between groups. The fact that quotas are still the main answer to the political mis-representation of women in the two countries highlights the persistence of differentialist representations of political roles political misrepresentation is thus telling; it shows the persistence of a representation of political roles, with women continuing to embody a form of “otherness” in society.
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Radicalisation & resilience: should Indonesian Islam be considered as an example to be followed in the Muslim world?

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DECEMBER 2013

When the “Arab spring” began in 2011, it resembled more and more like a long and harsh winter; the compatibility of Islam and democracy is finding itself once again at the centre of debates among academics and chancelleries. They were not the only ones who to have observed, been puzzled by, and undoubtedly disappointed by the political instability and the economic crisis stemming from the recent events in Egypt, Syria, Tunisia or Libya. Often glued to their television sets, the news of chaos that the Indonesians were watching was reminiscent of the events in 1997 and 1998 that led to the fall of President Suharto, under the pressure of the public and notably courageous students.

Many Indonesians undoubtedly realised the extent of the progress made since this historic period after being under an authoritarian regime for more than 30 years. Others undoubtedly understood the importance of the national ideology, “Pancasila”, adopted in 1945, establishing the religious neutrality of the Indonesia. In this country, the largest in the world in terms of its Muslim community (88% of its inhabitants are Muslims), the Pancasila does not privilege Islam, but recognises the “belief in one God only” as one of the five founding principles of the country. As an instrument of ideological control that was used for a long time by Suharto, the Pancasila is experiencing a comeback. Moreover, despite Indonesian Islam having suffered an inferiority complex, due to its “peripheral” situation in the Muslim world, it is now proudly claiming its singularity.

Indonesian democracy is, admittedly, far from perfect. In benefitting from the decentralisation process initiated by the post-Suharto reforms,
corruption has also become endemic, and now affects all levels government. The last scandal saw Akil Mochtar, the Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court, being arrested in October 2013 by the infamous Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK, Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi). The case was such that it could even have put the legitimacy of the political system into question. The corrupt Chief Justice was suspected of bribing the decisions of the Court on the outcomes of several contested local elections. A few months earlier, important political figures from the President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono’s Democratic Party (Partai Demokrat) were accused of embezzling tens of millions of dollars originally intended for the building of a sports complex.

Not long ago, the implementation of the Islamic ideal built around that of the Sharia would have been openly claimed as the solution to these problems of corruption, or to any other societal problem in countries that were at times disoriented by the frantic chase towards modernity. Today, however, these militant voices seem to be somewhat less vocal, for good reason. The country’s main Islamist political party, the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS, Partai Keadilan Sejahtera), was at the centre of a major corruption scandal, related to the beef import quotas overseen by the Ministry of Agriculture, which itself is headed by a member of this party. The case was all the more shocking in the view that the PKS – a distant cousin of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood – had prided itself in being the “true” party by excellence, possessing religious legitimacy. In the eyes of the public, these scandals were becoming intolerable as the social and economic inequalities were increasing with the sustained development that the country had been experiencing for several years (an average growth of 6%).

It thus seems that political Islam is not as popular as it was a few years ago: many surveys have shown that Islamic parties are at risk of facing a historically low result from the legislative elections that will be held in 2014. However, since the fall of Suharto and the liberalisation of politics, Islamic parties (Islamist and non-Islamist) have received a significant number of votes (approximately 33% and 35% of the vote in 1999 and 2004). The decline in 2009 (25% of the vote) could thus increase in the next elections. While the PKS managed to secure 7.3% of the vote in 2004, and 7.88% in 2009, according to current surveys, the party’s popularity could decrease to a level closer than that of its results in 1999 (1.36%).
Should Indonesian Islam be considered as an example to be followed?

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<td>7.34</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>33.73</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>35.12</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>25.85</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Results of the main Muslim parties in the Indonesian parliamentary elections from 1999 to 2009. (© 2013 / Réseau Asie – Imasie.)
(Source: The General Election Commission (KPU), Indonesia Memilih.)

With regard to radical and violent Islam that suffered defeat from the government’s security policy, it is much more fragmented than it was in the early 2000s and thus appears to have a lesser impact. No major terrorist attack has shaken the country since 2008, despite there being a new mode of action: it is decentralised and operated by self-taught independent militants who are targeting the police and religious minorities.

Mainstream Muslim organisations (the traditionalist Nahdlatul Ulama and modernist Muhammadiyah) are still torn in between a “liberal” current and a “conservative” current, more tolerant to radicals. However, their leaders have realised that the two organisations are being threatened by the “entry” strategy of Islamists and neo-fundamentalists.
It is clear today that the challenges faced by the role of Islam in the country’s politics are more associated with local issues. Since the early 2000s, this phenomenon was translated by the implementation of regulations in certain local communities, inspired by the Sharia (ban on alcohol selling, curfew for unaccompanied women, the wearing of the veil), favoured by the political manoeuvres of local candidates who were members of “nationalist” parties, and therefore secular, but who were nevertheless trying to gain the Muslim vote.

The role of political elites in Jakarta is thus important. It is the cowardice of the current president, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (with the support of certain ministers) that is granting legitimacy to the acts of violence performed by the militias of the Islamic moral order, like the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI, Front Pembela Islam). The public is becoming increasingly exasperated by abuses committed by the FPI (raid at bars, billiard halls, intellectual and interfaith gatherings). Recently, certain communities have started responding to this violence by resorting to force themselves. There is hope today that this active minority, which has been causing harm, will diminish with the arrival of a new and firmer political power.

There is therefore a growing willingness, not only in intellectual circles, but also in the most popular areas, to defend an Islam that wishes to be specifically Indonesian and distinct from the religious exclusivity associated to the Saudi Wahhabi model. Some even speak of the need to counter Islamic extremism, with “Pancasila extremism”, whereby the religious neutrality of the country is reaffirmed; a country, which has long favoured the sectarian and ethnic cohesion of the island.

Does this relative resilience of Indonesian society faced with the rise of radicalism deserve to be considered more throughout the Muslim world? Indonesia has certain undeniable advantages; in addition to its national ideology, it has a booming economy, a strong civil society, media enjoying total freedom of speech, reactive student organisations, moderate Islamic mass-organisations occupying the social ground, a strict anti-corruption commission, and last but not least, young rising political figures with a reputation of great integrity. The latest surveys show that the public is convinced that democracy, despite its imperfections, remains the best political system of country. The inhabitants of Greater Jakarta illustrated this political maturity during the last elections for governor and vice-governor, when they nominated both Joko Widodo, an entrepreneur with a reputation of possessing integrity and being efficacious, and Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, a Sino-Indonesian Christian, the first in the country’s history.

The problem thus stems less from the public than from certain elites who are ready to defend their political and economic interests through favouring an intransigent form of Islam or, at the least, by tolerating the
acts of violence performed by radical militias. The results of the next legislative elections in April 2014, followed by the presidential elections in July of the same year, will partly determine whether this strategy still has a future in a country that has now almost fifteen years of democratic experience behind it. For the moment, the island is one of the few countries in the Muslim world that has succeeded in combining democracy, religious revival, and economic development together. It is therefore interesting to note that since 2011, representatives of the Egyptian government have been visiting Indonesia in order to understand the country better.

Finally, one may wonder whether the reported failure of political Islam in the next elections could lead the forces of Islamist activism to return to their area of preference that is to say, preaching and social work, or increasingly investing in new horizons, such as the economy. Like the American televangelists, a new generation of charismatic Muslim preachers has been promoting “pious enrichment” for a few years now, associated to the provision of charitable services to the middle-class who are in need of the meaning of life. Similarly, parties and organisations have begun to create their own businesses and to use the motivational techniques of Western management to compete in a “benefits of salvation” market of 240 million souls (i.e. alms tax, endowments and the multiple forms that religious donations take today).

It remains to be seen what the outcome is of this possible “redirection of the area against which one fights” – from political activism to lucrative-charitable areas – when the joining of religious and economic fields is instilling a new dynamic into Islam and modernity.

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World War I inaugurated the first meeting between French citizens and what were known as “colonial subjects” in France. Almost 90,000 Vietnamese nationals enrolled unwillingly in French factories and barracks. 50,000 of them were sent to work in developing industrial warfare. As Michel Goya wrote: “1916 marks a rupture, a turning point, the critical transition from classical to modern warfare.” 900,000 colonial or so-called “exotic” workers, were brought to France from Indochina, Algeria, India and China, to form part of the industrial mobilisation, which was improvised in a hurry. The recruiting of unskilled labour was the case all around the world, regardless of the borders of the colonial empires. Long confined to the colonial territory, the history of the relations between the colonised and colonisers often ignored the internal migration within the empires, imposed by the coloniser. The war provoked a decisive moment during the Vietnamese emigration, which had barely begun in 1910, forcing thousands of farmers from the north of Vietnam to work in industry.

