Fallout at Kargil: The Nuclear War that Never Was
by Baya HARRISON

A Rising Wave
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Outsourcing (Part II)
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Cherry Blossoms
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A Message from Monsoon’s Co-Editor-in-Chief

After half a century of revolution, China had largely broken away from its past. A new spiritual civilization, one that would have astonished ancestors living a century before, was built on the rubble of old traditions. This is the impression I had when I last returned to Mainland China.

Here at Brandeis, I have discovered much about my country that I never even heard back at home. I never learned about the radical and rebellious side of Confucianism when I was in a Chinese secondary school, and I was shocked to see nearly as many traditional Chinese dances in Waltham, Massachusetts as I have seen in Beijing. In school, we learned to recite the essays and poetry of our ancestors, but our pronunciation bore little resemblance to the authors. We were taught the traditional ethics of our own country, but few of us practiced them devotedly. Many philosophies that appeared in old storybooks were long ago condemned as “feudal superstition,” never to be passed along to our generation.

An intellectual gap emerged in the first half of the 20th century, which separated the thinking of the old generation from that of the new intellectuals. The latter group believed that the only way to save the Chinese nation from corruption and total annihilation was to abandon parts or all of our tradition and embrace western ideology. During this period, China’s historiography was utterly changed. One prominent term that had lasting implications in the new historiography was “fengjian,” the Chinese word for “feudalism,” which took on an entirely new meaning in the 20th century.

“Fengjian,” once perceived as an ideal to remedy the deficiencies of the overly centralized government by early Qing (1644-1912) thinkers, was later used to classify China’s history in the western enlightenment mode. By the mid 20th century, “fengjian” was no longer a lost ideal, but a system and form of government that stood for all the backwardness of China’s past. Since then, this meaning has been widely accepted by Chinese intellectuals.

I am currently doing research on the shifts in the meaning of “fengjian,” and how these changes signal deeper shifts in the way we think about our own history. So far, I have discovered that Liang Chi-cho (Liang Qichao), a leader of the Hundred Days of Reform, was probably the first prominent figure to propagate a new historiography that neglected the traditional interpretation of “fengjian.” Traditional historiography viewed China as a static system showing no signs of progression. “Fengjian” was intended to balance the highly centralizing nature of the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing dynasties. However, Liang viewed “fengjian” as a stage of development in Chinese history, namely the period between the Zhou dynasty (1027-777 BC) and the warring states (475-221 BC). In one of his political essays, Liang explicitly regarded the “fengjian” system as backward and inefficient, something less advanced than the centralized bureaucratic system of his time, and even more backward than the constitutional monarchy he envisaged, a form of government in which the people, instead of a dictatorial monarch, ruled the country. In contrast with the contemporary view in Mainland China, Liang did not say that China’s history since the Qin dynasty (221-206 BC) was entirely “fengjian.”

This is one example of how my Western education has challenged and broadened my understanding of China. I am indebted to the multi-cultural environment and curriculum of Brandeis, in which I not only became more aware of my Asian identity, but also gained insight into the culture embedded within me.

Monsoon was established to “Bring Asia to Brandeis,” and has so far produced six well-received issues within two years. In another half semester, four of the founding members of Monsoon will graduate. But as more and more people, myself included, realize the benefits of the multicultural environment around us and continue to support our publication, the legacy of Monsoon shall live on.

Mu Zhou
Co-Editor-in-Chief
Fallout at Kargil: The Nuclear War that Never Was
- by Baya HARRISON

Half a century of U.S.-Soviet rivalry during the Cold War produced two lessons about warfare in the nuclear era. First, states with nuclear weapons do not go to war with each other. They bluff and threaten. They raise alert levels and ready their missiles for launch. They step to the very brink of the nuclear precipice, but they never take the final plunge into the abyss. The second lesson of the Cold War provides the rationale for the first: war between nuclear-armed states would inevitably lead to a full-scale nuclear war and its resultant horrors. The 1999 Kargil War between India and Pakistan shattered this conventional wisdom and left the world with more questions than answers about war in the nuclear age.

In the spring of 1998, India and Pakistan demonstrated their nuclear weapons capabilities to the world. Between 11 and 13 May 1998, India tested five nuclear weapons. Pakistan responded fifteen days later with six of its own tests: five for India’s most recent and a sixth for India’s first test in 1974.

The nuclearization of South Asia began a new chapter in India-Pakistan relations. Two contiguous states with a history of war and a bitter territorial dispute could now deliver nuclear bombs to each other’s capitals in three to five minutes. The emergence of nuclear-armed regional competitors revived Cold War era debates about the utility and danger of nuclear deterrence. The logic of nuclear deterrence holds that one state can prevent another from taking an undesirable action by threatening to destroy it or its ability to retaliate. Would fear of a nuclear strike put an end to war as a means of resolving the India-Pakistan conflict? Or would the next confrontation see the destruction of India, Pakistan, or perhaps both? With the outbreak of war within a year of the nuclear tests, these questions ceased to be purely academic.

In December 1998, the Pakistani Army’s 10th Corps and Northern Light Infantry penetrated the Line of Control (LOC) in Kargil, Batalik, Turtuk, and Dras. Reaching heights of 18,000 feet above sea level, this mountainous region was deemed uninhabitable during the winter months. For twenty-seven years, both armies had abandoned their positions for the winter and returned in the spring. General Pervez Musharraf, commander of Pakistan’s Northern Forces, exploited weak Indian intelligence in the region to conceal the Pakistani incursion. Musharraf relied upon troops and supplies readily available to undertake the operation, summoning reinforcements only after achieving substantial territorial gains. By the end of April, over 800 Pakistani soldiers had occupied abandoned Indian positions on India’s side of the LOC.

India first learned of the incursion from local informants between 2 and 5 May, a full four months after the initial breach of the LOC. Another week passed before the Indian military comprehended the full scale of the Pakistani operation. By that time, Pakistan’s Army controlled an area of Indian territory eleven kilometers deep and two-hundred kilometers wide. From this strategic vantage, Pakistani forces stood poised to disrupt traffic on India’s Highway 1A, the only supply route to India’s forces in the contested Siachen Glacier region.

For the government of Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Pakistani control of Kargil was intolerable. Indian infantry and artillery assaulted the Pakistani positions in an offensive to retake the lost territory. The Indian Air Force conducted air strikes against the infiltrators’ positions, marking the first use of air power in Kashmir by either side since the 1971 war. Despite the intensity of the combat, fighting remained localized to the immediate area of dispute. Pakistan did not breach other points of the LOC, and Indian forces did not invade Pakistani territory.

As the war raged, it became increasingly evident just how dangerous Kargil had become. U.S. intelligence possessed “disturbing evidence that the Pakistanis were preparing their nuclear arsenals for possible deployment.” U.S. satellites also detected a massive mobilization of Indian “tanks, artillery and other heavy equipment” in what appeared to be preparation for a cross-border invasion.

In response to threat of continued escalation, the United States took an active role in ending the conflict. The administration of President Bill Clinton demanded that Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif withdraw entirely from the Indian side of the LOC. Prime Minister Sharif and General Musharraf had hoped that the specter of nuclear war would lead the U.S. to ratify Pakistan’s territorial gains and defuse the crisis. The uncompromising U.S. position was both unanticipated and unwelcome in Islamabad. In an effort to win U.S. support, Sharif invited himself to Washington on the 4th of July and met Clinton in the Blair House, the White House’s guest residence.

In tense discussions lasting several hours, Clinton convinced Sharif to withdraw all Pakistani units from India’s territory. The administration was keen to avoid the appearance of giving in to nuclear blackmail, but Clinton promised to take a “personal interest” in supporting India-Pakistan dialogue after the fighting ended. Despite strong domestic opposition, Sharif fulfilled his promise to rein in the Army, and the war was over by the end of July. General Musharraf deposed
Sharif in a military coup three months later.

The two months of the Kargil War had seen the heaviest fighting between India and Pakistan since the 1971 war. Estimates of casualties vary widely. Pakistan claims that 690 of its soldiers died in combat, and India says it lost 417 of its own. Many sources believe the actual number of casualties to be closer to 1,000 dead on both sides.6

The lessons of the Kargil War are by no means clear. Kargil was a conventional war, though limited, between two nuclear-armed states that did not escalate to a nuclear exchange. Had fear of nuclear destruction deterred both sides from escalating? Or had overconfidence in the deterrent effect of its nuclear arsenal emboldened the Pakistani Army to undertake the incursion in the first place?

These questions illustrate Glenn Snyder’s “stability-instability” paradox of nuclear deterrence.7 Snyder’s paradox is two-pronged. First, war between states with nuclear weapons is less likely to occur, as states fear the apocalyptic consequences of nuclear escalation. Second, and conversely, war is more likely to occur, precisely because the low risk of escalation makes waging war “safer.” Seizing exclusively upon the first hypothesis, some analysts have concluded that the nuclearization of South Asia has made the region safer.

This conclusion is misguided and dangerous. Since independence, India and Pakistan have fought four major wars and experienced as many crises. The dispute over the status of Jammu and Kashmir remains unresolved. It is not entirely impossible—nor is it even difficult—to imagine a future situation that would bring India and Pakistan to blows once again. The mere possession of nuclear weapons by both sides has raised the stakes of every potential conflict. Every dispute, every impasse, and every provocation now carries the threat of escalation towards a devastating nuclear exchange. In the nuclear age, the slightest risk of another conflict is reason enough to be gravely concerned by the nuclearization of South Asia.

