Japan, China, and the construction of history

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Published in:  
IIAS Newsletter

Citation for published version (APA):  

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discrepancy between the interests of the firms, which engaged in cross-border trading, and those perceived by the local society. An emerging consensus was evidenced by the papers as an issue to be developed in future history writing. One means of overcoming the resulting tensions was discussed by Kuo Hua-Ying (University of Amsterdam), namely the building of cross-border business networks through the cultivation of hometown ties, such as the case with Myanmar business tycoon Aye Boon Hwee’s Hakka network, and the Hokkien network of An’s competitor in Singapore, Tan Ka Kei.

Similarly, the papers by Leo Douw (University of Amsterdam and VU University Amsterdam) and Chen Hong-Ling (Academia Sinica, Taipei) discussed the social position of the Taiwanese who migrated to China and Southeast Asia during the Japanese colonial period (1895-1945). The predicament of these “registered aliens,” partly caused by the claims laid on them both by the Chinese and the Japanese governments during that period of being Taiwanese, but registered as Japanese nationals, were subject to Japanese rules and restrictions, but they also profited from that status, especially when they worked and resided in China and South East Asia. The resulting jealousies and accusations of non-patriotic and even criminal behavior, which were largely justified, were forgotten during the Cold War period, but were again remembered during the late 1980s, when in Taiwan the indigenization movement emerged and the issue of multiple nationalities and identities was posed once more. Lin maintained no understanding of this rift “mainlander and native Taiwanese” in Taiwanese society is possible without remembering that many Taiwanese during the colonial period cooperated with the Japanese against China’s interests. Forging and reinterpreting major motifs in the histories of indigenization were also noted in the forgetfulness by Chinese nationalism in Denike’s paper, these were also present in the visualization that the “East Asia” was controlled since the sixteenth century at the latest. Therefore, the present-day reluctant cooperation between both countries is part of a long-lasting pattern. This pattern in its turn may be a starting point for historical analysis than the “balance of power” approach, which has recently emerged in the public debate, and threats to sharpen the apparent Sino-Japanese antagonism rather than soften it.

Several of the papers in the workshop will be published in the newly released academic journal Transdisciplined Chinese East Asian Perspectives (TCEA), n. 10.1 (spring 2016), published by Brill Academic Publishers. The journal is meant to provide a platform for academic discussion on issues and concerns of which those treated in the workshop are an important part. For further information on the journal’s institutional embedding and editorial policy, please see: www.brill.com/tcea (see also the announcement on page 53).

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References
1 The workshop was held at the occasion of the author’s retirement and was kindly sponsored by the Program Group Moving Matters at the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research, University of Amsterdam, the International Institute for Asian Studies in Leiden, and the Faculty of Arts at the VU University Amsterdam.
2 For a publication of Dirklik’s paper, see http://tinyurl.com/ boundaryDirlik
3 The workshop of course was much richer in content than could ever be done justice in a summary article, and all misrepresentations are the author’s responsibility. Valuable contributions, aside from those by the paper presenters, were provided by the discussants and the paper authors. Similar sentiments were shared by the paper authors and session chairpersons. For shortsakes sake only their names follow here, in alphabetical order: Xiaolu Bader (University of Amsterdam), Otto Holman (University of Amsterdam), Gerd Janse (University of Amsterdam), Susan Legén (VU University Amsterdam), Chris Lorenzo (VU University Amsterdam), Pál Nyiri (VU University Amsterdam), Peter Post (Netherlands Institute for War Documentation), Willem van Schendel (University of Amsterdam), Sikko Visscher (University of Amsterdam, Institute for Social Sciences), and Harriet Zurndorfer (Leiden University).