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In this issue and the next we will feature keynote addresses and selected papers from the ASIANetwork Conference 1999.

Keynote Address: *Issues of Ethnicity and Identity in the Study of Asia* Leonard Y. Andaya, University of Hawaii

Study Abroad and Legal Issues Stephen P. Nussbaum, Earlham College

Teaching Asia in World History Panel: Megan Greene, Gettysburg College; Richard Horowitz, California State University, Northridge; Daniel Meissner, Carthage College; Heidi Roupp, President, World History Association

Transitions and Transformation: Asian Literature Across Time and Space Richard J. Smith, Rice University

Keynote Address: *Issues of Ethnicity and Identity in the Study of Asia* **Leonard Y. Andaya** **University of Hawaii**

INTRODUCTION

Recent events of "ethnic cleansing" in the former Yugoslavia, and the ethnic violence which has racked Indonesia in the last few months have raised the specter of ethnicity as a destructive phenomenon. In the public mind ethnicity carries the connotations of persistence of cultural difference and of minority groups demanding recognition as equal citizens within a nation-state or the creation of an independent entity within the system of nation-states. The perceived dangers of ethnicity and the tragic consequences of such perceptions can be traced primarily to the rise of the nation-state or the colonial state. Communities have existed without the state, but they only become ethnicized as a minority when in contact with a dominant center. The word ethnicity itself derives from the Greek, *ethnos*, which was used to refer to a group mainly in northwest Greece whose "primitive" social organization was contrasted with the more cultured and developed *polis*, or city state.

Any group assuming a majoritarian status in society by controlling access to power and resources of the state relegates others to ethnic minority status. Groups in the uplands of northern Luzon in the Philippines maintained cordial and equal relations with their lowland neighbors until the arrival of the Spaniards in the sixteenth century. The Christianization of the lowlands created a Hispanicized Filipino majority, which was defined in opposition to the now minority status of the uplanders. To preserve majority status, institutions of the state were mobilized, particularly official histories, to create and disseminate myths of common origins, ancestors, and traditions. Thus was born the idea of a "pure" homogeneous majority threatened by the "mongrel"

ethnic minority Other. Nation-states may create a belief in homogeneity through a reconstruction of origin myths or through the ideology of the melting-pot syndrome.

Individuals, however, are not locked permanently in any particular ethnicity. Under certain conditions there is an element of choice, particularly in areas where people are physically similar, are normally polyglot, and operate in a multiethnic environment. In discussing this vast topic of ethnicity and identity in Asia, I would like to focus on one particular dimension: the dialogue between the individual and the state which occurs within the framework of the creation of majority and ethnic minority status. I hope to illustrate the dynamics of such a dialogue in my own personal ethnic journey and the case of majority-making in Malaysia. I will then conclude by drawing some implications of the themes in this talk for new directions in teaching and researching ethnicity in Asia and elsewhere.

INDIVIDUAL CHOICE AND THE STATE: A PERSONAL COMMENT

I was born in Hawaii of immigrant parents from the Philippines. There was no wrestling with ideas of "primordial sentiments": I was a Filipino by descent because I was not a Japanese or Okinawan or Portuguese like my neighbors. This was obvious by my skin color, the food I ate at home, my name, and the way I was labeled in school, in documents, in any activity where difference was measured. There was nevertheless some ability to escape the stigmatism of belonging to this lower status ethnic minority in Hawaii. Lighter-skinned Filipinos could claim to be Chinese, thus

lifting their status a few notches, but for those of us whose families came from the provinces, our dark skin restricted ethnic mobility. Nevertheless, as children of immigrants born in Hawaii we had another choice of ethnicity denied our parents. We could claim to be Hawaiian, or children from the territory and later state of Hawaii. In schools and in the media we were encouraged to think of our uniqueness, of our being multicolored people like the hues of a rainbow. Our source of pride was the close mingling of the groups, the picture of racial harmony at a time in the 1950s when black-white relations on the mainland U.S. were a source of grave concern.