The outlook is not entirely bleak, however, and there is some reason to be optimistic. In a 16 February 2005 meeting of foreign ministers, India and Pakistan agreed to renew a bus service in the divided territory of Kashmir. If begun on 7 April as scheduled, this would mark the first opening of the route since the 1947 division. India and Pakistan also pledged to cooperate on gas and oil pipelines that would enter India via Pakistan, one from Turkmenistan and another from Iran.8 Additionally, the Bush administration has taken a renewed interest in easing tensions between India and Pakistan. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice’s visit to New Delhi and Islamabad on 16 – 18 March signaled a renewed U.S. commitment to facilitating peace between its nuclear-armed allies.9

A failure of the peace process at this juncture, especially one that results in resumed fighting, would be extraordinarily costly to Indians, Pakistanis, and the often overlooked Kashmiris. A negotiated settlement of the territorial dispute between India and Pakistan would be a significant step towards peace in the region. After all, one lesson of the Cold War years still holds after Kargil: states that are not enemies do not destroy each other.

Endnotes

5Riedel, 13.
9“Rice to Make First Asia Trip as Secretary of State,” Reuters, 9 March 2005.

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A Debt Sealed in the Coffin: An Analysis of the Survivors of the Cultural Revolution Inspired by Ha Jin’s Novel, The Crazed

-by Tak-Hin Benjamin NGAN

INTRODUCTION

In more than three decades after its termination, Chairman Mao’s Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution still remains somewhat a mystery to both Chinese and Western scholars. This is largely due to the restrictions
placed by the Communist government on research into the Cultural Revolution. According to Professor Roderick MacFarquhar, “Written history is important but dangerous” (MacFarquhar, Mar. 2004) in China, and much work remains to be done for one to better understand the Cultural Revolution.

Even though many Chinese and Western scholars like MacFarquhar have devoted themselves to studying the Cultural Revolution, their emphasis is usually closely related to the politics of the Revolution. They devote their time to revealing the “written history” which documented the Revolution and attempt to reconstruct a “picture” of the Revolution, yet few have paid ample attention to what is equally important as the “written history” – the “living history” of the Cultural Revolution.

Professor Ralph Thaxton, Professor of Political Science at Brandeis University, emphasizes the study of “politics from the bottom up” (Thaxton, Jan. 2004). He stresses the importance of understanding politics and history in terms of the people. It is critical to understand politics on a national level, but to study the impact of politics and history on the individual is equally vital. The aim of this article is to provide a different perspective in looking at the Cultural Revolution and to explore the significance of this political trauma through part of its “living history” – the victims. The arguments in this article do not revolve around Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, or Lin Biao; instead, they are presented through a symbolic “living history” of the Cultural Revolution that was created by National Book Award-winning author and Brandeis alumnus, Ha Jin, in his novel The Crazed.

THE TRAUMA OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

The Crazed revolves around Professor Yang, a composite-fictional character who represents the survivors of the Cultural Revolution. Professor Yang suffers a stroke and spends the last few months of his life in the hospital being half conscious and half crazed. One significant aspect of Yang’s craziness is how it exposes the damage that might have been done to him during the Cultural Revolution, as “he was turned into a Demon-Monster [and] a target of the struggle” (The Crazed, p.21) when the Cultural Revolution broke out.

Although the novel does not describe in detail the experiences of Yang during the Cultural Revolution, one can nevertheless imagine the suffering he has gone through during the years by observing his description of his “reeducation” in the countryside: “It was horrible at night. I suffered from insomnia. So many things came to my mind that I couldn’t stop thinking about them … How often I envied the pigs in the sties behind our house, because they just ate and slept until one day they were hauled out to the butcher’s” (The Crazed, p.133). The torture of the Cultural Revolution has put an educated man like Yang into a position that is worse than “the pigs in the sties.”

In fact, according to Jonathan Glover, the major impact of the Cultural Revolution on its victims is the deprivation of their basic dignity. “[During the Cultural Revolution] the human response most spectacularly overcome was the respect for dignity,” writes Glover. “Humiliation was the main tool of the Cultural Revolution. People were paraded through the streets with degrading slogans on placards worn around their necks. They were made to wear dunce’s caps and their hair was cut in grotesque ways” (Glover, p.291). Such destruction of individual dignity, according to Glover, reflected the Maoists’ goal to “destroy people’s previous sense of who they were and to make sure there was no room for it to grow back” (Glover, p.296), and hence to deliberately construct “a new moral identity” (Glover, p.296) of the people.

Such destruction of individual dignity often involved violence and psychological assaults that would create “a sense of shrinkage of [one’s] personality [and] a partial conversion of [oneself] into nothingness” (Glover, p.296). For instance, in The Crazed, Professor Yang’s crazy mumblings reveal the psychological damage that was done to him when the Red Guards confiscated and burned his books during the struggle meetings: “Please, don’t confiscate my books, don’t burn them. I’m kneeling down to you, little brothers and sisters. Oh, please have mercy! I beg you … Water, water! They’re burning my soul” (The Crazed, pp.221-222). A parallel of Yang’s experience can be drawn from Jung Chang’s Wild Swans, in a description of Chang’s father when he saw his books being thrown into flames, as quoted by Glover: “‘Every now and then, in fits of violent sobs, he stamped his feet on the floor and banged his head against the wall.’ After the bonfire … something had happened to his mind” (Glover, p.296).

THE ONES WHO LIVE ON

In fact, many did not survive the tortures of the Cultural Revolution. “For some the indignities were unbearable,” writes Glover, “many killed themselves” (Glover, p.292). For the dead, their bodies are sealed in their coffins with ever-lasting pains, illustrated by Jung Chang’s description of his father’s death: “I thought of my father’s life, his wasted dedication and crushed dreams. He need not have died. Yet his death seemed so inevitable. There was no place for him in Mao’s China … He had been betrayed by something to which he had given his whole life, and the betrayal destroyed him” (Chang, p.479).

Yet, it is equally crucial to pay attention to those
victims who survived the Cultural Revolution and to what the trauma has done to their lives. Like those who died, the survivors also had their dedication wasted and their dreams crushed. They experienced the same sort of betrayal that Chang’s father experienced; yet they lived on. But if indeed the Maoists succeeded, or partly succeeded, in their attempts to “destroy people’s previous sense of who they were and to make sure there was no room for it to grow back” (Glover, p.296), then one can hardly expect the survivors of the Cultural Revolution to reposition themselves in a state of normality. Even though they were already freed from the Red Guards and the torture of the Revolution, the psychological damage that was done to them is nonetheless real and perpetual.

In The Crazed, the “left-over” of the Cultural Revolution in the mind of Professor Yang seems to have never been cured. Repeatedly, Yang yells slogans and sings songs that are Maoist in nature when he is asleep, even once claiming: “I always love Chairman Mao. For him I dare to climb a mountain of swords and walk through a sea of fire. Why don’t you believe me?” (The Crazed, p.23). This phenomenon can perhaps be explained by a self-description of a victim of Thought Reform, documented by Glover: “You are annihilated … exhausted … You must criticize all of your own thoughts, guided by the official … If you doubt, you keep it to yourself. Because if you admit the doubt you will be ‘struggled’ and lose the progress you have made … You begin to believe all this, but it is a special kind of belief. You are not absolutely convinced, but you accept it – in order to avoid trouble – because every time you don’t agree, trouble starts again” (Glover, p.293). Indeed, it is not an unreasonable assumption that Yang becomes confused, in his unconsciousness, with what he believes and what he was told to believe during the Cultural Revolution. In this sense, it seems that the “scar” of the Cultural Revolution would make the survivor’s life very uneasy.

Furthermore, it is possible that, after all the tortures and suffering, the survivors of the Cultural Revolution would have to bear some permanent forms of psychological deficiency. For instance, in The Crazed, Yang becomes extremely suspicious and hostile to anyone who approaches him in the hospital because he is afraid of a potential murderer. When a nurse attempts to inject medication into his body, he yells: “Help! Help! Mur-der! They want to poison me!” (The Crazed, p.26), and his fear seems to be real, as his student observes: “Professor Yang started sobbing; tears leaked out of his closed lids, trickling down his cheeks and stubby chin. He whimpered something incoherently. I listened for a moment and felt he seemed to be begging mercy from someone, who might be an imagined murderer” (The Crazed, p.27). When Chang writes that after the bonfire consumed his father’s books, “something had happened to his mind”. What that “something” actually may be a kind of permanent psychological deficiency that is implanted in the victim’s mind. In retrospect, one may find it reasonably convincing that perhaps the victims of the Cultural Revolution might never have been psychologically healthy after the trauma, and that they might have spent the rest of their lives battling the pains from numerous psychological problems that derived from their experiences during the Revolution.

THE YEARNING FOR JUSTICE

The survivors of the Cultural Revolution suffer. For Professor Yang in The Crazed, the trauma not only brings him psychological harm, but also destroys his family life. Like many victims, Yang’s family life was disrupted by the Cultural Revolution, as he yells at his wife blaming her for having engaged in a relationship with a man while Yang was taken to the countryside: “I didn’t take my life because I wasn’t cruel or courageous enough to desert you and our daughter. So I hoped and hoped, dreaming that some day I would come back … But my home was no longer the same” (The Crazed, p.171). In reality, the Cultural Revolution has ruined the relationships and the spiritual lives of its hundreds of thousands of victims.

Naturally, victims of the trauma yearn for justice, but the trauma of the Great Leap was never settled and none of the suffering of the victims has ever been avenged by any proper means. Professor Yang in The Crazed spells out his yearning for justice when his crazed mind is sparked by the sound of sirens: “Fire, fire, that the holy fire. Burn them, burn those devils … Revenge … I shall raise this nine-section whip and thrash your fat hips, pack, pack – I want to taste your blood and flesh. Ah, with full resolve I shall root out your whole clan like weeds! A debt of lives must be paid with
lives!” (The Crazed, p.74, pp.78-79). Subconsciously, Yang has always wanted to avenge his suffering. In the novel, he once reflects his experience during the torture: “During the torture I would recite to myself lines from The Divine Comedy … Whenever I closed my eyes, I saw the scenes in Inferno. If they forced me to open my eyes, I’d imagine that the crazed people below and around me were like the blustering evildoers, devils, and monsters cast into hell” (The Crazed, p.73). In his heart, he has always wanted to avenge his suffering and to see his torturers be subjected to proper punishments. But why the Inferno? Why the holy fire? Why not something earthly?

