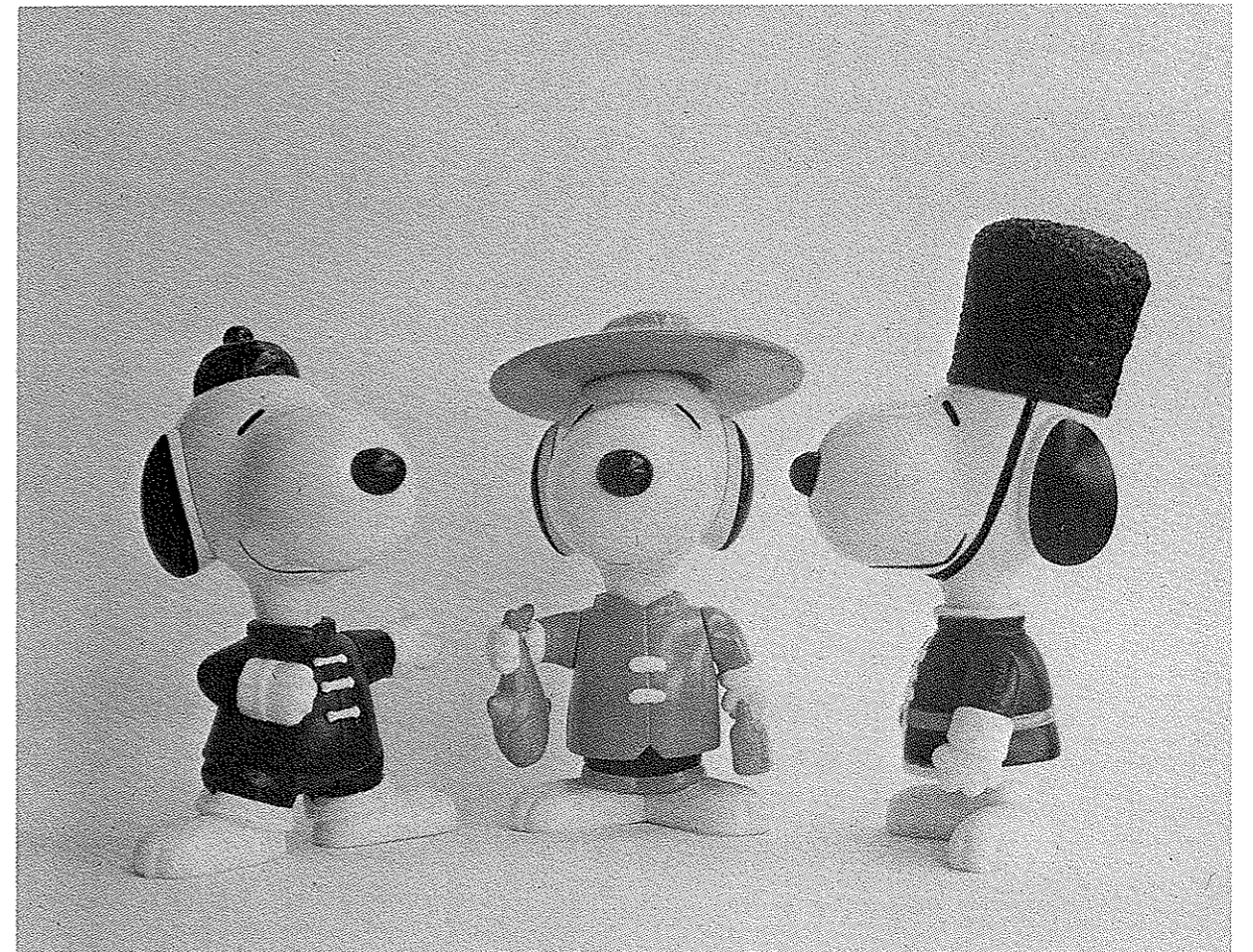


THE HONG KONG

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Report for 1998-99 by Gordon Mathews and Chris Hutton, Acting Co-Chairpersons

Over the past year, the society has had a range of interesting speakers. In May 1998, Makio Morikawa spoke on "the tricks of the trade," on what he learned from his years as an anthropologist-shop clerk in the tourist zones of Tsim Sha Tsui. The 12th Barbara Ward Memorial Lecture was delivered by Sidney Mintz in June: "A Matter of Islands," comparing Hong Kong to Puerto Rico in the cultural influences that have shaped them. Peter Ip Pau-fuk spoke in July on triad activity in Hong Kong, and on the cultural meanings of triad rituals. In September, the society followed the Hong Kong Museum of History in its move from Kowloon Park to Chatham Road; Larry Witzleben gave the inaugural talk at the new venue, on popular music in "pre-postcolonial Hong Kong," focusing on the performances of Anita Mui.