I left Hawaii in 1960 to attend university on the East Coast and then began an academic career which took me to the Netherlands, Malaysia, Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand. When I returned to Hawaii in 1993, I was overwhelmed by the changes which had occurred since I left. Awareness of ethnicity/race was still very much alive, but the categories had changed. Intermarriage between races had become widespread (some 55-60% of school children are said to be of mixed marriages), and now the largest single group was the whites or haoles, who comprised between 25-30% of the population. This was in stark contrast to my youth, where in my high school graduation class of about 175, there were three haoles: the daughter of the principal of my high school, the daughter of an English teacher in the high school, and the son of the Congregational minister.

In the present Hawaii not only has the menu of ethnicities and identities changed, but the choice is far more politicized than in the past. I have not simply accepted an attributed ethnicity; I decided in 1993 to stress my Filipino ethnicity as a conscious political act. It identified me with a "minority" group fighting for greater access to educational and economic resources in the state and in the nation. My older association with the identity of "Hawaiian" was now out of reach because it had reverted to the ethnic Hawaiians, who sought recognition as the indigenous people of the islands. The old Hawaiian panethnic identity of the 1950s was now termed "Local," to emphasize one's roots in Hawaii in contrast to newcomers, whether mainland haoles or the many new immigrants from Asia and the Pacific. While the state's tourism policy aggressively markets Hawaii's sunshine, blue skies, aqua-green waters, and ethnic/racial harmony for economic reasons, the reality is less sanguine. A recent study by Jonathan Okamura at the University of Hawaii exposes such stereotypes to reveal the tensions which are now fairly evident in Hawaii, particularly with the rise of the Hawaiian sovereignty issue.

For me, then, ethnicity is a political choice. I choose to be associated with Filipino Americans, but I am also proud to be "Local." In the last election in Hawaii, Governor Ben Cayetano opted to emphasize his Local rather than his Filipino-American roots, which made sense in the context of Hawaii's multiethnic politics. I identify culturally with the Local identity because I believe in preserving Hawaii's unique local Creole language ("Pidgin English") and its tolerant attitude toward life ("the aloha way"). But politically

and emotionally I claim a Filipino-American identity in order to work toward a multicultural America with no majority status, where ethnicity is not a minority appellation but a descriptive label for all groups, including the many different Euroamericans.

This personal vignette highlights the manner in which an individual can negotiate his/her various identities in response to the state in specific local contexts and in different time periods. Yet these decisions are not without problems, and the ethnic conflicts which continue to plague this planet force us to try to understand how and why ethnicity persists and why it arouses such fierce and fearsome loyalty.

THE STUDY OF ETHNICITY AND IDENTITY

Although the formal study of ethnicity began some time in the late nineteenth century, the subject grew in popularity in the middle of this century particularly among sociologists and anthropologists. Early scholarship attempted to identify certain "primordial sentiments" which defined a group, while later studies rejected this approach and argued that ethnic identities were flexible and tended to shift in response to differing situations and circumstances. Frederik Barth's often-referred-to statement that the focus of research should be the boundaries which delimit the group and not the cultural stuff it encloses, highlights the importance of the interrelationships of groups in the determination of ethnicity and identity.

Postmodern and postcolonial critiques have forced us to re-examine our inherited assumptions regarding ethnicity, and to recognize the role of a dominant group in controlling the institutions of power and imposing definitions of the center and the ethnic margins. To create a majority group in the center, it is necessary to establish boundaries in the Barthian sense and then institutionalize them to exclude others. These boundaries are based on mythology and constructed histories which provide the legendary common ancestor, the original homeland, and the earliest laws and customs of the group.

In this construction the idea of a pure and homogeneous race is essential because it erects the boundary with the ethnic, mongrel Other. In contemporary Japan, for example, state recognition of the Ainu, the Burakumin, Koreans and other "non-Japanese" groups was necessary to highlight the purity of the Yamato *minzoku*, the pure Japanese race. The fundamental identification of the "pure" Japanese race was with an agrarian lifestyle; hence the Ainu and the Burakumin were excluded as groups engaging in a non-agrarian and therefore a non-Japanese way of life. In China the idea of a category of Han Chinese comprising 94% of China's population is of recent origin created by nationalists. But the reality is of numerous ethnic and linguistic groups in China who are unaware of their assigned Han identity. In Indonesia the imposition of cultural attributes of the dominant Javanese ethnicity onto constructions of national Indonesian identity has been amply documented. Creation of the center formalized the dominance of one group which is then "de-ethnicized" to become a national identity, forcing all others

to the margins as "ethnic minorities." Let me provide a fuller illustration of this process of boundary making between majority and minority groups by looking at Malaysia.