**A DEBT SEALED IN THE COFFIN**

The unfortunate part of Yang’s life in The Crazed is that there was never anywhere for him to go to look for the justice he desired. This is made clear as his student reflects on his death, thinking: “To me the worst part of Mr. Yang’s death was that he had died in hatred. Did he save his soul? Probably not. Possessed by the desire for vengeance, he couldn’t possibly have attained the spiritual ascent he had striven for. He failed to liberate his soul from the yoke of malevolence. His soul must still have bogged down in the muck of this life” (The Crazed, p.262).

Since the end of the Cultural Revolution and through the Reformist era, there has been almost not one single effort from the Chinese government to address the victims of the Revolution properly. Even though, according to Professor MacFarquhar, the CCP resolution of 1981 officially “assigned blame to Chairman Mao” (MacFarquhar, Mar. 2004), the resolution did not go too far to actually deal with the Cultural Revolution, because “the Chinese could not afford to destroy Chairman Mao’s credibility” (MacFarquhar, Mar. 2004). Understandably, any attempt to attribute justice to the victims of the Cultural Revolution is automatically out of the Party’s agenda, because to do so would simply ruin more of Chairman Mao’s reputation.

Besides, if the survivors of the Cultural Revolution were to avenge their suffering during the years, who is to be punished? To what degree, and how? Who should Professor Yang or Jung Chang’s father go after, even if they were given a chance to avenge their torture?

The wrongdoers in the Revolution are in fact themselves part of “the people.” There were hundreds and thousands of Red Guards, and violence and assaults were carried out in arbitrary and non-systematic fashion by these teenagers and the Maoists. As Jung Chang explains, quoted by Glover: “Mao had managed to turn people into the ultimate weapon of dictatorship. That was why under him there was no real equivalent of the KGB in China. There was no need. In bringing out and nourishing the worst in people, Mao had created a moral wasteland and a land of hatred” (Glover, p.297).

Since the assaults of the Cultural Revolution were carried out en masse and in a non-systematic fashion, it is almost impossible for its victims to look for any kind of justice if the government is not going to address the issue properly. And precisely because the matter was never resolved or settled properly on the individual level, the damage that was done to the survivors self-multiplied as the years went by. Yang illustrates this with a metaphor in The Crazed: “Every day he presses more thoughts and emotions into his brain, in which a good deal of stuff is already stored but none is allowed to get out so as to accommodate new stuff. Yet day after day he squeezes in something more, until one day his brain becomes too full and cannot but burst. It’s like a pressure cooker which is so full that the safety valve is blocked up, but the fire continues heating its bottom. As a consequence, the only way out is to explode” (The Crazed, p.12).

In the end, Yang’s pressure cooker exploded. And sadly, he died before anything was done to avenge his suffering. For his whole life after the Cultural Revolution, he seems to have worried a lot about the purpose of his living on. Several times in the novel, Yang lamented in his utter sincerity that “I’m only afraid I’m not worthy of my suffering” (The Crazed, p.172). If what he means is that he is only living so that justice will come to him one day, then perhaps his student is right that he never did save his soul. His last words before he died are uttered to his student: “Remember, avenge me and … don’t forgive any one of them. K-kill them all!” (The Crazed, p.260). In the end, of course, there was no justice, no revenge, and no holy fire. Yang died, and the
CONCLUSION

In reality, how similar Professor Yang is to the survivors of the Cultural Revolution remains to be seen. But the insights drawn from Ha Jin’s fiction are nonetheless significant. Ha Jin’s novel shows us that the psychological damage done to the victims of the Cultural Revolution was permanent. This damage could have prevented many of the survivors from returning to a state of normalcy because their desires for justice have never been answered.

Their dreams have been crushed, their lives ruined, but if the Chinese government will never step forward and address this issue properly, perhaps the regrets of these victims will occupy all their remaining years and they will all be owed debts from the Cultural Revolution when their bodies are finally sealed in coffins. Perhaps, after that, they may have a chance to hear the wrongdoers being cast into hell, just like the one spelled out by Dante. Perhaps they may not. But the saddest thing of all is that it seems almost an inevitable reality that those remaining survivors of the Cultural Revolution will have to continue to lament like Professor Yang: “Ah, life, what an ocean of grief!” (The Crazed, p.172) While no one would stand up and return them the justice that they deserve, this line from one of Yang’s favorite poems may echo much in their hearts: “Wer, wenn ich schriee, horte mich denn aus der Engel Ormungen (Who, if I cry, would hear me among the angelic order)?” (The Crazed, pp.46-47).

Endnotes


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A Rising Wave

-by Ariav AMITTAY

During the past century, China has endured a staggering amount of social, political, and cultural change. The vast majority of its citizens have borne great suffering at the hands of various rulers throughout the last hundred years. The one consistent aspect of China’s governance has been its lack of legitimacy and credible rule. During the reign of the Chinese Communist Party and its predecessors, corruption has plagued the people of China and greatly handicapped their chances for political evolution. Bitter resentment is widespread throughout China as political transgressions of the past and present continue to go unaddressed. During the past fifteen years, this problem has become more visible on both the national and international level, and China’s long-standing social instability has achieved a new level of volatility. The calls for change are growing louder, and it seems only to be a matter of time until they are answered. As China stands on the brink of what will surely be one of the most complex periods of her development, it is crucial to obtain an understanding of the roots of her present problems. The causes of rampant corruption and misrule that afflict the country today can be found through a chronological analysis of the Chinese Communist Party, its leadership figures, and its strategy of governance. Utilizing this knowledge to understand the present political climate, it is then possible to forward some hypotheses concerning China’s future and the possibilities for democracy in the coming years.

When Mao Zedong successfully led the Red Army to victory over the nationalist armies of the Kuomintang in 1949, the future seemed bright for China. Mao’s charisma, intelligence, and strong ideological connections to the countryside all indicated that China had found a leader to end the cycle of brutal misrule that had served as the political status quo for decades. The almost mythical stature of the new Chairman would insure that he would receive the cooperation of his fellow citizens in whatever projects for change and reform he chose to pursue. It was time for China to assume her place among the modern powers of the world. Unfortunately, all of these positive indicators became meaningless when Mao’s administrative abilities proved inadequate with respect to his ambitions, and the power of his personality served to overwhelm the possibility for productive disagreement within the Communist Party. The Korean War in combination with the economic instability inherited from the Kuomintang regime convinced Mao that the revolution would have to temporarily halt in its progression towards complete socialism. The promising early reforms of the revolution had included rent cuts, tax exemptions, and the
elimination of landlordism. Under the national burden of rampant inflation and the pressure to modernize, the progressive early Maoist era quickly devolved into a Soviet style totalitarian regime. Feeling pressure from the United States’ imperial activities in the Pacific, and in response to a refusal of alliance on the part of the Americans, Mao aligned himself with the USSR and its developmental model1. Thus, China took its first step on the road to political disaster.

Mao’s desire to build China into a modern superpower could not be satisfied without making fundamental changes to the economic institutions of the country. In order to fulfill his industrial aspirations, Mao knew that he would have to optimize the output of the masses. Collectivization and eventual state regulation of grain storage and distribution was the answer that he arrived at. What Mao did not understand was that the burden placed upon the depleted land by the massive population of China was already too great to allow for survival strictly through subsistence farming, let alone accommodate the use of “surplus” crops for trade. As a result, Mao did not question the relatively minor successes of the early stages of collectivization, and felt that advancing to higher levels of organization could only improve the national yields. Even when the agrarian production was reduced during the period of transition between agricultural production cooperatives and the commune stage, Mao did not alter his plan. None of his advisors would dare to contradict the man whose word was truth in China. Once all the peasants living in China’s countryside had been organized into communes, the problems inherent to the system became quickly apparent. The unavoidable lack of resources would be a key motivating factor for the early development of corruption and would lead directly to the disastrous events of the Great Leap Forward period.

The organization of the countryside into communes was an effort that would fail miserably because of the complete lack of effective administration that existed on every level of the CCP chain of command. Mostly responsible for the lack of successful leadership by officials was the rampant corrupt practices that flourished within the communal system. It was during this time that many of the practices of corruption and exploitation that would become traditional in party politics were established within the CCP power structure. Within the communes, the people were completely under the control of the party officials responsible for regulating the grain production of that village or township. The mounting pressure of an increasing lack of food throughout the countryside led to an all-out fleecing of the common people by party members. This cruel plunder would contribute to the deaths of millions of citizens. A critical issue with the Party’s organizational system was the lack of any disciplinary body designed to regulate official activity. This complete absence of a means of holding party leadership accountable for their actions or punishing them for misdeeds was a striking fault that the Party still possesses to this day. The CCP quickly began to lose legitimacy as a ruling body as officials at all levels engaged in selfishly motivated exploitation of the commune and its institutions. This early ideological imbalance within the party would undermine the founding principles of the Communist Party. The desire on the part of officials to pursue selfish interests first, the interests of other party members second, and the interests of ordinary citizens as a distant third is another irresponsible and dangerous political trend that would endure for the rest of the century and beyond.