The society sponsored a trip to Macao in late October, in which a dozen intrepid people toured the historical sites by day; several of us experienced the casinos and other sundry spots by night as well. In early December, a Hakka Heritage hiking trip took society members to the Sheung Yiu Folk Museum, a restored Hakka village in Sai Kung. Sing Lee spoke in December on "Fat, Fatigue, and the Feminine": Dieting trends among Hong Kong women and their cultural meanings; Josephine Smart spoke in January on the second wife syndrome in south China, and its relation to larger social and economic trends in the region. May Cheng spoke in February on "Christianity Fever in China," and underground churches in China today; and Tracey Lu spoke in March, at the Annual General Meeting, on the birth of agriculture in China, a talk which generated much debate and discussion.

In a postcolonial Hong Kong and a globalizing world, the Hong Kong Anthropological Society continues to evolve, in presenting in its talks and trips topics both traditional and contemporary, relating to anthropological concerns both old and new. We continue to recruit new members at every opportunity, and strive to keep a balance between academic anthropology and the interests of our lay members; we welcome suggestions from any of our members as to our future activities. Many thanks to those who have worked so hard this past year, in organizing the society's activities: Kuah Khun-eng who served as Chairperson until February, when she took leave to give birth to her baby daughter (congratulations!), vice-chairperson Sidney Cheung, secretaries Jane Fong and Matt Pierce, treasurer Andrew Stables, and all the other members of the Executive Committee, whose contributions were invaluable. Thanks are also due to the editors of *The Hong Kong Anthropologist*, Joseph Bosco and Grant Evans, as well as to Joseph Ting and Irene Chan at the Hong Kong Museum of History for providing a monthly venue for our talks.

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with the assistance of Zhu Jiangang

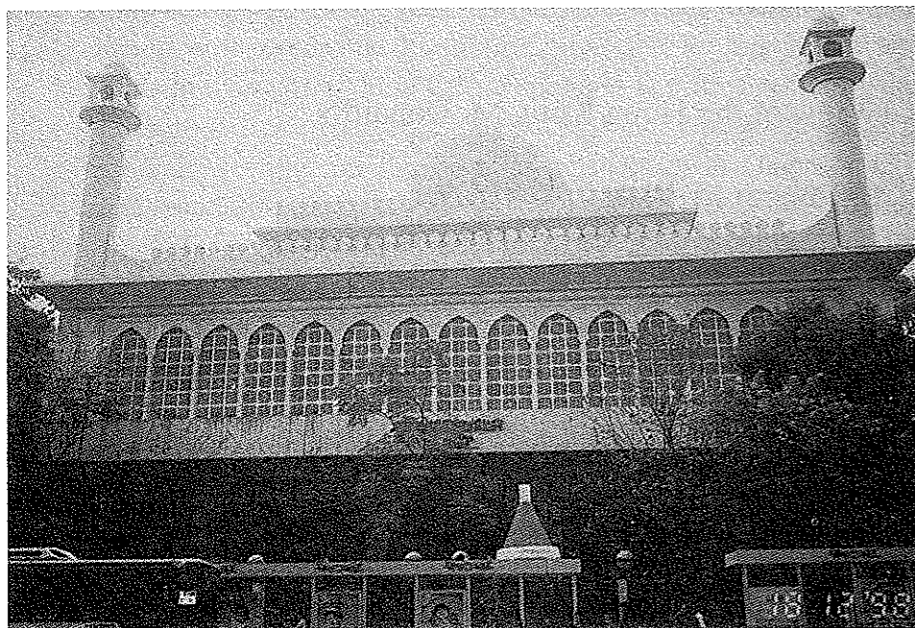
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Muslims in Hong Kong