In the urgency to meet its needs in terms of workers and soldiers, France, in 1916, re-examined the Yellow Army project, presented by General Pennequin (1849-1916) in 1912, a senior commander of the Indochina troops at the time, who used the project as a pretext for recruiting additional manpower. From 1911, Pennequin, an officer under Jean Jaurès, was aware of the evolution of the Vietnamese society that was shaken by colonisation and the emergence of the bourgeoisie with modern aspirations, and called for a rapid decolonisation. He recommended creating a national army, with officers from the country, as the first modern structure for the colonised countries and potential motor that would drive them towards
independence and constructing a nation-state. As a precursor of the imperialism that would come later, forcing France to change its colonial policy radically, the project was met with hostility and thus abandoned.

The decision to recruit in Indochina, which was presented as a vast reservoir of manpower, was made shortly after the decree of October 1915 on the recruitment of soldiers in French West Africa, defended by General Mangin. The recruitment plan was inspired by the search for manpower developed in 1915 by Albert Thomas (1878-1932), leader of the industrial mobilisation. This provoked the immediate opposition of the C.G.T, which claimed to have international control over the flows of the workforce, but which was short-circuited by the status of the colonies, deprived of all fundamental freedom and union representatives who were able ask for equal treatment to be respected, like that shown to French workers.

Paradoxically, Albert Thomas found an unexpected ally in the great nationalist and reformist leader, Phan Châu Trinh. Trinh promised to fight against colonialism, as for him, the recruitments represented the opportunity for modernised elites of his country to “travel to France” (Tây Du) and to be able to reach the first milestone of modernising Indochina, a prerequisite for independence, to which the French should agree after the war, in recognition of the sacrifice made by the Vietnamese who were playing a part in the industrial mobilisation.

After the failure of the first improvised recruitment in March 1916, leadership was taken over by Albert Sarraut, who returned to the general government in 1917, gathering the needed recruits among the poor farmers in north-Annam and Tonkin, which provided more than 80% of the contingents, and between 15 to 20% of them were between the ages of 20 in 30 in certain provinces. The failure of recruitment in the south was due to a stronger resistance from the people, but also the refusal of the administration to resort to traditional clientele networks in Cambodia. The Mandarins’ influence over the people was also historically less ancient in Cochinchina. On the other hand, in the north, recruitments in villages were led by the Mandarins and local notables, to whom the reservoir of manpower, which undertook chores to maintain the roads and dikes, provided a means of finding a selection of “volunteers”. The recruitment of these poor farmers almost fully relied on the collaboration with the country’s administration, illustrating the “ambiguous colonisation”, which involved the participation of the colonised themselves in a system that oppressed them. The Mandarins in France who were responsible for the postal censorship of their fellow countrymen, attested the consent of the colonised in the colonial submission pact. The study of the recruitments also highlighted that the structures existing before colonisation – town and indigenous administration at local level – were largely unaffected during this period, as the
French administration was relatively small, preferring to extract the modes of coercion that were used internally in Vietnam to its own benefit.

In France, serving in war factories, the Vietnamese gathered all the constraints of uprooting with those of Taylorism. The testing discovery of the industrial world was increased by the alienating effects of forced acculturation. The creation of the “General Control”, monitoring Indo-Chinese workers and infantrymen, a specific postal censor committee and a network of homes and associations, structuring everyday life, orchestrated by colonial interests, made the Vietnamese the most watched of all the colonies. The militarisation of the colonial workers wished to officially confer them with the same status as the French workers. It was a way in which Taylorism could be reintroduced, after it was abandoned in 1913, following a strong resistance from the automobile industry. In favour of state intervention in the economy of war, Albert Thomas became a provider of docile and underpaid manpower of workers, drained worldwide. The Vietnamese, mainly posted in the weaponry factories in Ripault, Bourges or Toulouse, representing 50% of the workforce in 1917, were used to develop methods of control and domination of the immigrant workers, which was crucial to the economy of the Western countries. The economic exploitation of the colonised, who were unskilled and assigned to the most testing posts, and who were furthermore forced to increase their performance through the bonuses paid to the production line, characterised the division of labour and racial hierarchy of skills, introduced by the collusion of interests between France and the employers who were in favour of war. These systems continued throughout the 20th century with the manpower of immigrant workers, inheriting this first colonial manpower. The use of the colonised workers played a decisive role in their rejection by the French workers. The two opposing currents, the majority and minority, of the C.G.T differed on the control of the flow of “exotic” workers, but they nevertheless came together in practice to not educate those who formed the “unorganised and unorganisable” manpower.

In this context, each Vietnamese individual experienced the physical, mental and cultural trauma differently, but the lack of varied reactions, mainly individual and pathologic reactions, opposing Taylorised work, proved the depth of the shock. A high rate of morbidity, rapid wear-out, and susceptibility to accidents were the effects of working conditions, characterising their adaption to industrial work, where the forms of resistance rarely included the collective agreement to strike or to slow down. Their performance was the subject of conflicting assessments: although the employers and the supervisors considered them flexible and disciplined, they also racially prejudiced the Vietnamese and compared them to an almost ‘women-like’ workforce, and hesitated in extending their employ-
ment at the end of the war. Anxious to save its base, the C.G.T did not consider the colonised as actual workers. As a variable adjustment in the manpower, they were, even more so than women, rejected from the workers movement by union bodies, defending their principle of nation defence, and also by French workers who wished to protect the country’s work. The rejection of the colonial workers, subjects and non citizens of the empire by the vast majority of the French society, from workers to the people of the barrack towns, showed how ignorant French people were of colonialism, and moreover, revealed how racist people were, which manifested violently in 1917. This rejection would later provoke the anti-colonialist fight towards Communism and nationalist claims.

The supervisory strategies of everyday life intensified the alienation of life in the factories. Literacy programmes and organised leisure activities were developed by the Alliance française and assisting committees, which refined their paternalistic approach to “the child-like population”. Attempts to transform the camps of closed worlds aimed at avoiding “perversions of contact” (women, games, alcohol), which were major concerns in official reports. However, the effects of this radical acculturation disappeared in the daily contact with French female workers in the factories. Their learning of the new mode of industrial organisation jointly brought these colonial workers together, well beyond the walls of the factory. The discovery of a white society much more diverse than in the colony that saw multiple lovers and liaisons, and the birth of mixed race children (Vietnamese and French), enabled colonial workers to denounce the social relations between the coloniser and colonised, which did not tolerate the sexual relations between a white man and a Vietnamese women. The reversal of Western sexual monopoly, unachievable in Indochina, more so than the discovery of the world of labour, led to the colonial system being politically contested. This was conveyed in the letters written by workers, and more so in those written by interpreters and junior officers, in which the French society was sharply criticised. These letters also recounted the exploitation to which they were subjected.

After the war, the refusal of colonial control provoked the sociological destabilisation of villages where those returning from France contested the authority of the Vietnamese administration that was under colonial power, and led to them participating in the farmers revolt in the 1930s. This was more radically expressed in the fight against colonialism, led in France by approximately a hundred men who had obtained the right to stay in the country and who became active militants. France, which had deliberately rejected reformism, incarnated by Phan Châu Trinh, remained repressive with the changing of control structures in political police services, branched out to Indochina. The country only consented to the reforms to
the education system or the association of the Vietnamese in the direction of their country, provoking an accelerated proletarianisation of the Vietnamese farmer movement and preventing the emergence of an elite formed by Western practices, and a bourgeoisie class likely to modernise the country. In this regard, the First World War was a missed opportunity for Vietnam to decolonise itself peacefully.

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PART THREE

Constructing theories
The rise of Asia in the world economy

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September 2012

It is widely accepted that Asia has risen in the world economy since at least 1960, and especially since 2000. But what does this involve? And what explains it? The answers are widely diverse and even contradictory. Some argue that Asia (or even China alone) has always been at the centre of the world economy, except for a brief period between 1800 and 1950. These analysts consider that the recent rise is merely a reassertion of Asia’s historic or natural position. Others consider that what is happening now is relocalization of the centre of the world economy to Asia and that this is simply the outcome of a process that has occurred several times before in the modern world system, resulting from the functioning of capitalist systems. Still others consider that the current rise of China and of Asia is the end stage of a slow process over the past five centuries, which reflects another kind of “modernization” that is different from that in the west. Some even consider that the rise is temporary and will disappear (or may disappear) soon.

Clearly, these various arguments are based on different and opposing political and geopolitical assumptions (and hopes) finding or seeking an intellectual facade. Let us try to pull apart the various elements of this debate.

One issue is the decline of the United States in the inter-state system. I myself have supported this position. In the face of such a decline, there is obviously a rise of Asia but not only of Asia. There is also the rise of South America. And there are still other “rises”, as there is today a much wider distribution of geopolitical power in the world than there was 50 years ago.