With his nearly unquestioned power during his reign in China, it seems that Mao Zedong would have been fully capable of crushing the early epidemic of official corruption that would become a lingering malaise within the party. Instead, Mao chose to fall into the general pattern of party behavior that would epitomize its ineffective and exploitative rule. During the period of collectivization within the communes, Mao expressed concerns that party members and others should share the burden of hard labor in the fields equally. This ideology meant nothing when lower level party officials were permitted to execute commune policy in whatever way they saw fit. Mao’s failure to establish any sort of entity to regulate the behavior of party officials at even the most basic level led directly to the years of inappropriate party abuse of power. Incentive for a later establishment of internal regulation of the party was non-existent. There was no reason for those in power to facilitate the control or observation of their behavior when they could use their position for great personal gain. Mao’s decision to quell the Hundred Flowers movement, which allowed for public expression of political concerns, was another decision that would have had negative consequences for the foreseeable future. The abolishment of this forum (and with it the principle of intellectual freedom) would simply encourage the early trend of opaque rule by the party, whereby there was a complete absence of “democratic or transparent controls” on the party and its policy.

As a result of these early failures to combat corruption, party members and officials have continued to use their positions for personal benefit throughout the second half of the 20th century. Examples of corruption in contemporary China are abundant. The use of public funds to modernize and improve private residences of party officials is one obvious instance of corruption. Another is the preferential treatment of the political elite and their associates by the Chinese...
Monsoon

out of politics, they are replaced by more pluralistic and pragmatic elements that would be more receptive to the possibility of democratic transition in the future. In fact, Deng Xiaoping himself has hinted that once the last of the party veterans are gone, China may face immediate and significant changes. This watershed moment cannot be too far away. In addition, China has entered an economic state that is indicated historically as favorable towards the sort of social and political reform that would be necessary to institute electoral democracy. While a revolution led by progressive elements within the CCP is possible, if a solution is not forthcoming from within the party, there are other options for achieving democratic reform.

After the famine of the Great Leap Forward, the CCP lost the mandate of heaven and the trust of the Chinese people. They have never recovered either since. In fact, the party has never even attempted in any way to apologize for the incredible levels of suffering inflicted upon the people as a result of misrule. As a result, intense feelings of resentment and anger still fester among the majority of China’s citizens. These sentiments should not be underestimated as a possible motivating factor for revolutionary actions. Any instance of minor social upheaval has the potential to erupt into a major disturbance or even rebellion. If the CCP continues to ignore the need for changes, then the populace might feel that there is no option aside from violent revolution in order to rectify the wrongs of the Party’s rule. As was demonstrated during the Tiananmen protests, there are large amounts of Chinese citizens who do not shrink from the possibility of a violent coup in order to achieve their goals.

Since the public desire for democracy in China is so strong, and changes aimed at moving China in that direction seem inevitable, it is relevant to question whether the longstanding tradition of corruption would be disrupted or ended in the face of a newly democratized political system. Democracy would provide several possible means of curtailing or ending this pattern of exploitation by political figures. In a democratic republic, the free press would be able to report on all activities without interference. As a result, there would be even greater public awareness of any political scandal than there is currently in China. This increased awareness would allow the citizens of China to make electoral choices based on free information and greatly increased transparency of the political workings of the country. While democracy has by no means eliminated corruption in such countries as India or the United States, there is certainly a lesser amount in such nations than there has been in China. Historical evidence certainly indicates that democratization would greatly help to address the corruption that has for so long been a

judicial system. Both of these violations of ethical and legal conduct are obvious to others in society. It is easy to understand the popular sentiments of anger and resentment that such behavior causes. Rather than using tax money to improve the lives of the common people, party members choose to use it for personal benefit. The Communist Party is designed to be an instrument of the people’s will, not a means of economic profiteering. The examples of judicial leniency towards the elite are a direct insult to those outside of the power network. It is fully understood that one’s connections, family, and position are often enough to achieve a favorable result in court regardless of the most obvious evidence. The populace must question why they should continue to support systems of taxation or justice that simply do not act in the best interests of the majority forced to support them.

During the 1990s, a general trend of exposure of official corruption has engendered a rise in the always-powerful forces of public protest and unrest. The economic reforms instituted after Mao’s death encouraged the corrupt party practices established during the earliest years of CCP rule and provided more opportunity for official profiteering. Deng Xiaoping introduced additional reforms in the early 1990s that would only have improved the outlook for corrupt practices. When these changes are combined with the mounting instability of the party, as is perceived by officials, it creates a general mindset of benefiting as much as possible while in a position to do so. The response of the party leaders has been to encourage reports of official corruption and subsequent punishments in order to give the impression that action is being taken against offenders. This course of action seems to have a dual effect, as it also serves as a constant reminder of the presence of corruption and its proliferation. In response, public protests are at an extremely high level and public pressure on the government to execute meaningful reform is mounting. The development of modern technology and the effects that it has had on public access to information inside and outside of China is another means of increased awareness of the problems with the current political system. It seems to be only a matter of time before the current situation reaches a crisis of critical mass that will somehow result in profound political changes for China, namely democratic reform.

Aside from the increased levels of popular protest movements that were epitomized by the Tiananmen protests of 1989, there are multiple other factors that favor a theory of impending democratic reform of Chinese politics. Recent public movements encouraging increased transparency and accountability within the Communist Party express decidedly democratic ideals. As the old guard of the party moves
major concern for the exploited peoples of China.

Although it cannot be known how China’s reform will come until it is upon us, understanding the long suffering that has been endured by the people under the Chinese Communist Party can help illustrate why such change must be inevitable. As long as the ugly history of the party continues to trouble the minds of the millions that have endured its rule, China cannot move forwards. Some change must be made in order to allow the wounds of the past to begin to heal. Whether or not democracy does come to China in the immediate future, if some change is not made then, the pattern of social upheaval and struggle will continue indefinitely. The time has come for the privileged regime of the Communist Party to relinquish its death grip on the political sphere and realize that the sooner a change is made, the more quickly China can become a successful world power with a government worthy of its population.

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East Asian Industrialization and the Third World

- by Kassian POLIN

Stellar growth, rising living standards, and escalating international competitiveness in the economies of East Asia have captured the attention of policymakers and researchers in other Third World countries. Much has been made in recent years of the differences between the patterns of development in East Asia and those in Latin America, Africa, and the Caribbean. The remarkable success of the East Asian “miracle countries” has left a deep imprint on scholars and policymakers. Latin America achieved independence more than a century before many East Asian countries, although the latter had a much briefer colonial experience. By the time East Asian trailblazers such as South Korea and Taiwan gained independence after World War II, many Latin American countries had had far higher standards of living and levels of industrialization, urbanization, education, and health. By the 1980s, however, East Asia had overtaken even the more developed countries of Latin America such as Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile, and those in Africa and the Caribbean. This article will analyze the patterns of economic development in these regions, and attempt to draw conclusions about this disparity in the pace of industrialization.

In the 1930s, decades of economic malaise in Latin America prompted many local intellectuals to question the soundness of the Western theory of comparative advantage, and by extension, the neoclassical development model. Raul Prebisch, the renowned Argentinian economist, complained that industrialized countries such as the U.S. and those in Europe depressed prices in the region by buying substitutable goods elsewhere and producing surplus materials for export themselves. Third World countries, including those in Latin America, began to call for growing Keynesian state intervention to stabilize local industries and provide jobs. Prebisch, who was the Director-General of the newly founded United Nations Economic Commission in Latin America (ECLA) in 1948, declared that the theory of comparative advantage was responsible for Latin America’s widespread poverty and for the area’s dependence on industrialized nations.

Concluding that a long-term trend exists for the terms of trade to be unfavorable towards the primary-good exporting periphery, the ECLA advocated a policy
of import substitution industrialization (ISI), in which development was to move from an export-oriented economic model towards one more focused on inward-directed growth. Prebisch, in criticizing the U.S. and Europe for refusing to purchase commodities from the region, called on Latin American governments to impose high tariffs for cheap imported goods, encouraged local producers to industrialize and launched a new phase of development based on heavy industry producing durable consumption and capital goods. Argentina, under Juan Peron, was the first Latin American country to adopt ISI, with Chile, Brazil, and Mexico closely following behind. African countries also began to pursue the ISI path afterwards, and the much vaunted export orientation and market liberalization that have been hallmarks of the East Asian newly industrialized countries (NICs) were preceded by an ISI strategy as well.

In analyzing the resounding success of economic development in the East Asian region – starting with Japan in the 1960s and the four “little tigers” of Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea – neoclassical theorists have argued that these governments employed market-based development strategies combined with an outward orientation of trade, known otherwise as a non-interventionist strategy. In certain respects, these aspects echo the principles laid out by the neoliberal. However, an obvious ingredient in the East Asian development recipe has been an interventionist state, to a degree that would give pause to most neoclassical economists. In South Korea, for instance, the state protected selected industries based on comparative advantage through tariffs and quotas, nurtured them through export subsidies and subsidized credit, steered firms towards new forms of production, set export targets and rewarded those firms that met or surpassed them. The government also owned and controlled all commercial banks and used them to direct funds towards favored industries. It limited the number of firms allowed to enter an industry, set controls on prices and capital outflows, and distorted prices to favor certain industries. Many preceding ISI efforts of the Third World did not provide incentives for export activities, which led to enormous wastage of resources and uncompetitive industries.

The failure of the African ISI experience is telling. The severity and breadth of protective industries in Africa were amply demonstrated by the interest rate and exchange rate policies that attempted to subsidize all domestic investors and importers respectively. Government interventions by East Asian countries, in accordance with ISI, were less severe and more targeted at specific industries such as textiles, industrial chemicals, iron, and steel. East Asian countries allowed domestic competition and prices to adjust to market forces within the limits of existing policies. For example, even though South Korea institutionalized its pre-eminence over the private sector through its nationalization of commercial banks, the control over foreign loans, the screening of technology imports and the like, as well as the private sector’s role as the principle vehicle of growth were firmly adhered to.