Caroline Pluss*

Introduction

Muslims in Hong Kong are rich in their ethnic and religious diversity. Today, there are approximately 70,000 Muslims in the territory, the majority of whom are Chinese¹. For different periods of time, a number of Hong Kong Muslim groups have evolved on their own, either resisting attempts to be integrated into an encompassing organizational structure, or failing to obtain the necessary consent from the other groups with whom they could merge. This history of inclusion and exclusion is most evident in the example of the Trustees. This article first provides information on how the different Muslim groups formed their communities, and then examines their oldest and most encompassing organizational struc-



The Kowloon Mosque, is the largest mosque in Hong Kong. (Courtesy of the Islamic Union of Hong Kong).

* My sincerest thanks to Chan Kwok-shing for his help given with classifying my data on Hong Kong Muslims and to Karin Smedjebacka for her conducting of interviews. thanks also to Chan Wai-yi for her help with translating Chinese sources and to Daniel Lau for transcribing the recordings of a symposium on Hong Kong Muslims.

¹ Personal communication by the Public Relations Officer of the Islamic Union, Mr. Sayd Gouda.

ture, the Trustees. This organization is important because it is responsible for the management of the most sacred expressions of Islam in Hong Kong, the mosques and cemeteries. The history of incorporation and exclusion of the different groups in relation to the Trustees provides us with some knowledge of what the aspirations and hesitations of these people were in their attempts to become guardians of Islam in Hong Kong.

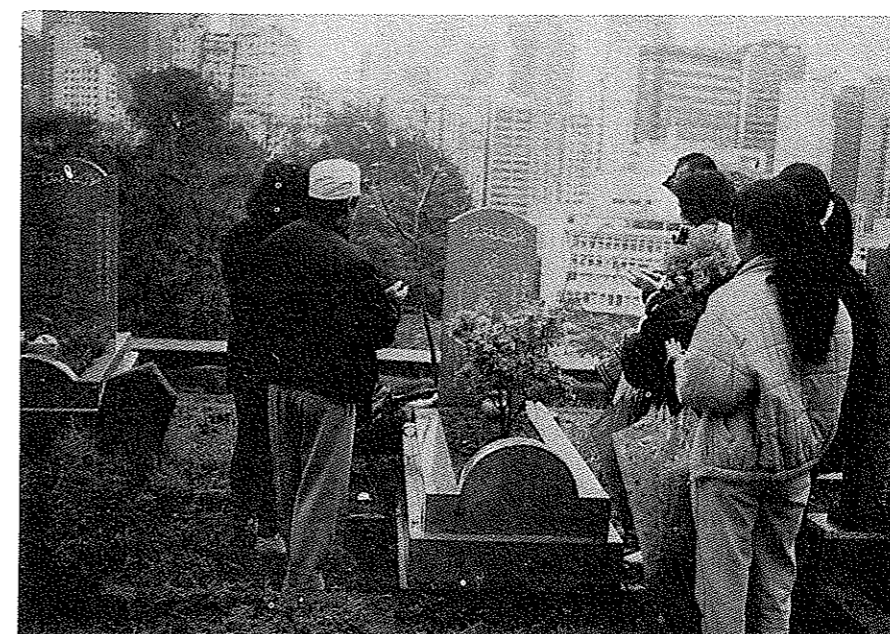
The first Indian, Pakistani and Southeast Asian Muslims

Written sources on the history of Muslims in Hong Kong are rare (see the references). Tang explains that the first Muslims approached Hong Kong Island in

the early 19th century. They were Indians, working as sailors on trading ships. They did not set foot in Hong Kong, but stayed on the boats, that were anchoring off Lantau Island, and in the Hong Kong harbour (Tang 1995: 48). The first known Muslims to settle in the territory were also Indians. They were either engaged in sea-trade, or were soldiers the British brought to the territory in 1841. The soldiers came from Punjab Province in northern India (Tang 1995: 48). The seamen settled in two streets in Central district, the Lower Lascar Rows, "Lascar" meaning "sailors from India". The Chinese called

them "Moh Loh". This is a colloquial expression for Indians, making allusion to their dark skin color. During their first years in Hong Kong, the Muslims had no mosque where they could perform their prayers, and thus prayed in the streets. We know that the Chinese population showed respect during