In my opinion, there is a slow tendency to re-centre the world economy towards northeast Asia (China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea together). It is true that this is “normal”, in that it is the result of the basic mode of operation of the capitalist world economy over the past four centuries. But it should be noted that it is a slow process and that in the past it took 100-150 years to bring about such a geographical turnabout.
It is also true that the relatively spectacular growth in China in the past 10-15 years, and in other countries such as Brazil and India, will not last long. Such high rates of growth have never lasted for long, and this time worldwide depression makes it even more difficult to slow such a decline.

What is missing from all these analyses is the essential point that the modern world system is in a structural crisis and has been for 50 years. The system has moved too far from the equilibrium. As explained by the sciences of complexity, all systems eventually reach this kind of impasse and then branch off. All that is certain is that it is impossible to preserve the existing system. But there are always two alternative outcomes at a fork in the road, and it is intrinsically impossible to predict which one will prevail. We will know 20-40 years from now.

When a historical system is in structural crisis, most people continue to apply the rules of the failing system, which, however, actually intensifies the crisis, which is what is happening now. For example, the rise of China, northeast Asia and emerging economies, far from resolving the crisis, is making it still more impossible to resolve.

Consider for example the fact that in China (or China plus Korea plus India plus Brazil), the number of people who now have a comfortable income (or, in the language often used, have become members of the middle classes) has grown considerably. Do the arithmetic. The result has been that the number of people in the world system who have such an income has gone from about 5-10% (or less) to 20-30% (or more). But the global surplus is about the same and must be divided by a much larger group. As the saying goes, the game is no longer worth the candle. Thus, not only are the global poor pushed to rebel but, more importantly, the globally well-off are pushed to find alternative solutions that will permit them to regain the levels of income that the present system offered them in the past.

Hence, the current situation is not a simple re-centring of the world economy, and even less the restoration of a multi-millennial historical centre that some people see in China. Rather, we find ourselves in a rather chaotic transition towards a completely uncertain future, until our planet decides to tilt definitively towards one or the other of the two alternative outcomes.

In this future world system (if the planet remains a unified social system), what will be China’s role? Will this future system even have state structures comparable to ours? Or distinct large cultural zones? Who can say? Will a non-capitalist system retain the worst aspects of capitalism (hierarchy, exploitation and polarization), or will we see, for the first time in human history, a relatively democratic, egalitarian system (the two aspects necessarily being linked)? Who can say today?

All this is part of a great political struggle to define our future, in which each of us participates, willingly or unwillingly. If a relatively dem-
ocratic, egalitarian system comes into being, the Chinese people (I don’t say China) will occupy a position similar to that of other people. If it is a hierarchical system, based on exploitation and polarization, it is impossible to predict where the Chinese people will find themselves on the global ladder, or the position of China, if it still exists.
The Role of the Judiciary in implementing Western Law in Iran under the Pahlavi Dynasty

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March 2012

The Islamic Republic of Iran has over 25 centuries of history. The sources of law and the judicial system of this country have undergone many evolutions and numerous influences, which have been ethnic, religious and legal. They were sometimes imposed on the Persian government and at other times were accepted voluntarily; some were the result of wars. Since the 7th century, many things have changed in Iran, except for one: the concept that Shi’ah Islamic law is the foundation of the Iranian legal system.

Shia and Sunni are the two main branches of Islam. The schism occurred after the Prophet’s death in 655. The Sunnis considered that the followers of the Prophet should elect his successor after his death, whereas the Shias considered that the Prophet’s successor was Ali, his nephew and son-in-law. Shias believe that the Prophet designated Ali as his successor before his death, during his last pilgrimage to Mecca. Ali and his 11 descendants are therefore known as imams (guides), and the Shias Muslims consider them the most important figures in the Islamic religion after the Prophet, their sayings having almost the same value as those of the Koran and the jurisprudence of the Prophet. The Sunnis designated “Caliphs” as the Prophet’s successors. Caliphs usually governed Islamic territory and exercised tyrannical power over the population. Eventually, all the Prophet’s descendants were killed directly or indirectly by the caliphs, mainly because of their popularity.

Philosophical, legal and political consequences arise from these differences. The Shia philosophy is based on the existence of free will to determine man’s destiny in this world, whereas the Sunni believe in the principle of predetermination (the concept of mektoub or “pre-written”
destiny). This essential difference resulted in greater freedom of speech and spirituality among the Shias during the Arab invasion. A consensus of historical communities, not the decisions of political authorities, led to the establishment of four legal schools of thought: Malikis, Hanafis, Shafi’is and Hanbalis. In theory, a Sunni Muslim could choose whichever school of Islamic thought he or she wished to follow and could change this choice at will. The Shia Muslims have only one legal school. The main difference between the Shia and Sunni schools is in the source of laws: whereas the Sunni and Shia Muslims agree on the existence of the four main sources of Islamic law, i.e. the Koran, the Prophet’s tradition and jurisprudence (referred to as the Sunna), the “consensus” consisting of the universal and infallible agreement of the Muslim community, especially of scholars on any Islamic principle, at any time (Ijma’), and reasoning (Aql), Shia Muslims add the traditions and jurisprudence of the Imams (the Prophet’s descendants). Therefore, interpretation of the same documents or concepts results in conflicts between Sunni and Shia law. Throughout their history, Iranians have used Shia to resist the Arab invaders, by proclaiming the right to a new, different way of interpreting Islamic concepts. Less than 10% of the over 1 billion Muslims in the world are Shia. Therefore, as the population of Iran is approximately 69 million according to the most recent statistics and more than 88% are Shia, more than 65% of the Shia population of the world lives in Iran. Other Shia Muslims live in Afghanistan, Iraq, Turkey, the Russian Federation, India and many other countries.

Only small changes were made to the judicial system up to the end of the 19th century. Judicial power has always been concentrated in the hands of the clergy, who were considered the legitimate sources for rendering justice. The law is considered to be based on Islamic sources and the clergy are deemed to be the legitimate authority for interpreting the sources. Although in the early uncertain days of his career, Reza Khan showed that he knew how to play on the religious emotions of the people, he was basically disinterested in religion and was antagonistic towards the clergy. The impact of western civilization on the institutions of Muslim Iran is therefore more apparent than the reforms of the judicial system.

Reza Khan started reforms as soon as he became Prime Minister to counter the adverse consequences of the First World War on Persia’s economic situation as well as the extreme weakness of the central Government, which favoured a return of the local landlords who had destroyed the infrastructure of the political system and the Government at the end of the Qadjar Dynasty. The Shah proceeded as quickly as possible with his plans for reform. He founded a new corps of civil servants based on the western model and the foundations of a new judicial system. His principal objective was to abolish the system of capitulations, a concept that went back to 1910, when the Russian Government
signed a treaty with Persia according to which Russian citizens received immunity from the Persian courts if they committed crimes on Persian territory. This provision was imposed on the Persian Government by the Russian Government because of the lack of an impartial judicial system that could guarantee the fundamental rights of the accused individuals. Thus, Russian citizens could commit any crime in Persia without being prosecuted, and they were also protected by their own courts, as long as their crimes did not interest their own country. This problem became progressively generalized as the Persian Government was forced to confer similar immunity to citizens of other countries on the basis of treaties they had signed, which usually contained a clause referring to “most favoured nation”. In 1925, the citizens of more than 30 countries had such privileges through their respective treaties!

Reza Shah was, however, extremely sensitive to foreign criticism, and he realized that as long as Iran did not have a judicial system along western lines, abolition of capitulations might attract adverse publicity in Europe. He knew also that, in order to be credible when abolishing the capitulations, he should provide a really efficient Persian judicial system, especially for the criminal courts.

The man who carried the weight of this responsibility was Ali Akbar Davar, the Minister of Justice, who was one of the young chief lieutenants appointed by Reza Shah in his efforts to westernize the country. This man was of middle-class origin, who graduated in law at the University of Geneva and was the chief member of the so-called “brain trust” of the Reza Shah regime. On the basis of his Swiss legal education, Davar decided that the first step towards the desired efficiency was codification. This decision was a very important one, which affected the evolution of the Persian legal system. Davar chose to give the Persian system a continental European structure, thus distinguishing it from the Anglo-Saxon system. Persian law, which up until then had consisted of small pieces of legislation, became more and more complex.

Experimental commercial and criminal codes were introduced in 1924 and 1926. Early in 1927, the old Ministry of Justice was dissolved, and, in the spring of the same year, new personnel, many of whom had received a European education, took over administration of the new Ministry of Justice from the former clerical officials. This new Ministry was charged with the preparation of codes of law. Early in 1928, a commission within the newly formed Ministry of Justice, headed by Davar, presented to the Majlis the first volume of the civil code and a judicial reorganization bill establishing a hierarchy of courts. On 8 May 1928, the Code was approved. As the Government was anxious to abrogate the capitulations under Reza Shah’s instruction, members of Parliament had little opportunity for debate. The parts dealing with general subjects were verbatim transla-
tions of the French Civil Code. As this code was a secularization of the Shari‘ah, Davar feared that members of the clergy would oppose its implementation. Therefore, little was said about the Code, and the first volume was voted before any opposition was heard. This was followed by approval of the second volume of the Civil Code in 1935.