In addition, African countries did not have a genuine agenda for ISI. Many of them did not provide the private sector sufficient opportunities to develop industries so as to benefit from protection against imports. Some countries even had just as many barriers against the growth of their domestic private sector as they had barriers to international trade. The result was an increased monopoly by the government and its institutions. In fact, it can be debated whether ISI actually occurred in Africa at all. The development strategy did not reduce the need for imports, especially when many local factories were highly dependent on foreign inputs. Due to the shortage of foreign exchange, it was not possible to meet import demand. When the African industrial sector expanded too rapidly relative to the growth of the foreign-generating sectors, the terms of trade moved against many sub-Saharan African countries, particularly the non-oil-producing countries. The foreign exchange crisis cut the flow of imports to a trickle. In short, African countries paid the costs of pursuing import substitution without reaping the benefits.

In the 1960s, the dysfunctional state of the education system due to the lingering effects of European colonialism, and foreign control of the most economically productive areas in the majority of African countries were also decisive factors that hindered the region’s economic development. The unequal class structure created by British colonialism was preserved. The provision of education was reserved only for the privileged, who had a tendency to migrate to the industrialized West in search of a better life. The state had few resources to set up technical and vocational schools, putting many Africans at a competitive disadvantage. In addition, Africa was saturated with low-skilled European expatriate workers who were paid with foreign exchange. Europeans maintained control of the most productive economic sectors on the African continent. With the non-existence of substantial manufacturing industries, Africa continued to engage in cash-crop-based Eurocentric trade. This guaranteed that the continent remained a massive exporter of foreign exchange at the expense of local employment and investment, as Europeans continued to expropriate profits instead of investing them in the local economies. Africa, in short, achieved political but not economic independence.
During the period of postwar economic development, significant government taxation of the agricultural sector occurred in many developing countries to provide the resources to initialize state-led industrialization. East Asian countries, however, successfully pursued a combination of ISI and export industrialization (EI), while others did not. The East Asian NICs achieved rapid economic growth through an aggressive strategy of EI – not the traditional primary commodity exports, but new manufactured exports. Manufacturing in each society started with textiles and then progressed to products embodying higher technology, such as electronics and automobiles. The initiative for this growth came from the private sector, while states directed resources where they were most needed. East Asian public resources were utilized in the construction of extensive agricultural infrastructure such as safe water, sanitation and electricity and the like in both the urban and rural areas, at a pace that far outstripped their Latin American and sub-Saharan counterparts. With the rapid development of high-yield crop varieties made possible by improvements in irrigation, the green revolution in East Asia resulted in a significant rise in land productivity for rice and maize during the 1970s. Africa’s lack of infrastructure minimized the beneficial impact of the agricultural breakthrough. In Mexico, only rich farmers were able to adopt new varieties, while high-yielding maize was never diffused among poorer farmers due to an absence of government support for irrigation and other inputs.

Labor market economics and the origins of business groups also provide clues to the success of East Asian economic development. Given that labor markets are usually seriously distorted in developing countries, Latin American and African markets were distorted through institutional wage-setting (minimum wage-legislation) and by labor market activism. In contrast, their East Asian counterparts were more flexible due to weaker enforcement of legislated wage levels, the smaller role played by public sector employment, and in some countries such as South Korea and Singapore, political repression of labor unions. As a result, there was a tendency for the rate of corporate profit and hence the level of saving within the region’s industrial sectors to be higher than those in other areas. This translated into greater rates of investment in local economies, which contributed to economic development. In Latin America, many large business groups came from businesses established by European immigrants, often with special technological knowledge and with backgrounds in multinationals. Landed elites with huge wealth bases in agriculture were uninterested in setting up manufacturing industries. In East Asia, however, business groups advanced up the industrial chain as production shifted from agriculture to transportation and storage, diversifying into banking and other financial activities, and finally into modern manufacturing.

To understand East Asia’s successful ascent up the industrial chain, the nature of the state must be put in perspective. The weakness of the Latin American state, as contrasted with the widely touted “strong” states of East Asia, is due to the fact that Latin America entered modernity much earlier than many East Asian nations, in the context of restricted enclaves. The early insertion of the primary-good-exporting Latin American economies into the global economy, combined with the pattern of industrialization that attempted an idiosyncratic internalization of the experience of the United States, did not result in self-sustaining development. A consistent pattern of exuberant consumption, heavily skewed in favor of urban elite groups at the expense of the rural and lower-income majorities, industrial sectors geared primarily towards the domestic market, as well as the dubious leadership provided by national industries, all conspired towards the weakness of the Latin American state. In contrast, the smothering of local entrepreneurial talent in the wake of revolutionary turmoil in the light of Japanese imperialism, as well as state-led reform to pacify peasant upheaval in a chaotic postwar environment, led to the relative absence of industrial and agricultural entrenched interests in East Asian economies such as South Korea and Taiwan. This East Asian sequencing of land reform as a prerequisite for industrialization, which reversed the sequence in Latin America, effectively equalized incomes more than in most developing countries. It also enabled the emergence of effective interventionist states that were supported by the extensive agricultural and industrial infrastructure that the Japanese provided, which stood in stark contrast to the enormous amounts of disinvestments European colonial powers undertook in their Latin American and Caribbean colonies. In addition, East Asian nations were assisted by the United States, which sought to build up their industrial capacities to help contain the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Washington provided tax relief to U.S. companies when they set up shop in East Asia. From schools to shipping industries, American transfers of capital and technical know-how to East Asian nations produced cloned industries that greatly assisted in the region’s industrialization.

East Asian nations produced forceful states that were somewhat isolated from societal pressures. One should realize, however, that the impressive economic achievements of such countries as Singapore and South Korea have not come from dictatorial, repressive measures or oppressive labor policies. Domestic resources were mobilized mainly through free market-type price mechanisms, while the state created
a viable environment for effective entrepreneurship. The framework of economic policy-making was successfully isolated from the clientelist demands of the political process. The institutional infrastructure of East Asia included well-oiled local self-governing units, national extension service and community development programs. These, in turn, produced experienced, dedicated political leaders who could plan and execute long-term development policies conducive to national economic development. Indeed, democratic decentralization, which aims at “political socialization” together with economic development, is, of course, not without inherent contradictions. The delegation of substantial decision-making to local authorities does bring about what the political scientist describes as “a fusion of national and local interest,” rather than weakening the state or central government. This political device alone helped East Asia to close the wide gap in institutions afflicting many developing countries. Their weak institutions of local self-government, plagued by petty politics, parochial loyalties, and a lack of independent sources of finance, have been a constant impediment to many Third World countries.

The Caribbean inherited many of the European colonial structures that Latin America and African countries were saddled with, and thus shared many problems with those regions which were absent in East Asia. Due to the fact that through their historical development the best land belongs to vested interests of an often foreign-based plantocracy, most Caribbean nations are dependent on food imports. In the context of their democratic regimes, a comprehensive land reform which would promote self-sufficient food production seems unlikely. Thus, valuable foreign exchange continues to go into food imports and the continuation of widespread rural poverty means that the size of the domestic market is not maximized. This is only exacerbated by the fact that insular Caribbean nations have much smaller populations than most East Asian countries. In addition, the international economic environment during the 1950s and 1960s was significantly more conducive to late developers than it is today. There is general agreement that the political process, which has sharply increased in both agriculture and manufacturing, despite, and sometimes because of, the latest General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) agreement.

 Developed countries today are not allowed to protect their infant industries – as East Asia was – against superior international competition. The example of the Brazilian hardware industry serves as a stark reminder of investments destroyed by international economic coercion. The industrial structure of Caribbean economies has been affected by the recent neoliberal globalization – enforced by structural adjustment exercises, bilateral assistance programs and new multilateral agreements – in a peculiar way. The Caribbean Basin Initiative, which was touted as a means to boost Caribbean business through the provision of free-trade zones (FTZs), was to effectively provide a cheap-labor site for U.S. businesses. Contrary to the earlier East Asian experience where exports to the U.S. were mainly wholly manufactured products, Caribbean FTZ exporters are encouraged to be involved with low-tech, low-skill component assembly work, with the components themselves mostly produced outside of the region. Seen in this light, by no means have liberalization, privatization and the opening up of Caribbean domestic economies meant anything close to East Asian-style industrial development, as advocates of these policies in the international aid agencies and most Western governments have claimed.

Ultimately, there were many factors that enabled East Asian economies to slowly but steadily ascend the industrial chain, while the majority of Latin American, African, and Caribbean nations were not able to do so concurrently. Although there is no single path to development that fits every country, the recognition of institutional diversity does not accept the argument that there are no lessons to be gleaned from the East Asian experience. It is feasible and enlightening to identify some of the major principles involved, and to adapt the policy tools and institutional means used to fit local conditions elsewhere, and invent new measures if necessary.

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Who Are the Jews of India?
-by Janice HUSSAIN

India has been a refuge for many religious communities. Zoroastrians, Sufis, and Bahais have all sought protection in India. Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism are all indigenous to the subcontinent. Invaders from central Asia introduced Islam, while colonialists from Europe brought Christianity. India became the home to these and many other religious groups. Jews were no exception.

Compared to India’s overall population of one billion people, the number of Jews living there today, about 6,000, is minuscule. Even so, the Jews of India do not belong to a single community, but to many
different communities, each with its unique culture and background. Their origins vary as well, each having arrived in India in different ways. This article will provide an overview of the three main Jewish communities in India: the Bene Israel, the Cochin, and the Baghdadi.

The Bene Israel is the largest Jewish community in India. Its members believe that their ancestors can be traced back to 14 survivors of a shipwreck that occurred during a passage from Israel to India. However, other scholars believe that they descended from the “Lost Tribes” of the Children of Israel, whom the Assyrians exiled in 800 BC. Although their Hebrew language was lost over time, the Bene Israels continued their tradition of observing the Sabbath as a day of rest and circumcised male members of the community. They also observed the kosher law of not eating fish without fins or scales. However, they were not aware that these practices were Jewish traditions until a Jewish merchant named David Rahabi arrived in west India around 1000 AD. Rahabi informed the community that they were practicing Jewish traditions. Some Israeli festivals were celebrated but known by Indian names. Also, many traditions were heavily influenced by Indian customs. For example, in the marriage ceremony, the bride was dressed in a white sari. Bene Israel members also adopted Hindu practices such as not eating beef and not allowing widows to remarry.