these events, by not carrying any pork meat through the streets at times of prayer (Weiss 1991: 420)². A mosque was built a few years later, presumably on Shelly Street. (Smith n.d.: 14-17). The Chinese called it "Moh Loh Miu", meaning "Indian temple". The second mosque in Hong Kong was built in 1869, between Austin Road and Nathan Road, nearby the Whitfield Barracks (Tang 1995:50). The British Garrison initially managed this mosque, since it was built mainly for the Punjabi Indian Muslim soldiers. The growth of Hong Kong's economy encouraged further Indian Muslims, mostly from the Punjab Province, to settle in the territory. They worked as policemen, as security guards and as sailors, or opened department stores (Tang 1995:49; Zi Yu 1979:12; Smith n.d.: 22-29,47). At the same time, established Muslim merchants arrived in the territory from India. They were Bohra Muslims. The Bohras are a special sect that originated from the Shi'a branch of Islam³. Early in the 19th century, they had set up their business in the Chinese coastal settlements (ITICFHK 1985:15). Most of them oper-



Muslim tombs in the Happy Valley cemetery. Note that the inscriptions are both in Arabic and Chinese. (Courtesy of the Islamic Union of Hong Kong).

ated only temporary business firms in Hong Kong. Weiss explains that the main reason the Bohra merchants came to Hong Kong was to press for compensation. In 1839 in Guangdong, the Qing government had confiscated their opium. After the resolution of their claims in the 1880s, they gradually returned to Bombay and East Africa (Weiss 1991:423-424). The Bohras were however not the only established Muslim traders in Hong Kong. During the 1860s, other Muslim traders from the southern Indian city

of Madras arrived in the territory, and successfully built up their businesses (Mr. Furrakh Rizvi, 1986 Symposium). Tang claims that during the period of 1840 to 1879, there were altogether twenty-seven Indian Muslim firms in Hong Kong (Tang 1995:50). In later years, Southeast Asian Muslim merchants, mainly from the Malaysian Islands came to trade in Hong Kong (Tang 1995:50).

The Chinese Muslims

The sources on how the Chinese Muslims established themselves in Hong Kong are also rare (see references). Tang dates their arrival as the latter half of the 19th century. Nevertheless, I think it is probable that they traded in Hong Kong earlier, since Muslims had been living in Guangzhou for a long time. The first Chinese Muslim to live in Hong Kong, after Tang, was Ma Kai Cheung. In 1872, he came from Yunnan Province to Hong Kong in order to set up a branch of the "Hing Sun" shop (Tang 1995: 51). Tang explains that after the 1880s, given the

improvement of the financial situation of Hong Kong, more Muslims from the Mainland, especially also those from Guangdong Province, moved to the territory. They either set up their own business or worked as labourers. Tang recounts that in 1912, Yunnanese Muslims set up branches of the stores two stores "Wing Yi Cheung" and "Mo Seung Ho" (Tang 1995:51). Muslims from the North of China moved to Hong Kong in 1937, when the Japanese started to invade China. The Japanese Occupation of Guangzhou in 1938 also

brought Chinese refugees to the territory. A further set of Muslim migrants arrived in Hong Kong in 1949, when the Communist Party came to power in

² Muslims abstain from eating pork meat, which is seen as impure.

³ Muslims can be roughly re-grouped into either Shi'a Muslims, or Sunni Muslims. The Sunni Muslims form the majority of Muslims worldwide, including most of the Chinese Muslims. Today, most Shi'a Muslims live in Iran and Southern Iraq. Sunni and Shi'ites differ in their interpretations of the Koran, and have different customs (Netton 1992: 230-231, 238).

China. Some of them were famous Muslims intellectuals and entrepreneurs (Tang 1996:57). Thoraval informs us that in the 1950s, a small number of wealthy Muslim merchants from North China had settled in Tsim Sha Tsui. They were mainly engaged in selling antiquities and jewelry (1991:247, note 62).