THE MAKING OF A MAJORITY: THE CASE OF THE MALAYS

In present-day Malaysia the Melayu, or the Malays, are legally acknowledged as the indigenous people of the land, and they are guaranteed special rights and privileges in the Malaysian constitution. All other ethnic groups, particularly the Chinese, are relegated to minority status. The government's encouragement of large families among the Malays has finally resulted in the Malays being also numerically the majority ethnic group. The story of the creating of Malay majority status is an intriguing historical tale which reveals much of the role of the state in the determination of majority and minority identifications.

Historical linguists have identified a "homeland" of Malayic speakers somewhere in the headwaters of three parallel rivers in southwest Kalimantan or Indonesian Borneo. It is believed that sometime between c. 500 and 200 BCE there was a migration of some of the Malays from Borneo to southeast Sumatra in Indonesia. The association of the Malays with the Malay Peninsula is a relatively recent development. Malay traditions, confirmed by Chinese and later Portuguese sources, record a movement of a group of Malays from southeast Sumatra to the Peninsula sometime just prior to the foundation of Melaka in the early years of the fifteenth century. The term "Malay" was reserved for this small migrant group which came to govern the pre-existing communities of fisherfolk and other indigenous inhabitants of the land.

With the spectacular economic success of Melaka, its rulers deliberately encouraged the association of Malayness with the kingdom of Melaka, hence making Melaka the ultimate measure of all things Malay. When the British established a colonial state in Malaya in the nineteenth century, they acknowledged the Malays as the primary inhabitants of the Peninsula. The large numbers of Chinese and Indians imported to labor in the tin mines or the rubber estates were regarded as temporary, and the British assumed the official stance of being simply "advisors" to the "indigenous" Malay rulers. Histories written by British colonial scholar-officials encouraged the belief that the Malays were indigenous to the Peninsula and therefore lords of the land.

Independence in 1957 brought a new set of problems for the Malays because they inherited a land from the British in which they no longer formed the numerical majority. Yet the belief that they were indigenous remained, and the primacy of the Malays was retained in the new British-formulated Federation Plan which created the new nation. The formation in 1963 of a new entity, Malaysia, was carefully crafted to help maintain the numerical balance between Malays and Chinese. It was done through combining the indigenous groups in Sabah and Sarawak in Borneo with the Malays to create a new identity known as Bumiputera,

or "sons of the soil." Then with the expelling of Singapore from Malaysia in 1965 a substantial Chinese population was excised from the land to create a Bumiputera numerical dominance. With the rapid population growth among the Malays and restrictive immigration policies, Bumiputera numeric superiority in Malaysia is assured.

The ethnic riots which erupted in Malaysia's capital of Kuala Lumpur in 1969 revealed the fragility of the ethnic arrangements in Malaysia. Though the Malays continued to control the police and the armed forces, they still harbored a fear of the minority Chinese because of their economic dominance. The social and economic restructuring of the society which followed under the New Economic Policy proclaimed in 1971 increased the percentage of Malay ownership in the economic sector, but it has not removed the distrust of the Chinese. There is therefore a schizophrenic official governmental policy which continues to safeguard Malay privileges, yet demands assimilation of all groups into an ethnically undifferentiated "Malaysian." What constitutes a Malaysian has been determined by the Malay majority, in which the Malay language has become officially the "National Language" (Bahasa Kebangsaan), and Malay culture has become the foundation for the creation of a Malaysian culture. At work is the process of the de-ethnicization of the Malays to become the national identity.