The Bene Israel community became a considered part of the Indian Caste system, with many of its members in the profession of oil pressers. In fact, some think that the Bene Israel originated from the tribes of Zvulun and Asher, because oil pressing was a common profession for members of these tribes.

The Bene Israels divided their community into two groups, Goras and Kalas. The Goras, which means “white” in Hindi, were the majority in the community. A Gora’s parents were both Jewish who descended from the original Jewish settlers in India, while the Kalas, or “black,” were the descendents of mixed marriages between Jews and Hindus. These two groups used to pray together, but traditionally, the Goras didn’t accept the Kalas as complete Jews and didn’t associate with them, nor were there intermarriages between them. Today, however, there is little or no distinction between the two groups.

In the 1950s, The Bene Israel’s population numbered about 30,000 members in India, making them 0.01% of the Indian population. Since the 1950s, though, most members of the Bene Israel have immigrated to Israel and some to English-speaking countries such as Australia, England and the United States. Today, there are fewer than 5,000 Bene Israels living in Bombay.

The Bene Israel is one of the few Jewish communities in the world today that has not experienced much anti-Semitism. For over one thousand years, they were free to practice Judaism and develop as a community, while living peacefully but separately with Indians.

The second Jewish community of India is the Cochin Jews, who live in Cochin in southern India. Similar to the Bene Israels, the exact arrival time of the first Cochini Jew is unknown. What is known is that they did not come to India in a single emigration. Some believe that, like the Bene Israels, the Cochinis descended from the Lost Tribes. Another theory holds that the Cochini Jews arrived in India after being exiled from Israel by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Others believe that the Cochini Jews arrived in India because King Solomon wanted them to conduct commercial business with a kingdom in Kerala in south India.

In the 17th and 18th century, Cochin received an influx of Jewish settlers from the Middle East, North Africa, and Spain. Meanwhile, the Jews of Cochin said they came to Cranganore after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE.

Like the Bene Israel, they were divided into “white” Jews, “black” Jews, and Meshuchrarim, or “freemen”. The white Jews were a mixture of Jewish exiles from Europe, who followed Sephardic traditions as well as some Ashkenazi traditions. The black Jews had separate synagogues from the whites. The Meshuchrarim were freed slaves, and their offsprings were attached to either of the two communities. Nevertheless, they had no rights to attend services at the synagogues until 1932. These three groups do not intermarry, similar to the practices of the Indian caste system.

After World War II, most of the 2,500 Jews who lived in Cochin immigrated to Israel, leaving fewer than 100 in India. In 1970, the Jews from Cochin in Israel numbered approximately 4000.

The third major Jewish community in India is the Baghdadi Jews. In the 18th century, Jews who
were later recognized as the “Baghdadi Jews” arrived in India from Arab countries. These countries included Syria, Iran, and Yemen. Many were from Baghdad and other places in Iraq. They came to India because of religious persecution in their home countries, as well as commercial reasons. Most of the “Baghdadis” were merchants before they arrived in India. They settled in the main commercial cities of India, such as Gujarat, Bombay, and Calcutta. The Baghdadi population was about 7,000 in the 1940s, but today there are fewer than 50 Baghdadis in all of India.

There are other smaller communities of Jews in addition to the Bene Israel, Cochin, and Baghdadi. In east India, in the state of Manipur, a community of Jews views itself as descendants of the Menashe Tribe, one of the Lost Tribes. These Jews, who have a Chinese appearance, claim that after their forefathers were exiled and enslaved by the Assyrians, they escaped from slavery and arrived in China. Later, they moved to the Chinese-Burmese border and to India. There are many Christians in the state of Manipur as well. Some Manipur Jews believe that the Christian missionaries in the 19th century forced these Jews to convert to Christianity.

European Jews are also prevalent in India. During World War II, about 2,000 Jewish refugees escaped from European countries and arrived in India. These Jews often worked in high-skilled professions such as medicine. Jewish people also joined British services in India. In the 1920’s, the Viceroy of India, Lord Reading, was born to Jewish parents.

The central organization for Indian Jews is the Council of Indian Jewry, which was established in 1978. It consists of representatives from the various synagogues and Jewish organizations. The committee deals with important religious rituals, such as marriage and conversion. It also helps provide kosher food for the various communities.

There are three Jewish schools in Bombay, but over the years, the number of Jews enrolled in them has declined. Israel and India have had diplomatic relations since 1992, and Israel has a consulate in Bombay and an embassy in New Delhi. Subsequently, many Indian Jews have made aliyah, which means that they have emigrated to Israel. Since 1948, 26,536 Jews have left India for Israel. As the population continues to shrink, the future of a flourishing Jewish presence in India remains in doubt.

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The Lion Roars: Origins of the Ancient Art of Lion Dancing

-by Diana KWOK

The lion is considered an animal of high nobility and remains a symbol of happiness, courage, prosperity, and good luck in ancient China. The tradition of lion dancing has been passed down through the generations to ward off evil spirits. As the legends were passed by word of mouth, there are many different stories as to how the lion dances came into being. Most can be entitled Kung-fu Master and the Lion, The Paper Beast, The Lion and the Nian, The Emperor’s Dream, The Lion Saves an Emperor, The Lion Breaks the Elephant Formation, and The Death of the Lion. This article will delve into the above-mentioned lion dances, exploring their origins and deeper meanings.

The lion dance can be traced back to China’s Han dynasty (205 B.C. to 220 A.D.), when the first lions in Chinese history were sent as gifts to the emperor. Historians believe these gifts were sent in exchange for the privilege of bartering with merchants on the Silk Road. It was not until during the Tang dynasty (716-907 A.D.), however, that the lion dance became a popular ritual, which was believed to bring good luck and ward off evil. It is said to have begun when a lion rampaged through a small village, harming adults, children, and animals alike. No one dared to challenge the lion, except a kung-fu master who had learned of the villagers’ predicament. He caught up with the lion several times, but was never able to imprison him. He rallied the villagers by teaching them martial arts so that they might defeat the lion. After a few months, the group set out to take vengeance on the lion. They found the lion in the mountains, where the teacher and pupils defeated it in a vicious battle. In order to celebrate this grand occasion, the villagers composed the lion dance.

One of the most popular stories concerning the origins of the lion dance is also based in a village. Everyday, so the story goes, a beast romped through the village destroying what few belongings the villagers owned. As the days wore on, the people gathered together
and decided to do something about this terrorization. They devised a plan to make their own “beast” in order to scare away the real one. They pieced together a rough resemblance of the beast and gathered some instruments (most likely, it was pots and pans) to scare him away. After a frightful and deafeningly loud encounter, the villagers celebrated their victory with firecrackers.

A similar version is The Lion and the Nian (年—meaning “year” in Chinese). This time, there was a terrible monster called Nian that terrorized the villagers. When China’s emperor became aware of the monster’s threat, he immediately sent orders for a wise man to resolve the crisis. The wise man first fought alongside the lion, but the lion was injured. He then challenged the monster to defeat other malevolent creatures that roamed the surface of the Earth who actually stood a chance against him. Nian accepted the challenge, taking a year to vanquish all the other monsters of the Earth before returning to bully mankind. The day he returned, he was petrified to find the children playing with firecrackers. When the villagers discovered the monster’s fear of firecrackers, they made an imitation lion and gathered firecrackers to scare Nian away. To this day, the lion dance and firecrackers have been a symbol of peace used on New Year’s Day to fend off Nian, the last malicious monster left on Earth.

In yet another interpretation, Qianlong (1736-1796), the third emperor in the Qing dynasty (1644-1912), had a dream during a trip to Jiang Nan, south of the Yangtze River. He dreamt that, while he was standing alone, a mysterious creature appeared by his side. The horned creature stared at the emperor and left as suddenly as it had materialized. Upon waking in the morning, the emperor questioned his advisors regarding the interpretation of his dream. Everyone decided that this creature had come to show the emperor that it was of the same rank as the emperor. It thus earned the title “King of Animals”.

The Lion Saves an Emperor is similar to the last version. It is said that during the Tang dynasty, an emperor had a dream in which he lost track of his army. He was without food or water, and would have lost hope had it not been for a creature that emerged from the darkness to guide his way back to the palace. The next day, the emperor consulted his circle of ministers and was informed that this creature was called a lion, a creature not found in China at the time. His ministers were then ordered to construct a model so that the emperor could view it when he was awake.

Lin Yi, a country located in the area of Laos and Burma, was the target of General Zhong Yue of the Sung dynasty. He was stalled for a bit by the formidable “Elephant formation” of the Lin Yi army, but after some thinking he came up with a plan. He had heard that all animals, great or small, feared the lion. He ordered the creation of imitation lions and placed the replicas on the front line. When the elephants saw the look-alikes, they fled. This is how Lin Yi fell into the hands of the Sung army.

One of the most appealing versions of the story centers on the rebirth of a heavenly lion. The lion was a naughty one, often the center of attention, as he liked to play practical jokes on practically anybody. One day, he went too far and infuriated the Jade Emperor himself. In a moment of rashness, the emperor severed the lion’s head from its body and threw it into a ditch to rot. When the Goddess of Mercy, Kwan Yin, discovered the lion, she pitied him.
Kwan Yin brought the lion back to life and embellished it with a few instruments against evil. The red ribbon along its spine, the horns, and the mirrors are all gifts from Kwan Yin.

The northern style lion dancing is also called the Peking lion dance. Rooted in Beijing Opera, it utilizes the kung fu styles of northern China, characterized by swinging arcs with the arms and legs to create a long flowing motion. Thus, it requires more aesthetic martial arts skills and acrobatic movements than the Southern lion dance. The Peking lion is mangier than the southern lion as it possesses a full body of yellow and red fur drooping like a weeping willow. The head is smaller, golden colored, and not as flexible as the southern lion’s.