Hong Kong Muslims in the Second Half of the 20th Century

The middle of this century marked significant changes in the composition of Hong Kong Muslims. On the one hand, the Chinese Muslim population had significantly increased and on the other hand, most of the Indian soldiers had been sent back to India after World War II. Later on, they were "replaced" by Pakistani Muslims. Also since the middle of this century, Muslims from Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Burma started settling here. They lived mainly in the commercial areas of Tsim Sha Tsui (Tang 1996:58). Indication for the increase of the Muslim population of the latter half of this century is the Hong Kong Government Annual Report. It counts 20,000 Muslims for the year 1973 and 50,000 Muslims for the year 1980. The same report for 1980 provides evidence for the new prominence of Chinese Muslims: It states that out of the 50,000 Muslims, 30,000 were Chinese, 12,000 were Pakistanis, 5,000 were Hong Kong born Muslims and 3,000 were Muslims of other nationalities (quoted in Tang 1996:58).

The first Trustees

The Muslims who held their prayers in the Lascar Rows wished to build a mosque. Four representatives applied for a piece of Land from the Hong Kong government which was granted in 1950. Once the mosque was built, they became its Trustees. They were Shaik Moosden, Mahomed Arab, Shaik Carther and Hassan Malay. Shaik Moosden was a native of Madras in India. He had moved to Hong Kong from Macau in 1842 and had an office on Queen's Road. Mahomed Arab was an entrepreneur with

connections with the Lascar Row sailors. He was also well connected with the British, having been at the ceremony when the British raised their flag at Possession Point. Shaik Carther was the head of an Indian sailing crew and a boarding house keeper. Hassan (or Hussan), a Malay, was granted a license for boarding and lodging Asiatic seamen in 1847, at the same time as Carther and Arab (Smith n.d.: 11-20). The first Trustees were prominent figures in the trade that brought the Indian Muslims to Hong Kong. My guess is that the Trustees and the large majority of the Muslim community in Hong Kong of that time were Sunni. Supporting evidence is that we know that Shi'a Muslims, in the form of Bohra traders, only arrived in the territory in the 1860s. In addition to being responsible for the Shelly Street mosque, we may assume that the Trustees were also in charge of burying Muslims on that plot of land. It was only in 1970 that the Hong Kong government leased land in



Help by the Islamic Union to Mainland Muslims in Ning Xia Province. (Courtesy of the Islamic Union of Hong Kong).

Happy Valley to the Trustees for the purpose of establishing a Muslim cemetery. Thoraval informs us that this cemetery also contained a little mosque, which was used to prepare the burials (1991:222-223).

The Trustees of the Early 20th Century

In 1911, a new set of Trustees came to be the guardians of the mosques and cemetery. Six Muslims⁴ replaced the initial four Trustees who had all deceased. The way in which these representatives had been elected gives us information on which Muslim groups were involved in the organization.

These were first the Sunni Muslims, forming the majority of the Indian and Pakistani Muslims in Hong Kong. The Sunni were allocated four Trustees, two of them representing the Sunni who were members of the Islamic Union⁵, and two representing the Sunni who were not associated with the Islamic Union. The Shi'a Muslims, presumably mainly the Bohra traders, had two Trustees. We interpret the involvement of the Islamic Union in the Trustees as evidence for the importance of secular trading activities to Hong Kong Muslims. These six Trustees were



New convert with Imam Haji Uthman Yang. (Courtesy of the Islamic Union of Hong Kong).

appointed under the stipulation that in case of death or resignation of one of the Trustees, it will be up to the Muslim group who originally nominated the Trustee to elect a new one Thoraval (1991: 223). As we will see later on, this stipulation came to work against the inclusion of Chinese Muslims. I can only speculate on the reasons why the Chinese Muslims were not part of the Trustees of 1911. It is possible that until the early parts of the 20th century, there was not much contact between Chinese and non-Chinese Muslims, perhaps because of differences in languages and activities. Nevertheless, this hypothesis awaits substantiation. Membership in the Trustees brought with it the demand that the members of the groups represented needed to pay monthly subscriptions. As a return, they obtained low rates for burial in the Muslim cemetery. However, Muslims who were not associated with the Trustees also had the right to be buried there, but at a higher rate. The Shi'a Muslims were a special case. As their beliefs differ from the Sunni who ran the mosques, they did not worship there. But their membership brought the advantage that a special area of the cemetery was reserved for their use (Thoraval 1991:225).