As the case of Malaysia demonstrates, numerical and economic dominance alone does not assure a majoritarian position in society. Achieving this status requires ongoing state manipulation of central institutions, including the police and the armed forces. While ethnicity remains a mode of social and political differentiation in Malaysia, the crucial issue adumbrating ethnic relations is the preservation of the majority-minority dichotomy.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STUDY OF ETHNICITY IN ASIA

Postmodernist and postcolonial critiques argue for a rejection of the center-margin or majority-minority paradigm in the study of ethnicity. If all groups in society were accorded an ethnic status free from a majority-minority division, multiculturalism would not be viewed as a threat to the majoritarian concept of the state but as a sign of the health of the entity. For every case of ethnic conflict and violence in society, one can counter with an example of a positive interethnic relationship. Moreover, the removal of the majority-minority dichotomy with its center-margin corollary greatly expands interpretative possibilities in the study of ethnicities.

Let me draw examples from my own discipline of history. It would be interesting to conceptualize the writing of the history of China and Japan without the hegemonic centrist framework. The rise and fall of dynasties or governments at the center may have a counter-cyclical effect in the margins. It may even be argued that the margins prosper because of the freedom to act outside central restrictions or because of the necessity to innovate. Even in India or Indonesia, where the multiplicity of ethnicities has been an

ever-present reality, history-writing has been structured by latter day conceptions of centers represented by the nation-state. If history were traced not from the center outward, but from the margins inward, a far more dynamic picture may emerge. By problematizing a group's attempts to achieve a majoritarian position through the appropriation of national symbols, an alternative history may be able to detect local and regional strategies of survival and the intricacies of negotiating identities. The group in control of the state apparatus is only one part, albeit an important part, of the multilateral relationships established by each ethnicity. In this useful enterprise, one would reject the centrist attempt to trivialize "local" history by citing its parochial interest and value. Instead, one would attempt to restructure history as complex networks of localized relationships between ethnic groups, including that at the center.

These decentered histories could also employ local ethnic concepts, such as ideas of space. In premodern Thailand before the adoption of international mapping conventions, boundaries were determined by religious, magical, strategic, economic or demographic factors, but rarely by territorial considerations. These differing ways of understanding space offer a novel opportunity to examine the role of ethnic groups in each of these separate spheres, thus providing a depth of perspective rarely attained in centrist histories. To illustrate this point, let me just take one example of how a local conception of religious space can provide a new way of thinking about religion.

Studies often emphasize the role of centralized states in the spread of world religions, with some even demonstrating the seamless expansion of religious and secular power. A decentered view of world religions, on the other hand, would focus on the localization of such religions by ethnic groups. A recent study by Matthew Amster describes how the Kelabit, Lun Bawang, and Lundayeh peoples inhabiting areas on both sides of the Malaysian and Indonesian border in interior Borneo have created a new religious space located at Mt. Murud, the highest peak in Sarawak. What began as an evangelical Pentecostal Christian faith in the mid-1930s underwent two separate localizations in which the Holy Spirit and the sacred Mt. Murud were accorded major roles in keeping with local beliefs in spirits and high places. Thus was created a panethnic religious movement which reinforced a long history of interethnic relations in the interior away from centrist attitudes on the coast.

Trade ties are another common form of boundary-making at the margins which ignores arbitrary nation-state borders established by international law. The contiguous land areas between southern China and the northern areas of mainland Southeast Asia form a logical unit based on trade relations among "transnational" ethnic groups. In another area economic ties between ethnic groups sharing a common sea between the southern Philippines, northern Sabah in Malaysia, and northern Sulawesi in Indonesia have persisted despite the creation of nation-state borders. This region has now been officially recognized as one of the newest ASEAN

(Association for Southeast Asian Nations) growth triangles, reaffirming an older tradition of free movements of groups in the area.