The northern lion usually operate in groups of at least three. Walking on a large moving ball or stealthily crossing a high wire are just two of the many antics the lion has up his sleeve. Generally, the lion is escorted by a woman or boy who attempts to tame him. This is customarily accomplished by tantalizing the lion with a small ball. The ball is inched out of the lion’s reach while the lion tamer requests execution of more challenging acrobatic feats. Due to the difficulty of the northern style, many dancers choose to learn the techniques of the southern lion.

The southern, or Cantonese, lion dance uses southern styles of gung-fu. Most are characterized by short kicks, low stances, and upper body techniques. The lion’s head is crafted from paper mâché and a wooden framework to yield a final product weighing approximately 30 to 40 pounds. The lion’s body is made of lengthy material composed of different colors – depending on the lion – connected to the lion’s head. This is the area where one person acts as the head while another takes up the rear.

There are two types of lions: the old (wise through experience) and the young (impulsive and assertive) type. Old lions, complete with a long white beard, symbolize an established martial arts school and younger lions sporting a short black beard tend to be used by schools new to a given area. Both lions perform tricks such as jumping from poles, climbing on tables and chairs, and standing on shoulders. The dance steps are very exaggerated and thought-out. The instruments, a drum, gong, and cymbals, follow the lion’s steps according to a deliberate rhythm.

Another style was developed when the Manchus took control of the Chinese government around 1644 and formed the Qing dynasty. This lion was used to harbor weapons and act as a reason to be traveling around the country. It was also used to keep in touch with other loyalists of the Ming dynasty. The Satin-like face of the green lion (Fighting Lion) mirrored the brutality of the Qing militia. With eyebrows structured from steel swords and a penetrating gaze, the lion’s face symbolized an impossible mission: defeating the Manchus while reviving the Ming dynasty. Thus, when the dance was performed, the ability to defeat the green lion meant that the Manchus were toppled from their throne.

Today the lion dance remains a source of popular entertainment. Although it may seem to be merely a boisterous gathering, there is a rich historical and cultural heritage behind the dance. It is an art that ushers in the New Year to bring health, luck, and prosperity to all. So let these creatures of imagination strike fear into demons, and experience a phenomenon fit for emperors.

Diana KWOK (’08) is a first year student at Brandeis University.
Outsourcing (Part II)
- by Lilian DUVAL

About the Author
Lilian Duval is a technical writer, a 9/11 survivor, and a former software developer. She lives with her husband George, a native of Singapore, in Ridgewood, New Jersey, and writes fiction in her spare time.

Synopsis: Outsourcing (Fiction)
In Part 1, Vijay, a brilliant young Indian economist, has swept into Aurelie's Wall Street office. She feels her career threatened, and at the same time is drawn to him, impressed by his talent, and entranced by his culture.

The flight attendant brought them Hindu vegetarian dinners on toy dishes wrapped in foil and plastic. “Smells good,” Aurelie said. “I love airplane food.”

“Oh, so do I,” Vijay said. “Traveling gives me an appetite.”

After they finished, she pulled a little box of Godiva truffles out of her travel bag. “Here, take some,” she said, glancing at Kurt across the aisle. He was still stuffing himself and didn’t notice. “A decadent dessert to mark your first business trip with the company.” They munched on chocolates and watched the clouds. Kurt swallowed a couple of sleeping pills and put on a blindfold. “That man is beyond weird,” Aurelie whispered.

Vijay smiled. “I’m pretty sleepy, too. See you later.” He closed his eyes.

When she was sure he was asleep, Aurelie slipped her hand into his. He neither clasped her hand nor pulled his away. There was a catch in his breathing. She couldn’t tell whether he was continuing to sleep, or awake and pretending. His skin was surprisingly smooth, refined. She fingered his palm lightly and wondered how it would feel to be nude together. The sensation of falling in love was so uplifting that she could have flown without the plane. She decided, midway across the Atlantic, to enjoy whatever brief intimacy she could attain with him, admitting that there would inevitably be some price to pay. She reluctantly slid her hand away and closed her eyes. It was a new day when she awoke in London.

In the bar at the hotel, Vijay sipped his drink while she played with hers, barely wetting her lips. He told her he was missing one of his favorite holidays, a kite festival – Makar Sankranti. She loved to watch him talk about something that excited him. The bar was dark and nearly deserted. She felt uninhibited and leaned a little closer. His eyes glowed.

“There are teams from different states. They compete in categories, like Best Fighter Kite, Best Display Flier – it’s so much fun.”

Aurelie was thinking how much fun it would be to attend a kite festival with him, or to do anything with him. She was becoming uncontrollably horny.

“There are kites that buzz like wasps, and kites with imitation stained-glass panels, and kites shaped like mythical birds,” he said. “I carry many happy memories from this festival.”

She smiled sympathetically. He seldom talked about his life in India; it was as if his cherished memories of home were too delicate to expose. She was gratified that he was trusting her. He finished his drink, and she slid her full glass over to him. “Here, have mine, you’ll sleep better.” She smiled encouragingly.

He sipped. “You’re trying to get me drunk,” he said.

“No, I’m not; if I drink when I have jet lag, I can’t function the next day,” she said.

“What about me?” He laughed.
“You’re young and strong. It’ll relax you.” She hoped she wasn’t harming him.

“Good night,” she said as they approached their rooms. His was right next door. She stammered something about needing to unwind, and he invited her in to watch a movie. They folded into each other’s arms. “We shouldn’t be doing this,” he mumbled into her hair. Kissing him was much more enjoyable than she had expected. She could hardly talk. “It’s okay,” she panted. She tugged him toward his bed, pulling him over on top of her. She had daydreamed this sequence many times before, but Vijay in bed with her was not the same as Vijay in the comfortable imaginary scenes, where she had done all the driving. She was nervous to death. She tugged off her watch and dropped it on the night table, bumping into the table lamp, and didn’t know what to do next. For one thing, she wasn’t sure whether to be noisily exuberant, or quiet, the way you make love when someone is in the house. And she had ended up on the wrong side of the bed but couldn’t maneuver to the right side.

Afterwards, he held her with the arm that was still around her waist. “Did you…” he whispered.

She could barely speak. “Yes, oh yes.”

“Was it good for you?” he asked, full voice, in a mischievous tone, affecting a New York accent in his Indian English. They both howled with laughter. Then he dozed for a few minutes, while she tried to memorize the silhouette of his head and shoulder in the dim light. The wave of his hair turned and cavorted like the cadences of his speech.

A clatter in the hall woke Vijay and he sat up. “You’d better go to your room. We can’t be seen together.” He wasn’t especially warm, and she didn’t know what to make of it. She started to kiss him goodbye, but he gave her the briefest peck on the lips. He must have been exhausted from the jet lag and the drinks. Aurelie slipped into her room and lay down. A faint whiff of his cologne lingered on her fingertips. She sniffed her hand and closed her eyes.

They found a satisfactory motel by the Holland Tunnel in Jersey City that charged thirty dollars for a three-hour stay, and went there once every week or two. They shared the expense. No one at work noticed their relationship; they never touched or exchanged intimate glances. Vijay was so convincing as a dispassionate colleague that Aurelie had moments when the affair seemed an illusion. It amused her to attend meetings and group lunches with him, their secret humming in the background.

They settled into a pattern that she thought of as Round One, Halftime Show, and Round Two. Round One was quick and eager. The Halftime Show consisted of conversation and lighthearted bickering. She planned topics for discussion, but usually forgot them by that time. Like a college girl at a football game, she often enjoyed the Halftime Show best. Round Two was slower and more satisfying, although by now her habit of faking orgasm had become ingrained. Then they left the motel separately.

Aurelie made an effort to learn as much about Vijay as he was willing to divulge. By May, he was warming up a bit. “Let’s turn on the air conditioner,” he said one evening during Half Time.

“Tropical weather today,” she said. “Like in India?”

“Not nearly. But I’m going home for my sister’s wedding next month.”

“An arranged marriage?”

“Pretty much. Our two families have known each other for a long time.”

“Do you think it’ll work out?”

“Absolutely. Our divorce rate is very low, practically nonexistent. There’s so much support when a wedding happens. It’s exactly like the families getting married to each other. The families and friends do everything to help the couple get started and stay together.”
“What if they find out they’re completely incompatible and it was a big mistake?” she said.

“First, you don’t just get thrown together with a girl and told that she’s your wife. You have some time to get to know each other, and to raise any objections. And second, once everyone decides on the marriage, there’s a tremendous obligation on the part of the couple to stay married,” he said. “It’s our culture. People don’t get divorced. Plus, they confirm the permanence of it all with a celebration that goes on for at least five days and nights.”

“Wow, a five-day wedding,” she said. “No one would ever put on a spectacle like that in this country.”

“Ahhh… life is so different back home.” He folded his hands under his head and made a tent with his knees under the sheet. She propped herself up on one elbow and looked at him in the dusky light from the window shades. “You know, in India, a close friend is just like a brother; he would do anything for you,” he said.

“Mmm,” she said. “Are you homesick?”

“I was, for a while, when I first came here from London. There, I had my cousin. Here, I was depressed until I found myself a nice group of friends. My best friend lives in the apartment near me. We keep each other’s house keys and car keys.”

“You’re kidding.”

“See what I mean? Americans don’t trust anybody. Sandeep comes into my place anytime he wants,” he said.

“Without knocking?”

“Sure. And you know what else is different? In my family, we pool all our money. If I get a raise, we all do.”

“You mean you send your paycheck home?” she said.

“No, no, my money is their money. What my parents have, we all have. My parents and my sister have all my credit cards.”