Davar told those who opposed the Codes after they were approved that they were experimental and temporary. Once the Codes had been prepared and enacted, Davar ensured that qualified personnel were trained as quickly as possible in order to apply the new legislation. The most important personnel were the judges. He also hoped that formation of a new civil corps of judges would help the Government to combat corruption. A special effort was therefore made to train the new judges at the University of Tehran. The Faculty of Law trained new students, whereas evening courses were organized for judges to become acquainted with the new legislation. Few judges were trained in this way at first, and it was several years before the Persian courts became efficient. Judges were sent to the capital cities of different provinces when their training was complete.

With regard to the organization of the courts, the burden of reform was entrusted to a few honest, qualified judges who knew the old and the new systems and could successfully ensure the transition between the two. These people included Mohammad Shafie Jahanshahi, Mohammad Reza Vejdani, Mehdi Gholi Hedayat, Nur Ali Elahi, Seyed Mohammad Fatemi Ghomi, Assadollah Mamaghani, Habibollah Shobeyr and Javad Ameri. It is obvious that the new legislation and court system required time before it became efficient. Without these judges and their efforts to implement the new laws in Iranian provinces far from the capital, the modernization could never have resisted the obstacles created by the clergy and the feudal organization of Iranian society.

Reza Shah concentrated on two ideas: abolishing the capitulations as quickly as possible and continuing the reforms. Therefore, based on the reforms made to the Persian judicial system by Davar, the Government denounced all capitulation treaties in 1928. The vital blow to the position of the clergy in the judiciary system was dealt on 17 March 1932, when the Majlis enacted a law concerning the registration of documents and property, requiring that the registration of legal documents, of ownership and of other transactions concerning immovable property be done in front of secular state authorities only. This function had previously been the monopoly of the Shari‘ah authorities and, together with the registration of marriages and divorces, had been the most important function of those authorities. Furthermore, it was by far the largest source of revenue for the mujtahids and lower clergy. As a consequence of this law, many members of the clergy were forced to abandon the robe and seek secular employment.
Legislation completing the permanent secularization and westernization of the judiciary system was enacted on 27 December 1936, when a law concerning the reorganization of the judiciary system and the employment of judges was passed by the entire body of the Majlis. In setting employment qualifications for judges, it eliminated many members of the clergy from the judiciary. It was clear from the beginning of the Reza Shah’s reforms that the clergy would have to be removed from the judiciary system. There is reason to believe, however, that the final step, taken in 1936, was motivated primarily by a desire to hasten that separation and not by consideration of the needs of the new system and the effects that such legislation would have. Yet, it was inevitable that the expansion of the judiciary system with sudden exclusion of a large proportion of former practitioners would have adverse results. A real crisis arose in the judiciary system, as there were not enough educated, qualified personnel to fill the vast new organization. Frequently, a judge would go from one mission to another or one province to another within 1 or 2 years. One judge might also be entrusted with a mission for several provinces in what were called travelling courts.

The final version of the new Civil Code passed in 1939 gave greater jurisdiction to the lower courts and increased powers to State attorneys and prosecutors. It also provided, for the first time, a special procedure for trying foreign nationals. Both the Civil Code and the Penal Code reflected the influence of western judiciary models. Like the Civil and Penal Codes, the organization of the courts in Iran followed the French pattern. The strong influence of the French and European legal and judicial systems on the Persian system was mostly due to employment by the Iranian Government of various European professors of law and legal advisors to the Ministry of Justice during the regime of Reza Shah. From 1922 until 1939, eight French and two Italian professors were engaged to teach at the Faculty of Tehran for a total of 16 academic years.

Therefore, for nearly 10 years after the rise of Reza Shah, the power of the clergy was diminished by a process of attrition, which led finally to a general law enacted by the Majlis on 30 November 1931, which totally redefined the status and jurisdiction of the shari’ah courts. They were forbidden from pronouncing sentence, and their verdicts had to be sent to the State court that had referred the case to them, to be pronounced by that court. In case of appeal by the defendant, the verdict of the shari’ah court could be reviewed by the State court.

Reforms were continued under the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah (1941-1979) but not with the same force. The greatest efforts were made in the fields of women’s rights and family law. In any event, the process of attrition of the power of the clergy under Reza Shah can be directly linked to the political events some 40 years later, in 1979.
Towards a better understanding of Asian capitalism?

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JUNE 2012

THE REVIVAL OF COMPARATIVE CAPITALISM ANALYSES... WITHOUT ASIA

After a blank in the first half of the 1990s, a period during which the illusion that all economic systems would converge towards the Anglo-Saxon form of capitalism was widespread, comparative analyses of capitalism became active again for more than 10 years. It was found that the diversity of capitalisms had been reinforced since the early 1990s, despite pressures such as the collapse of socialist regimes, globalisation and the new technological regime. This sustained diversity does not mean stability, and many studies have shown evidence of various types of change, from the most radical to the most gradual. New fields have been investigated, and one in particular has emerged: the political economy of the diversity of capitalism and institutional changes

Nevertheless, in debates in social, economic and political sciences on the diversity of capitalism, Asian capitalisms have been under-researched, with few exceptions. One reason is that most of the researchers in the field of comparative analyses of capitalism are American or European. Another reason is that the focus has been on the internal diversity of capitalisms within Europe, as in Amable (2004) for example. A final reason is perhaps the preeminence of cultural explanations for Asian economic systems.

2. E.g. Whitley, 1994; Orru et al., 1997; Boyer et al. 2011.
TOWARDS A NEW RESEARCH PROGRAMME: BRINGING ASIA INTO THE COMPARATIVE CAPITALISM PERSPECTIVE

Therefore, theories and concepts of the comparative capitalism approach remain to be applied to Asia and tested in these specific institutional configurations. The very nature of capitalism, its internal diversity and its pattern of institutional change are questions that are especially fascinating to analyse for Asia. We consider that comparative capitalism theories offer interesting tools for analysing and understanding current trends in Asia.

More specifically, the apparent lack of coherence and immense heterogeneity of capitalist production, regulation and the related institution-building in the case of China, the differential speed of change in Japan and Korea, despite seemingly similar institutional arrangements, the specific institutional structures of city states such as Hong Kong and Singapore, the rapid integration of different models and levels of economic development within the “China circle”, particularly between China and Taiwan, and the idiosyncratic industrial specialization in India based on textiles, IT and services such as call centres call for new analyses of institutional comparative advantages and of various modes of capitalist growth.

AN EXAMPLE: ANALYSING NEW EMERGING WELFARE SYSTEMS IN JAPAN, THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA AND CHINA

A concrete example of the importance and need to conduct a new generation of analyses on Asian capitalisms is the rising inequality in countries such as Japan, the Republic of Korea and China, and the emerging welfare systems in those three countries. Increasing inequality in these three economies is just one of the changes they have experienced during the past few decades, but it is certainly one of the most important, as it reveals internal contradictions, which require new welfare systems. These three countries are not the only ones that have experienced rising inequality; however, some analyses tend to show that the roots of this evolution are well explained by the literature that analyses apparently similar trends in the US and Europe.

Towards a better understanding of Asian capitalisms?

Generally speaking, from the viewpoint of comparative capitalism, inequalities are not just another outcome of a given form of capitalism (at the same level as the macro-performance of the economies), nor do they go beyond the diversity of capitalism and national economies (such as the impact of globalisation or of technical progress); rather, they tell us something about the very nature of each form of capitalism. They are the core (not the outcome) of the compromise on added value and risk-sharing.

Interestingly, most of the analyses of East Asian capitalisms emphasize the organization of industries and businesses as the dominant characteristics from the viewpoint of institutional hierarchy and relations between employment and finance from the viewpoint of complementarities. While welfare systems are considered a distinctive feature of some European capitalisms as opposed to the liberal form of capitalism, the dominant understanding of Asian capitalisms is that they are in opposition to what could be labelled “welfare capitalism”.

Our aim is to argue that the previous analyses of Asian capitalisms underestimated or ignored in-depth analyses of Asian capitalisms from the viewpoint of welfare, in adopting, at least implicitly, a perspective inspired by the over-simplified typology of Esping Andersen, which can be qualified as “welfare orientalism”. We argue that welfare is at the core of the evolving forms of capitalism in these three countries. The crises during the past two decades in Japan and the Republic of Korea have shown the fragility of a model of growth that relies almost exclusively on investment and exports and the necessity for welfare expansion to promote a more balanced model of growth; in turn, this development raises important issues about the financing of the new systems and requires political decisions about cost-sharing. In China, welfare development is perceived by the Government as the key to ensure the survival of the regime, if not its stability. In short, our interpretation is that institutional change in Asian capitalism is driven by changes in the social compromise. To put it differently, emerging forms of capitalism may put welfare at the top of the institutional hierarchy after the failure of financialization in Japan and the Republic of Korea and the lessons drawn from the case of China.