The first attempt to have Chinese Trustees

Despite the fact of not being represented in the Trustees, Chinese Muslims had started to contribute to their income through paying subscriptions (Thoraval 1991: 227). The subscriptions were probably for using the mosques and cemetery. The Japanese occupation of Hong Kong (1941 to 1945) interrupted the activities of the Trustees and an interim committee was formed. After the liberation in 1947, a first meeting of the committee was held in the premises of the Chinese Muslim Cultural and Fraternal Association⁶. The location of this meeting clearly indicates the desire to include the Chinese Muslims. The members of the interim committee consisted of two representatives from the Shi'a sect, two members of the Chinese Muslim Cultural and Fraternal Association, two delegates of the Indian Muslim Society⁷ and two representatives of the Islamic Union (Thoraval 1991:227-231). In 1949, the interim committee proposed the

following distribution of seats for a new formation of the Trustees: Two seats were to be assigned to the Islamic Union, two to the Shi'a sect, one to the Pakistan Muslim Society⁸, and one to the Chinese Muslim Cultural and Fraternal Association. But strong opposition surfaced among the Pakistanis. They refused

⁴These six Trustees were Ahmet Rumjahn, Abdool Bin Suffiad, Muhamed Akbar, A. Fukeera Arculli, Esmail Chandobhoy and Tyabjee Motabhoy. They represented the coalition of three Muslim groups in Hong Kong. Rumjahn and Suffiad represented the Sunni Section which consisted of members being also in the Islamic Union (see the next note); Akbar and Arculli represented the Sunni Section whose members were not associated with the Islamic Union; and Chandobhoy and Motabhoy represented the Shi'a Section which supposedly consisted mainly of Bohra Muslims (Thoraval 1991:242-243).

⁵The Islamic Union was founded in 1905 by Muslims of the Sunni sect. They mainly came from India, Pakistan and later from the Malaysian Islands and China. The initial aim of the Islamic Union was to promote trade with China (ITICPHK 1995: 8; Tang, 1995:51).

⁶The Chinese Muslim Cultural and Fraternal Association was founded in 1918. The founders were Ma Ging Ji and Tuet Man Ying. The aim of this association is to look after the interests of the Chinese Muslims in Hong Kong (CMCFA 1979).

to play only a secondary role in the institution to which they had contributed much in the past. The Pakistanis based their objection on the stipulation that trustees can only be replaced with candidates from within the Muslim groups who were putting up the Trustees of the early 20th century. (Thoraval 1991: 230). As a result of this protest, the Chinese Muslim Cultural and Fraternal Association was excluded from the Trustees and the Pakistan Muslim Society presumably obtained two seats.

The 1960s Changes in the Trustees

In 1969, the Trustees, representing the Islamic Union, the Pakistan Association and the Shi'a Association, drafted an agreement that was soon to become controversial. It stipulated that their members had to pay at least three dollars each month to the Trustees, so that a fund could be established to advance the practice and teaching of Islam in Hong Kong (Thoraval 1991:234). The Shi'a Association soon withdrew from the agreement explaining that some of their members did not wish to pay three dollars per month as one of the conditions for incorporation (Thoraval 1991:235). A further, and perhaps even more important reason, for why the Shi'a Association decided to withdraw was the article of the agreement regulating the conditions for being Trustees. The article stipulated that all associations represented needed to transfer their property to the Trustees. Given the observation that the majority of the members of the Shi'a Association were wealthy, especially the Bohra traders, they were worried that their properties would be controlled by others. The Chinese Muslim Cultural and Fraternal Association brought forward the same argument. They refused to join the Trustees, claiming it was difficult to demand the

⁷The Indian Muslim Society was founded in 1924 by the Punjabi Muslims belonging to the Sunni sect but not to the Islamic Union. Many of them were working in the Hong Kong Police Force, the Royal Naval Yard Police, or the Prison Department (Thoraval 1991; Tang 1995).

⁸After the partition of India in 1947, the Pakistani Muslims who formerly belonged to the Indian Muslim Association founded another organization: the Pakistan Muslim Society. The society was formally registered in 1950 when it had 650 members (Thoraval 1991:228).

⁹The Dawoodi Bohra Association was founded in 1973 by the Bohras belonging to the Ismaili Shi'a sect (personal communication by Mr. Zoheir Tyebkan).