“They use your credit cards?” She tried not to sound alarmed.

“My checking account, too. They withdrew $10,000 for my sister’s wedding.”

“What if you want to buy something expensive, or move to a bigger place?”

“We talk about it on the phone and decide what’s best for the whole family. We live an ascetic life, where people are much more important than things, and possessions don’t matter.”

Vijay was going home to India for three weeks, and he invited her for a sort of farewell to his quiet apartment complex surrounded by trees. In a framed photo on the coffee table, Vijay was hugging a middle-aged couple and a girl about his age. “Nice family,” Aurelie said.

“Yeah, you know what? If I ever go around again, I’ll want the exact same family when I come back. They gave me so much love growing up, so much freedom. My childhood was – idyllic. It will be impossible to repay them for all the sacrifices they made.”

Aurelie reflected on her own parents, her own brothers; fine, in her eyes, but very far from ideal.

“They were here for a couple of months last year,” he said.

“You mean weeks?”
“Two months.”

She tried to imagine an American family visiting a grown son in a one-bedroom apartment for two months, and gave up.

“Do they know about me?”

“No. If they asked, I would tell them. I would tell them anything.”

“Then why can’t you tell your friend about me? The one who has your keys?”

“Why do you have to analyze everything? Take life as it comes.” He smiled at her in his familiar seductive manner, then closed the blinds and crouched before her. “Want to have some fun?” he said electronically. She laughed. He tugged at her sweater and pulled it over her head. It was still daylight, and they had never seen each other partially nude before. In the motel, they always made love in the dark. They had been lovers for eight months, and she didn’t even know if he had flat feet or high arches. “Want to come into my bedroom?” he said.

When it was over, she put her arm around him and groped for his hand. He rolled away and said, “Don’t do that.”

“But you’re violating sexual etiquette,” she complained. “Afterplay is part of the experience. We never have a moment to savor.”

“Stop being so melodramatic. Listen, I was in love once with a girl in India, but it didn’t work out. She was as unlike you as anyone could be. I don’t want to do anything with you that interferes with my memory of her.”

“That’s terribly insulting. She’s gone, and I’m here, and you make me feel cheap, like a whore, and I’ve been a good friend to you.”

“We’re getting nowhere. Just think of it this way: it’s a nice part of both of our lives, but it has no significance beyond that.” He was sliding into his jeans. Aurelie walked naked into the living room, self-consciously now, picked up her scattered clothes, and put them on. She sat on the sofa combing her hair.

Vijay came in from the bedroom and sat next to her, opening a photo album in his lap. “Want to see some pictures?” he asked softly. He showed her photos of his college classmates. Some had written farewell letters to him in English, and he let her read them. Many of the young men had their arms around each other, their hands trailing over one another’s shoulders. She remarked on that.

“That’s another thing I miss,” he said. “Here, if I show my affection for a male friend, it means I’m gay. Your culture is rather sick and puritanical in that respect.”

“My culture?”

“Don’t be so sensitive. Hey, let’s go get some dinner.” They went to a local Indian restaurant, where a few families were having dinner, and Aurelie was the only Caucasian person there. “Don’t they know you here?” she said.

“It doesn’t matter what they think. They’re not in my group.”

The waiters were staring openly at her. “They’re staring at me,” she said. He shrugged. “Vijay, you know what. I’ve really enjoyed your company. Your friendship even more than the rest of it. I’m going to miss you so much.”

“Enjoy life as it comes,” he said, and changed to some safe topics: his work, his car, his sister’s wedding. She marveled that he could be so cool after the hot afternoon they had spent together. Instant replays were already beginning in her mind even while they were conversing. The savory food in the restaurant was excellent. She would have food for her imagination for days to come.
They got into his new BMW and he drove her the sixty miles to the commuter parking lot in her suburb. Before getting out of the car, she tried to kiss him, but he said, “That’s not good for us. Just friends, right?”

“Ok, just friends.”

Peculiar friends. She waved as he made a U-turn, then sat alone in her car, watching him drive away in his “bimmer,” and taking time to savor the moment. He was so happy within himself that she had tried to become slightly more like him in order to soak up some of his sunshine. She had enjoyed revealing herself to him, a bit more each time, offering him the kind of little vignettes from her life that he would listen to, that he would approve of. She treasured his company. He was someone for whom the story of her life was news.

But he hadn’t listened to the story of her life. When he returned after his visit home, Aurelie could no longer make easy conversation with him. He was always on the phone, or reading, or writing, or churning out e-mail messages. Sometimes he was absorbed in papers that he kept in a red folder in his briefcase. He was irreproachably courteous, but unavailable. His history with Aurelie seemed to have vanished, and remained a memory only for her.

One day, Vijay was called hurriedly to a meeting and forgot the folder on his desk. Helplessly, Aurelie shut the door and opened the folder. There were printouts of e-mail messages between him and a girl in English and an Indian language. They were engaged to be married. There were handwritten love letters. On a page torn from the Matrimonials section of an Indian magazine, Aurelie read:

Suchitra is 22, single, Hindu female living in Mumbai, India. She is in final year B.E. Computer Science & Engineering, and has been brilliant in studies with first class throughout. Suchitra is very sober, mild, cheerful, decent, very well cultured, and respects all. She is slim and beautiful with fair complexion. She likes to try new things and meet new people, and is a very friendly, fun-loving, sensitive, caring, honest, and affectionate girl. Her friends and family are very important to her and she takes time to cultivate those relationships. She likes to laugh, read, cook, travel, dance, sing, listen to music, and much more. Suchitra has an older brother who married two years ago, living in California, a senior software engineer. Her father is a bank manager and her mother is retired from government service.

We are in search of an educated, matured, confident, well settled, loving, and caring life partner for our daughter. Caste no bar. He should above all be a good friend. Please let us know if the particulars suit the boy. We are planning for an early marriage. Only serious candidates may please contact.

Beneath the magazine page was a glossy snapshot of Vijay, sitting and smiling, with a young woman standing behind him, dimples showing in her smile. She was draped in a cream silk sari printed with pink orchids, her lips painted to match the flowers, her wavy, black hair grazing his neck. His right hand was clasping hers, their fingers entwined. She was beautiful. The couple’s postures were natural and unstressed, as if the photographer had snapped them just as they were, without making them pose. Aurelie studied the photo attentively, memorizing their faces, and carefully replaced it in the folder with the letters. She set the folder on Vijay’s desk exactly as she had found it, left the office, and did not return to work that day.

After a year with the company, Vijay returned to Mumbai and never gave the affair a backward glance. Suchitra was his life.

He had never thought much about girls growing up. As a student, he had been more occupied with his studies and his buddies than with dating. During his first visit home from America, his father had come to him and announced that he would be formally introduced to Suchitra at a family gathering soon to take place. Vijay and Suchitra had sat at the periphery of the room and conversed shyly for half an hour. The next day, his father had asked him what he thought of her as a potential wife. “She’s fine,” Vijay said.

“So we can go ahead and plan the wedding then,” his father said.
“Not yet,” Vijay said. “I’d like some time to get to know her better.”

“Well, what more would you know after another meeting than you have already discovered?” his father had asked him kindly. “This is enough. She comes from a good family. You’re both the right age. Let’s make plans.”

At the time, his father’s authority and his simple argument had been sufficient for Vijay, and he had consented to the marriage. Since then, growing together with Suchitra, learning to give and to give in, he had come to adore her with such immense force that it seemed as if his internal organs had gladly relocated within his body so as to accommodate her, as if she were filling his whole being with colors and light and music and rapture. His parents had discovered her, but she was his destiny. No one could have made a more perfect match.

The End

Acknowledgements

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Co-Founder's Farewell to Monsoon

There is a saying that in his later years, Pablo Picasso was not allowed to roam an art gallery unattended, for he had previously been discovered in the act of trying to improve on one of his old masterpieces. As a founder of Monsoon and a graduating senior, I do not share Picasso's paternal anxiety over his prized creations. I believe that the journal has steadily matured since its inception in Fall 2003. I also know that the new leadership is more than capable of taking the publication to greater heights.

On the surface, today's Monsoon bears little resemblance to its budding self in 2003. Our expanded student-run Editorial Board, which reflects an unparalleled diversity of talent from all walks of life, is the envy of our colleagues in other campus media organizations. Our deeper pool of contributors, which range from Brandeis students and faculty to overseas scholars, underlies our distinct brand of Asian cosmopolitanism. Most importantly, our readers are increasingly outspoken on what they would like to see as we cover the political, economic and cultural realms of Asia.

There are certain elements that will not change, however. Our uncompromising pursuit of the highest journalistic standards undergirds the fact that Monsoon is the highest Student Union-funded publication within a year of its founding. Our ongoing efforts to engage students and faculty with a globalizing Asia through forums and other outreach programs will seek to build upon the success of our last event in Spring 2004 - “Globalization and its Costs in Asia” - which drew more than a hundred guests from the campus and beyond. Finally, our creed to wholeheartedly embrace enthusiastic students - Asian or not - into our closely-knit family will continue to be a key pillar that nourishes our work.

In the foreword of Monsoon's maiden issue in November 2003, I wrote how many Westerners and other peoples have been deprived of the joy to appreciate the Indian fascination with the annual monsoon. Our mission has been, in an Asian context, to highlight how ignorance is the greatest obstacle to discovery and self-fulfillment in a rapidly shrinking globe. I hope that Monsoon has made its modest contribution in achieving this goal, and will continue to Bring Asia to Brandeis with flying colors. We may not be able to bring you the magnificent intermingling of monsoon thunder, lightning and rain that Indian royal families have traditionally enjoyed in their palaces. However, we can deliver to you the best of Asia through the enriching discipline of the written word.

Thank you for your support.

Kassian Polin
Co-Founder, Monsoon

A fond farewell for the founders...From left to right, Elliott, Ben, Kassian, Daniel.