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Some thoughts on the role
and tools of archaeology in Japan

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AUGUST 2012

The discipline of archaeology established itself progressively during the “long 19th century” (from the end of the 18th century to 1914) in western Europe. It thus developed in the context of the building of European nations. This was also the case in Japan from the last third of the 19th century. The slow growth of this “science of remains” would bring original perspectives to the immemorial past of humanity, to history before written history, in a time when some of the people entering the “modern” 19th century were precisely looking for a political identity, a national consciousness.

Whether one is dealing with “our ancestors the Gauls” or with the tombs of the legendary sovereigns of Japan makes no difference: the main goal is to find the roots, in a remote past minimally described in written documents (if any), leading to something completely new: the nation and the official state framework that relies on it. Archaeology, opening new horizons in knowledge of the past, has thus from the very beginning been the witness of its own contextual development. More importantly, it bears witness to the main concerns of modern societies and to the frameworks within which they evolve.

Japan and northern and western European countries were among the first in the world to build a particular relationship between past and present. More than a century after its first steps, with the nation, recounting “history before History” is still an attractive field of research. For Japan, what interpretation can be placed on its archaeology, which has some of the most financial support and human resources in the world?

Until the end of the Second World War, Japan responded to an imperial monarchy, within which the question of the origin of the nation was clearly secondary. Officially, the nation was strictly “defined” and existed mainly through the tutelary figure of its sovereign. Within this context,
archaeology contributed to establishing the age of the lineage of the sovereigns of the archipelago, but it could not develop a scientific or critical approach to explain the origins of both the State and the population of the archipelago. Archaeology thus spent a long time “in the wilderness”, between the birth of a methodologically sound archaeology (at the Imperial University of Kyôto in 1917) and the time when it became possible to use its methods to describe the archipelago’s history. In the previous period, scientific archaeology, with its methodological capacity to give new chronological perspectives, had to remain silent in the face of the official, legendary chronology imposed by the Imperial system.

The defeat of Japan in 1945 led to the end of this prohibition, and a genuine chronological division into “periods” before antiquity was rapidly formulated. The year 1945 also saw the end of the colonial empire, which, with its monarchy, had defined Japan since the Meiji era, from the end of the 19th century. It was thus necessary to rebuild Japan not only within its physical, insular limits but also in terms of mental representations. This fostered a new conceptualization of the Japanese nation, with real questions about the origins and the originality of the Japanese people, which might yield a new national imagery. In this post-war context, archaeology became a crucial factor in the construction of Japan and the Japanese identity.

The extensive academic work on the Japanese nation after the war is interesting in many ways. While in Europe we are progressively setting aside national descriptions of the past, in Japan it is yet to begin. Although nationalism was one of the main reasons for the ruin of the European powers in the first half of the 20th century, in Japan it was imperial expansionism that was blamed. The construction of post-war insularity, national narration and the new chronologies are elements that represent a complete rupture with the landmarks of the imperialist monarchy.

Between the 1950s and the 1970s, archaeology thus provided concrete elements to characterize the birth of the Japanese people, such as, for instance, the remains of the first rice-growing societies in the archipelago (Yayoi period, from the first half of the first millennium BCE to the first half of the 3rd century CE, the name coming from pottery found in the Yayoi quarter in Tôkyô at the end of the 19th century. History thus “serves the people” by providing it with ancient cultural roots, going back to days well before the antique monarchist system and the figure of the sovereign.

Archaeological studies during 1970–1980 of the end of the Yayoi period and the period just before antiquity (Kofun period, named after protohistorical burial mounds erected on the archipelago between the 3rd and the 8th centuries) indicated the existence of an already strong, complex political system that preceded the antique system. The question of the origin of a Japanese state, beyond the question of the Imperial lineage, was raised in the 1990s.
The *Jōmon* period (named after pottery with “cord marks”), set temporally between the Palaeolithic period and the appearance of the first peasantry on the archipelago, was very long, lasting from the end of the last ice age to the first millennium BCE (i.e. a “very long Mesolithic period” of about 10,000 years). This period has, however, been ignored in the national narration. During the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, *Jōmon* was usually considered “pre-Japanese” and associated with the “interior otherness” of Japan, represented by the Ainu population of Hokkaidō. *Jōmon* was nevertheless progressively (re)integrated into the national narration between the 1970s and the 1990s on the basis of a set of theories in physical anthropology (the people from the archipelago being considered a biological cross-breed between “indigenous *Jōmon*” and “allogensous Yayoi”) and the discovery of important archaeological sites (such as *Sannai Maruyama* in north-western Honshū: a settlement of very high population density for the time), which demonstrated an unexpected complexity in the societies of the *Jōmon* period, strongly depreciated for a long time and often considered “barbaric” in Japanese historiography.

Japanese archaeology is rich and exceptionally well documented, as a result of intensive, long-term research, and thus developed fully autonomously from European archaeology, with its own chrono-cultural landmarks. Nevertheless, the contemporary scientific issues of Japanese archaeology are similar to those in Europe: the trajectories of the last hunters-gatherers, their interaction with the first farmers and rice-growers, the process by which societies became more complex and the creation of the first political elites, until the full establishment of the State. Theoretically, the spectrum is wide, making Japan a partner with its own specificities, which could play a prominent part in assessing and validating the solutions to the big questions that all archaeologists pose.

The aims of a highly desirable, fruitful collaboration among archaeologists all over the world should not be limited to the domain of scientific research but in Japan should also involve policies of national heritage. For years, Japan has been marked by strong centralism; however, with policies to reduce the State prerogatives in education, research and culture (e.g. autonomy of the universities since 2004 and giving legal status to several actors of archaeological rescue plans in the 1990s) after standardization of governance in line with liberal globalisation, local and regional levels of decision have become primordial, rather than the national level. This creates a strong dependence of archaeology on the opinions of local structures, which are now essential for its support and development. It also results in strong distinctive features across the archipelago, which do not simply mirror ancient regionalism, as the “software” used is still that of
national archaeology, applied in the local and regional structures that now defend and (financially) support heritage policies.

Japan, having depended for years on a national archaeology with centralized decision-making, is now a pioneer in cultural and patrimonial reforms according to the liberal paradigm. It is thus important to draw lessons for countries such as France, where autonomy and general decentralization have been mooted for many years. Questions about the future and the social role of archaeology and national heritage are also relevant for other European countries. These questions are the basis for a twofold problem: how to protect a country’s heritage in the context of reduced financial support, without resorting to local cultural jingoism, which could however be an effective way to bypass current austerity measures.
The earliest evidence of Chinese writing goes back to the 13th century BCE, which makes it the oldest form of writing in East Asia.

Unlike the early development of writing in Egypt and Mesopotamia during the fourth millennium BCE, Chinese writing from its earliest discovery was already a fully developed system that reflected the different elements of the language. Certain specialists consider the possibility of a less developed, earlier stage, but no evidence of this has been discovered. Other scholars consider that the lack of standardization of the writing indicates that the system must have been invented at that time or slightly earlier. In any case, it is without doubt the ancestor of modern Chinese writing. Although the writing appears to be more archaic, the principles of character forming are generally the same.

It was during the last period of the Shang dynasty (1250-1050 BCE) that the first inscriptions in Chinese appeared on various objects. These objects were linked to the aristocracy, and most were used in ritual practices, such as divination and ancestral cults. Thousands of inscriptions are found on bronze ritual vases, most of which are very short (one to three characters) and give the names of ancestors and lineages. In addition, thousands of inscriptions are found on cattle bones and tortoise shells (more than 100,000 fragments) used for divination. Most of the inscriptions are short summaries of divinations, carved after completion of the mantic practice, although some were used several times and thus consisted of more than 200 characters. The writing used in this type of inscription is not very carefully done, unlike the more solemn characters that appear on more luxurious objects, such as bronzes.

More than 90% of the inscriptions from the Shang period excavated by archaeologists came from the Anyang region, where the capital of the
kingdom was established. Writing thus appears first to have been the pur-
view of small groups of people linked to the royal household. In the con-
text of proximity between the writers and the readers and the very limited
range of subjects treated in these inscriptions, the Shang population may
not have felt the need for greater standardization of their writing.

The Zhou were enemies and then allies of the Shang. When the Zhou
finally overthrew the Shang around 1050 BCE, they had already adopted
the Shang form of writing and the written language for several years. The
history of the Zhou dynasty is traditionally divided into two periods: west-
ern and eastern. The former corresponds to a time of relative unity and
stability. Although the Chinese world at that time consisted of various
states, most of the lords recognized the authority of the King of Zhou,
whose capital was established in the Xi’an region.

Most of the inscriptions from the western Zhou period are dedications
on bronze ritual vases and were longer than the Shang inscriptions, gener-
ally stating: “X made such a vase for Z”. In longer inscriptions, which
developed in aristocratic circles close to the King and which consisted of
several tens of characters (the longest nearly 500 signs), the dedication was
accompanied by references to official investitures by the king. Such texts
remained associated with ancestor worship but were also aimed at
strengthening the status of the owner of the vase in relation to other mem-
bers of the aristocracy.