Nation-state borders are also meaningless with regard to individuals who "feel" that they belong to a specific ethnic identity. The idea of "feeling" Filipino or Vietnamese, for example, refers to those who have been labeled ethnics in their adopted lands and no longer share many of the common features associated with the homeland. This is the situation of recent migrants and their descendants even into the fourth or fifth generations. Conceptualizing the story of the nation from the margins would provide a far more complex rendering of national history than is currently found in history books. It would depict the struggles of ethnic groups in constructing their sense of identity through dialogues with their homeland and their adopted land. It would also reveal the layers of identities which are required by individuals in their daily lives, including that of a panethnic identity, in order to negotiate a greater share of resources from the center. This is the story of ethnic minorities throughout the world, including the U.S. More studies employing perspectives from the margins need to be produced in order to argue successfully for a rendering of official national histories which represent all groups in society.

CONCLUSION

Let me reiterate in conclusion that the rejection of the politics of majoritarianism for a decentered view of society should be one of our principal objectives. With ethnicity unshackled from its association with minority status, the scramble for access to resources would still persist but without the xenophobia of the majority. Ideally, then, all ethnic groups, including the dominant ethnicity, would negotiate the identity of the nation-state on equal terms. Multiculturalism can then be advocated as a sign of a healthy, self-confident state drawing on the strengths of its many ethnic groups. The shift in attitude of the state would therefore ensure a different type of dialogue with the individual if ethnicity is not simply about allocation of resources but about how one can contribute to the creation of a truly multicultural society.

Focusing on the margins also offers an exciting prospect for researching and teaching about Asia. Local ways of conceptualizing knowledge, such as the varied ways which a group determines space, may provide insights to help the researcher uncover new boundaries and new meaningful relationships defined not by the nation-state but by the ethnic groups in the margins. Students can also be challenged by visions of national histories which do not privilege centrist perspectives. This would not only be a stimulating enterprise but also one which would increase awareness of the constructed nature of difference. The end product, I hope, would be greater toleration and the removal of the association of ethnicity with minority status.

SUGGESTED READINGS

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Study Abroad and Legal Issues

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PRELUDE

Earlham, and specifically a program I direct, has recently been involved in litigation attracting considerable national attention. Regarding that process I am authorized to state the following:

"The parties have reached an agreement to resolve and end their litigation. In the interest of the parties involved, the parties have agreed to keep the terms of their resolution of the litigation confidential and not to revisit the particulars of this litigation. The parties agree, however, that Earlham College and each of the educational institutions involved are committed to the safety of their students who participate in foreign study programs."

INTRODUCTION

Anthony Giddens has suggested that with modernity our ways of trusting each other have evolved: we have moved from trust being embedded in local communities, kinship groupings, and religious cosmologies to trust as embedded in dyadic personal relations, in friendship, on the one hand, and in impersonal abstract systems, in bureaucratic safeguards, on the other.¹ A glance at the response to the current debates about safety in study abroad suggests that the field is caught up in this transition. I fear this transition marks a shift to a world where educational practice abroad is safeguarded not by trust in local peoples, wherever they reside, but rather in formal bureaucratic processes within this country. As this process has unfolded an unease has settled over study abroad offices across the United States and they have begun to examine their procedures typically with an eye towards avoiding, limiting, or shifting liability.

In commenting on this I would like to do three things:

- First I'd like to discuss some of the bigger issues shaping the conversation;
- then I'd like to make an argument for study abroad;
- and finally I'll make practical suggestions for those of you involved in managing study abroad programs.

ORIGINS OF THE CONCERN WITH SAFETY AND RESPONSIBILITY

In the past five years we have seen the creation of a new risk management industry for study abroad. We have seen several articles in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, and both *DateLine* and *USA Today* have devoted issues to this topic. NAFSA (Association of International Educators) has spent considerable time creating guidelines for the field.²

Several factors shape this conversation. They fall into two areas. The first deals with issues intrinsic to the field of study abroad.

I don't think we can avoid acknowledging that there is risk. We live in a tremendously diverse world where unpredictable things happen. We live in a world where even though we might do our best to limit risk we often cannot have sufficient knowledge to avoid it.

We also send very diverse students into that world. Our students are young Americans and this means that, almost by definition, they are risk prone. They are young. They think they will live forever. And they have been socialized to be skeptical of distant truths and to believe that their immediate experience is their best teacher. Some take medical and emotional issues with them as they go abroad—when you put the diversities of the world and our students