During the western Zhou period, writing was no longer confined to
the circles close to the royal house. This wider diffusion of writing was due
partly to the political system put into place by the Zhou and particularly to
the large number of regional lords belonging to the Royal family. Mentions
in Zhou inscriptions also illustrate the pragmatic use of writing, while no
trace is found during the Shang dynasty. References were made to docu-
ments, probably written on scrolls of bamboo slats, concerning official
ceremonies, land exchanges and judgements. These new written practices
were particularly well developed at the Zhou court and within the Royal
house but were also adopted, on a smaller scale, by aristocrats in other
regions. The regional elites thus maintained close relationships with the
Royal household, generally accepting its political and cultural supremacy.
Therefore, standardization of Chinese writing, as seen in the evolution of
the inscriptions of those close to the Royal family, also occurred in all the
sinicized states. Although Chinese writing was used in an area extending
from the west of the current Shaanxi province to Beijing (more than 1000
km as the crow flies), there is a high degree of uniformity in the writing.
This unity must have contrasted with the linguistic diversity of the inhab-
ants of this vast territory. Nevertheless, the elites, many of were from
Zhou, must have spoken the same language and at least expressed them-
selves in one language with the same form of writing. Differences began to appear only after the end of the western Zhou.

In 771 BCE, following invasions by enemies and internal tensions, the Zhou Royal household was forced to abandon its capital and its home territory in Shaanxi province and took refuge in the secondary capital of the Kingdom, in what is now known as Luoyang in Henan province. The Zhou Royal house thus lost most of its original territory and was consequently deprived of one of its main sources of legitimacy.

During the eastern Zhou period (770-256 BCE), the most powerful states struggled bitterly to assert their power and to extend their authority over other countries. The use of writing thus became increasingly important, especially when new administrative practices were developed for efficient control of expanding territories. Handwriting evolved to meet these new needs and for taking notes rapidly. It was during this period that numerous words appeared in the written vocabulary and new characters were created to replace others that were considered too ambiguous. These changes occurred at a time when the Zhou form of writing was no longer as effective a model as it had been. The evolution of writing thus differed by country, and regional variants of Chinese writing appeared, characterized by specific written forms, vocabulary and choices of characters to denote words. This was a unique period in the history of writing. However, despite the differences, similarities dominate. It should be remembered that all writing stems from one origin: Zhou writing, inherited from the Shang dynasty.

Archaeologists have discovered much material on the usages of writing in the eastern Zhou period that had not been seen in previous periods: seals, manuscripts, coins, public inscriptions on erected stones or rocks, etc. Despite the problem of the conservation of such materials, it is clear that this sudden diversification of written evidence reflects an evolution in writing practices. Also during this period, styles of writing were developed for aesthetic reasons, the forms of which sometimes taking precedence over their intelligibility.

By 221 BCE, the King of Qin had unified all the sinicized countries and adopted the title of First Emperor. The unification of writing that was claimed did not result in the creation of a new writing system that synthesized the existing writing traditions. Qin simply imposed his own tradition on all the other territories under the authority of the Emperor. This policy resulted in the disappearance of other regional variants of Chinese writing that had developed over more than three centuries. The new standards were imposed simultaneously throughout the Empire and for a long time. This success can be explained by the fact that the Qin form of writing was closest to that of western Zhou, the common origin of all the regional variants. The extent and functioning of Qin centralized administration also contributed.
The Qin dynasty lasted only 15 years, but, even after its collapse in 207 BCE, the principle of a single form of writing was not called into question. The next dynasty, the Han, which ruled from 206 BCE to 220 CE, kept many things established by the Qin, especially regarding administration.

Chinese writing continued to spread more widely in society and to change. From the Qin period, the Han society developed a less rounded writing called “scribe writing”. The writing was wider than its height, and there was a strong contrast between thin and thick strokes. At the same time, the structure of the characters was standardized. Cursive writing was developed for note-taking or drafting, and clean copies were produced in a finer form of scribe writing.

The last phase of the evolution of Chinese writing occurred progressively between the 3rd and 6th centuries CE and finished with modern Chinese writing.

CONCLUSION

Written evidence revealed by archaeologists shows that the evolution of the form of Chinese writing was not independent of the evolution of the Chinese society but accompanied it. When writing appeared in China, it was a marginal practice involving limited groups close to the king. It then spread to the higher classes and to groups of writing professionals, who became more and more important in society as the first administrations were formed. In parallel, writing expanded to new social categories and new occupations. The evolution of Chinese writing must be understood in the dynamic context of responding to new needs and reaching a wider and wider audience of diverse backgrounds and also in light of historical events.

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For a loving policy: what the meeting between Japan and the west tells us about the couple and love

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January 2013

Love, sexuality, redefinition of marriage or its predicted dissolution, the modern-day couple is the subject of crucial public debates and demands, as well as statistics and scholarly studies to analyse its every detail. And yet accounts that trace the changes it has undergone—which appear monthly—generally follow a fairly simple pattern of explanations, the repetition of which encourages a cautious stance. Studying the issues of love and the resulting discourses in non-western societies may challenge certain over-repeated facts. Japan is a particularly interesting case, in that it can be analysed in some detail from a wealth of data (historical, demographic, sociological and literary) that enable us to go beyond the modern period and, from the outset, the well-worn issue of the modernization of traditional societies.

The western stance appears to me to have been clearly illustrated once again in a recent article published in the online version of Le Monde, in which the author expressed surprise at the strategies consciously devised by French men and women in their search for a partner on the marriage market. The author concluded by regretfully asking, “Does love have any role to play in all this? Clearly there is some doubt…”¹ For the journalist, the issue was clear and of a moral nature: marrying for love is a western advance, indicat-

ing a certain degree of social evolution and maturity in relationships between men and women, the transition to a “modern” love economy. Such spontaneous, unselfish, modern love stands in contrast to any idea of a “marriage market”. The existence of strategies, although well substantiated by sociologists, is seen as a social regression to a more barbaric state.

This view is also partly shared in countries that are undergoing “modernisation”. Here too, love is touted—ad nauseam—as something new, a sign of modernization and westernization. And while, the most elaborate versions of such affirmations may concede that love did exist “previously”, it is stressed that this is not a justification for marriage, which is founded on more serious, coercive criteria (this type of view can be confirmed, but readers may also consult more disturbing analyses in an issue of Courrier International devoted to the subject).

In Japan, there is general consensus, so we are told, on a pell-mell of various historical and sociological constructs: the traditional family is patriarchal; marriages are arranged by parents, often against the wishes of those concerned, who in most cases do not even know each other; women are oppressed, they must give up their jobs upon marrying and devote themselves to looking after their husbands, who in any case are absent, and their children. Let us be quite clear: each of these statements is false, albeit to varying degrees, and the resulting construct must be taken apart (see the bibliography). Modern forms of love, the couple and marriage began to occupy a central place in the public debate from the final third of the 19th century. Particularly in the 1870s and 1880s—the first draft of the Civil Code, presented by the Frenchman Boissonade in 1888, represented a kind of culmination, discussion focused on “free marriage” (jiyū kekkon), i.e. marriage based on personal choice, monogamy and equal rights, as well as the status of concubines (mekake), the reality of prostitution, adultery and chastity. Let us stop for a moment here. What do these subjects, touched upon by the media of the period and briefly listed here, tell us? The defenders of love were fighting not so much against a “traditional” model but rather against a model being introduced by those in power. Their struggle was not one of modernists against conservatives, but rather of moralists against certain aspects of the modernity that was taking shape. Having arrived later, we perceived what was introduced a century ago to be an ancient form, forgetting that, on the contrary, it was a direct result of modernity and that it was formed at the expense of other models that have

continued to coexist and whose re-emergence does not necessarily reflect an increased, or declining, modernization.

This is confirmed by another, analogous debate on the family model. The modernization of Japan was long considered to have been achieved by the arrival of the nuclear family (kaku kazoku), which supposedly replaced – with varying success and only recently – the traditional multi-generational family (stem family or ie). Emmanuel Todd’s recent work on family systems recounts, with the author’s customary brilliance, the origins of this discourse and its lack of validity. The studies on historical demography conducted in Japan itself (by Hayami Akira, and presented in France by Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux and Emiko Ochiai) attest to the extremely commonplace nature of the nuclear family, including in pre-modern Japan. It is widely accepted today that the stem family, seen as traditional at the end of the Second World War, was largely a modern invention, developed by late 19th-century Japanese jurists on the basis of values that combined both the principles of a tiny section of society that had recently come to power (the samurais) and a very Victorian Anglo-Saxon moralism.

Thus, love did indeed exist in Japan before the modern era. Just as there were couples who loved one another and even individuals who decided to live together out of passion, whatever opposition they faced. Literature and poetry testify to this, as does ethnology. In saying this, it is not my intention to argue that modern western love is universal. Each local view of love has its specificities, which have not been studied carefully, research focusing instead on a simplistic opposition of “arranged marriages” (omiai kekkon) and “love marriages” (ren’ai kekkon). While contrasting “arranged marriages” with “love marriages” in this way might appear to be substantiated by statistics, it must be understood that this contrast is not one of practices but rather one of acceptable discourses: there are societies in which only the feelings of the two parties can lead to the formation of a couple (this is one of the essential conditions introduced by the Catholic Church in the 12th century in order for a marriage to be considered valid); in other societies, this mutual feeling must be endorsed, by the family, a religious institution, the law or ancestors, for example. There are societies in which couples must prove their love for one another, where it is considered immoral for a decision to be motivated by anything other than love, even a matrimonial decision; in yet other societies, personal affinities lead to the mobilization of channels involving third-party intervention (the study of which, however—while fascinating for structuralists—could make one forget the existence of love). The broad contrast established between the west and the rest of the world is undermined by more subtle considerations, in which experiences seemingly mirror each other beyond borders.
and political divides. To the French blogger at *Le Monde*, the Indian journalist Lakshmi Chaudhry replied: ³

“Conventional wisdom today holds that the sole difference between a love marriage and an arranged marriage is the method of selection. Yet, however you come to choose your spouse, the trials and tribulations of matrimony remain the same. The emotional disconnect and lack of communication are still there. Young people have thus lost their willingness to believe in love. Their search for happiness is guided by a business-like pragmatism.”

To which the Chinese writer Xin Zhoukan⁴ add:

“With the ever-widening gap between rich and poor and the sudden transformation of social strata, marriage, just like work, has become a way to increase one’s resources. Chinese women currently earn just 75% of that of their male counterparts. Women, who are not treated as equals on the professional market, hope through marriage to achieve a new distribution of wealth.”

Could making love the foundation of the married couple be the result of a certain economic equality, then, rather than a geographic equality? Might the increasingly precarious nature of today’s societies lead to the disappearance of love as a motivation for marriage, as suggested by the Japanese sociologist Yamada Masahiro in his most recent studies? Arguing passionately for the egalitarian couple united by mutual love, the Meiji-era educator Iwamoto Yoshiharu warned that:

“There are absolutely no equals on earth. We fear our parents; our older brothers and sisters are our superiors; our younger brothers and sisters are smaller than us; we serve our lord; our vassals serve us. True friends are equal, and this equality gives rise for the first time to a feeling of love that is not mingled with fear. That is why we want to be equal to our friends. [But this very desire proves that] there are truly no equals on this earth. In these circumstances, there are only married couples: husbands and wives are the only equals on earth and in heaven, marriage is the only place where it is possible to taste, for the first time, the true friendship [*makoto no yūjo*] that is befitting between equals. (…) The only place where real communism is practised is the couple, only

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3. “Tradition • Avoir le choix, mais pour quoi faire ?” [Tradition • Having a choice, but to do what?], *Courrier international*, op. cit.
4. “Chine • Les jeunes femmes ne sont pas à la noce” [China • It’s no picnic for young women], ibid.)
husbands and wives truly share profit, only husbands and wives, and they alone, share profits and losses equally.”

Beyond what some might consider a naive fervour, Iwamoto showed just how comparisons between indigenous definitions of love and the romantic ideal seemingly proposed by the western world (in his case a Protestant Anglo-Saxon love from the late 19th century) can encourage a truly loving policy.
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The Northern Mountains, another aspect of Vietnamese history

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SEPTEMBER 2013

The Northern Mountains lean against the Laotian and Chinese borders and surround the Red River delta. This strategic underpopulated area, which was difficult to access for a long time, is characterized by wide ethnic diversity and was for a long time overlooked by national economic development. It is now undergoing unprecedented economic growth and raising growing interest. The systematic utilisation of its hydroelectric potential is visible everywhere, as can be seen by the many reddish scars that spoil the landscape. In order to reduce its dependence on Chinese importations, over the past 10 years Viet Nam has set about building hundreds of small and large dams to attain energy autonomy at a time when its needs are growing by 20% per year. At the same time, a fast growing tourist industry shows another Viet Nam, with indented peaks criss-crossed with terraced rice fields, which are a pleasant alternative to the flatness of the delta area rice fields. The economic integration of the mountainous areas and the arrival of migrants from the overpopulated plains is a prelude to the slow assimilation of the native populations.

There is, however, widespread ignorance about the history and culture of these faraway provinces. The ancient dynasties considered the border districts as a large area covered with forests and mountain peaks, where only the populations with strange customs could drink the poisoned water. These provinces did appear on maps, but they were not directly administered, as their economic interest appeared to be so minimal. Nourished by a long imperial tradition, the documentation of past events was confined to the capital’s scribes, who considered these distant regions as an appendix to the national political history led mainly by the Kinh (or Viet) majority established in the plain.
It was not before the 19th century that the first detailed descriptions of these regions appeared. Vietnamese mandarins, then French officers wrote regional monographs describing the habits and customs of peoples who constituted a complex linguistic archipelago. The ethnic groups are spread over a vast territory in a perfect ethnic stratigraphy, by which the latest arrivals settled on empty lands on the high slopes. Some have been established for a very long time (Lo Lo, Tay, Tai, Glay, Khmu), while others are the result of more recent migratory waves (Yao, Hmong). Many of these groups did not have a writing system, and the vernacular documentation of the others, the Tai and the Yao in particular, is limited and poorly identified.

At first, researchers looking for primary sources, manuscripts and inscriptions or even physical traces that the past leaves may feel at a loss, as they cannot count on monuments, places of worship or ancient buildings, of which there are very few. Going through archives, provincial libraries and excavations, they thus organize a highly diversified corpus. As the written record of ancient periods is rare, any alternative source is welcome.

The enigmatic petroglyphs of Sapa in Lào-Cai province, which have been known since 1925, are original models of stone cartography. As they had no writing, the engravers nevertheless left us a subtle description of their world. The network of terraced rice fields engraved in the rock, the interlacing of the hydraulic network and the representation of villages allow their morphology to be studied and provide information on the evolution of human implantation in the high valleys. The petroglyphs have now been catalogued and can thus be interpreted to give a new perspective on the way of life of the peoples that succeeded each other on the same territory.

In the surrounding valleys, the ancient manuscripts kept in the Yao households seem to have no heirs, because although there are many Yao speakers, the ancient writing was abandoned in favour of the assimilating Vietnamese school. These texts, written in Chinese characters but read in the Yao language, are diverse – the Taoist canon, works on traditional medicine, epic poems, songs etc. - and risked being sold to tourists. A provincial inventory identified 14,000 texts, and 1,000 were digitalized. At the same time, schools to teach characters were established for literate people in villages, to familiarize the young generation with these texts and to strengthen community awareness. The huge work of gathering these sources and protecting this heritage protection is only beginning, but it is encouraging. For these two projects, a partnership between EFEO and the Lào-Cai local authorities was combined with donors in order to complete the collection and cataloguing of the manuscripts within a few years.

The huge archive of documents kept in France and in Viet Nam, dating back to colonial times and also after independence, allows a detailed approach to the disruptions that occurred in the mountainous areas. A study
on the evolution of the different forms of power in the Black River basin (Sông Dà), an area as large as Belgium at the Laotian and Chinese frontiers, indicates progressive national integration between 1885 and 1975.

Formerly scattered with tributary principalities under the rule of hereditary chiefs, the region became a military territory after the French conquest. The local leaders compromised with the few French government officers who controlled the province at the time. They set about restraining the rights given by customary law to the large clans. At the beginning of the Indochina War when the Vietminh began to entrench themselves in the interior, the region again fell into the hands of the Lai-Châu Đèo clan, then, in 1948, the region was established as a Tai confederation, dependent on the Vietnamese crown and thus a French ally.

It was in Dien-Biên-Phu valley that the French set up their entrenched camp in December 1953 and where French colonial history in Indochina ended. Their defeat accelerated the end of the war and locally led to the decline of a clan but also to the predominance of the ethnic group. The region became an autonomous zone in 1955, and after 1975 became of the common administration. Its autonomy was thus finished. Nowadays, the old village of Lai-Châu lies underwater in the Son-La dam. Diên-Biên-Phu, the eponymous administrative centre of the province, is a flourishing Vietnamese town set in Tai territory, as seen in its brick buildings that have replaced the traditional houses on stilts. This example is a perfect illustration of the process by which regional particularities are reduced.

Apart from political and military history, the archives also give insight into the everyday life of the populations, to distinguish them from each other and to determine the state of interethnic relations, which are sometimes contentious. One discovers a high region, situated weeks away by pirogue, the sites of penal colonies, with endemic malaria, iodine deficiency and illiteracy. Its fragile economy relies in the long term on the salt trade, transit of Chinese tea and the opium traffic. Historians are now mapping market networks and quantifying the exchange channels. This will make it possible to determine the nature and the extent of cross-border ties in a geographical area that was profoundly disrupted by the creation of stretched frontiers more than a century ago, which is very recent.
Asia has become the laboratory of various forms of capitalism and a challenge for the social sciences

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OCTOBER 2013

ASIA IS NOT LATIN AMERICA: CONTRASTING PATH OF DEVELOPMENT

Conventional economic theories had long suggested that the club of industrialised countries had closed after the Second World War because of the advantages that the most advanced countries had enjoyed in terms of innovation, increasing returns to scale, control of networks and rules of the international system. The recurrent difficulties and the inability of Latin American countries to build a strong industrial base and promote a steady growth were arguments in favour of this hypothesis. As a consequence, a complementarity/opposition was established between the centre and periphery: developed countries exchanged industrial goods in exchange for the supply of natural resources by the periphery.

Japan’s breakthrough in the 1960s received much attention despite the country being industrialised for a long time; it was surprising how quickly Japanese companies could catch up with modernity and how the economy had experienced a double-digit growth rate, as was the case for China from the 1990s onwards. These two countries were not exceptions, as most other Asian countries also saw the success of their industrialisation strategy, which was developed to generate a wide range of literature on the emergence of the Asian tigers, even before the concept of “emerging” countries had been coined in the 2000s.
Asia was therefore a remarkable challenge for theories of growth, more so in developed countries than those underdevelopment that were built to reflect their specificity compared to old industrial economies. It was also an invitation for multidisciplinary research to understand how social ties to Asian countries were shaping their types of capitalism, growth patterns and their integration into the economy.

“JAPAN NUMBER ONE”,
A CHALLENGE TO AMERICAN CAPITALISM AND ITS THEORISTS

The American concept defines a company as being an entity that is wholly dedicated to maximising profit, for the benefit of its shareholders, whereas a large Japanese company is an anomaly, and to a certain extent, is that which represents an irrationality that: seeks professional stability for multi-skilled employees who contribute to the company’s performance, lacks authority of shareholders who are paid a lump sum, and highlights the importance of financing compared to financial markers, constituting to the many elements that would have jeopardised the success of large Japanese groups.

The findings of Masahiko Aoki, a Japanese researcher and professor at a renowned American university, illustrated that both the American company “A” and the Japanese company “J” were two viable configurations of a capitalist company, but that they were based on two different compromises between shareholders, managers and employees, and that the network of circulating information and hierarchy in decision making varied accordingly. Other Japanese researchers had already shown how this originality explained that growth and market share were the preferred targets of companies and not simply the pursuit of profit. This aspect affected the growth regime of Japan.

Similarly, Japanese colleagues have been consulting studies into the theory of regulation on the United States and France in order to clarify the specificities of their country. There is a sharp contrast between the typical American Fordism salary and that of major Japanese companies. In the case of the former, the growth in remuneration is codified and institutionalised in exchange for flexibility. In the case of the latter, it is the permanent “company-ist” relationship that is turning all the other components of the working contract into variables of adjustment. Moreover, the organisation of work is different in both cases, as illustrated in the comparison of automobile factories in Japan and the United States. Hence the name Toyotist salary, which is given to this original configuration, and by extension, to the corresponding growth regime.
In some of these problems, the concept of hybridisation is highlighted. After the Second World War, attempts to import American methods of mass production into Japan were confronted by a series of obstacles related to the nature of professional relationships to the degree of industrial concentration, the small size of the market, and the consequences of wartime destruction. Furthermore, it was important to take into account of the values and culture that prevailed in society at that time. Was it not remarkable that the Japanese mathematic economist, Michio Morishima, developed the hypothesis that Confucianism was the equivalent of Protestantism to explain the rise of Asian capitalism? Literature continually defined Americanisation as being a slow and fumbling process of adaptation, more than an imitation, hybridisation and innovation, creating a new form of capitalism. Such a process will be reiterated mutatis mutandis in the majority of countries in South-East Asia, giving rise to various new socio-economic trajectories in Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore.

**BOOM, CRISIS, STAGNATION:**
**CRISES ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF CAPITALISM**

The diffusion of methods of production and forms of organisation towards new areas proved to be a transformation factor of socio-economic regimes. However, this process hybridisation was not the only mechanism at work. Many historical studies conducted during a long period of time, using the theory of regulation as a starting point, have testified the slow transformation of technical systems, organisations and institutions, which can lead to a sharp reversal in economic conditions. The concept of endo-metabolism, created for this purpose, can describe the reasons for which the Japanese economy had become the reference for economists and management experts in the 1980s, experiencing a speculative surge and arousing great optimism for the future, and then taking sharp turn downwards, leading to a long process of reducing property prices and the stock market, without affecting the growth rate.

Hardly recognised as a model to imitate, Japan was in crisis, under pressure from the same factors that led it to its emergence and success. The intensification of its own work in relation to the Toyotist wage encountered both social and economic limits; the remarkable productive efficiency was generating a surplus in the trade balance that was leading to pressure being applied by North America to liberalise the Japanese economy and opening it to international financial flows. These two transformations resulted in the Central Bank and the Ministry of Finance progressively loosing control of
the economic situation at that time, as the steering of the economy by the government was loosing its effectiveness. The Japanese authorities were taken by surprise by the speculative boom of the 1980s, which had turned around abruptly and marked the beginning of a new phase of the Japanese economy: the previous mode of company-ist regulation prevented a cumulative depression, but did not allow the economy to return to the trends of the 1970s and 1980s, while no clear strategy of the government and the administration was allowing for the emergence of new growth regime. This was a major crisis or structural crisis in terms of the theory of regulation. In this respect Japan was the industrialised country that anticipated the crises that would follow and whose common origin was the open conflict between trade and financial globalisation and the persistence of domestic institutionalised compromises, forged long ago in history.

In 1997, most Asian countries experienced similar crises, although they did not have the same consequences. This episode brought about two lessons. Firstly, we must beware of the naive admiration of models that were supposed to guarantee a limitless growth. Secondly, beyond the sophistication of the economy’s monetary and fiscal management tools, great crises can occur, and this was all the more probable because the illusion of a flawless model had been maintained. Unfortunately, these lessons from the history of Asia have not been taken seriously, neither by officials of the European Union nor by the authorities of North America.

**Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan:**
**Where other forms of Asian capitalism are still present**

A taxonomy of capitalism based on its geographical origin and the opposition of Asia and Latin America are often found in economic studies. Or still, specialists of capital varieties tend to classify all European countries as belonging to the same model characterised by they way in which institutions oversee coordination, in contrast to the Anglo-Saxon capitalism, where the market is the key actor, if not the exclusive one.

The theory of regulation emphasises that forms of capitalism should be dependant in relation to certain founding compromises that had been updated and amended over time, but which retain the same tone in terms of the mode of regulation and growth regime. The industrialisation of Korea thus occurred later than that of Japan; the *chaebol* were not an exact replica of the *keiretsu* as the country’s impulse through an ambitious industrial policy was much more greater in Korea, while in Japan, the public authorities were playing the role of the mediator and catalyst for major industrial
projects. Furthermore, in Korea, the struggles of the labour movement, such as that of 1985, played a key role in the creation of an original form of capitalism. Similarly, the success of Taiwan owes itself to certain institutions that were left by the Japanese colonisation long ago, but the preponderance of small and medium businesses and their production links with mainland China is turning this country into another form of capitalism, with specific characteristics.

As a consequence, it would be wrong to speak of a model of Asian capitalism, as we would not know how to further the idea of European capitalism, since the euro crisis has been showing opposition between northern Europe and southern Europe. Not only is socio-political history largely specific to each national entity, but it is also an international cross-sectional analysis of institutional, organisational and technical characteristics of contemporary capitalism, showing Asia’s take-off as increasing the diversity of capitalism, for Asian countries are spread out according to contrasting, and at times, extreme configurations. The first group consists of city capitalism, Hong Kong and Singapore, while Indonesia and the Philippines are forms of semi-agrarian capitalism. Malaysia, Thailand and, to some extent, China share a common property: industrialisation thanks to the development of foreign trade, while South Korea, Taiwan and Japan define capitalism driven by innovation and export. Closest to other forms of industrialised capitalism, these three countries differ from it in terms of the long-term trajectory and contemporary political alliances.

These various forms of Asian capitalism are becoming increasingly interdependent due to the division of labour being intensified within Asia. China is at the centre of this impulse and the public authorities are engaging in a process of technological catch-up at an unprecedented speed, but which is causing many tensions within Asia and the United States of America.

A PROMISING RESEARCH AGENDA FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES

The interest in Asia is not purely geographical, but it should also be the starting point for an ambitious interdisciplinary research programme and a melting pot, combining political economy, social and political history, cultural studies, management specialists and many other disciplines. This is one of the research strategies used to understand the rapidly changing modern world, characterised by the growing interdependence of contrasted socio-economic systems.
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