¹⁰The Kowloon mosque was, and is, frequented by the Pakistani, South Indian and Northern Chinese Muslims who are living in the Tsim Sha Tsui area. This mosque replaced the one in the Whitefield barracks nearby, which was destroyed in 1980 (Weiss 1991: 443).

¹¹Personal communication from the Public Relations Officer of the Islamic Union, Mr. Sayed Gouda.

monthly subscription fee from their members, whose economic status was modest, and stating that they disapproved of the idea of having to hand-over their association's property (Thoraval 1991:235-236).

Integration into the Trustees in the 1970s and 1980s

In the early 1970s, only the Islamic Union and the Pakistan Association were part of the Trustees. But a few years later, both the Daiwoodi Bohra Association⁹ which became representative of the Shi'a Muslims, and the Indian Muslim Association, rejoined the Trustees. Two Trustees started representing the Bohras 1979 (White 1994: 62), and one the Indian Muslims in 1983. Although the reasons for why these two organizations rejoined the Trustees await investigation, we can hint that this movement was associated with the wish of being part of the enlarged structure which assured the practice of Islam in Hong Kong. As we have discussed, the earliest responsibility of the Trustees was to look after the Shelly Street mosque and then the Happy Valley Muslim cemetery. From around the middle of the 20th century onwards, the Trustees came to look after a larger number of mosques and cemeteries in Hong Kong. In 1947, the management of the Tsim Sha Tsui mosque was handed over from the British Garrison to the Trustees. In the 1930s, the Garrison also handed over the responsibility for the Ho Man Tin cemetery to the Indian Muslim Association, who, in 1947, handed it over to the Trustees. The Trustees also became the managers of the mosque and cemetery in Cape Collinson. Furthermore, they played a leading role in the reconstruction of the dilapidated Kowloon mosque¹⁰, which had been built in 1896. We can make the hypothesis that with the expansion of the responsibility of the Trustees over more mosques and cemeteries, it became both more necessary and significant for the different Hong Kong Muslim associations to be part of the Trustees. This brings us to the question of why the Chinese Muslims did not put forward Trustees, as they could have for example done through the Chinese Muslim Cultural and Fraternal Association. A tentative answer might be the observation that the Chinese Muslims were indirectly represented in the Trustees through their membership in the Islamic Union. Today, for example, the two representatives of the Islamic Union are local Chinese.¹¹

Conclusions

This article first provides us with some insight into the question of how the principal Muslim groups

came to establish themselves in Hong Kong. It then explains some of the reasons for which different groups, at different moments in time, were hesitant to join the Trustees. It is important to stress that the emphasis of this paper is on the secular reasons provoking such hesitation. Namely, it substantiates concerns over membership fees, property rights and loss of power. This focus on secular issues is an arbitrary choice, and was principally imposed by the present availability of source material. There is no reason to assume that religious and symbolic issues are not equally important in determining the involvement of different Hong Kong Muslim groups in the Trustees. For example, it can be expected that the prestige which membership in the Trustees carries with it is a strong factor motivating membership in this organization.

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香港的穆斯林

Caroline Pluss

文章摘要

本文討論了香港七萬穆斯林中的不同組織如何在不同的歷史時期整合與分化的過程。文章首先描述了不同的穆斯林組織在不同的歷史時期如何形成自己的社區，然後檢驗他們中間最老和最封閉的組織結構：托管會（Trustees）的發展過程。通過研究不同組織與托管會之間的合併與排斥的歷史，作者揭示出不同穆斯林組織在參加托管會時之所以猶豫的原因。作者尤其強調那些導致這些猶豫的世俗性原因，如會員費、財產權和宗教設施的可提供性，雖然宗教與象征的因素也同樣重要。

CHANGING MEANINGS OF AN ART FORM: A LOOK AT KETHOPRAK IN RELATION TO JAVA'S CHANGING SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE 1990s

Nancy Tsui-Han Yu

Introduction

Kethoprak is a form of theatre popular in the land of Central Java created at round about the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century¹. Throughout the decades Kethoprak has encountered several changes in performing stylisation and technique, Kethoprak as performed nowadays in Central Java can be recognised by a combination of the following features:

Stories performed (lakon) based on the legends of the old Javanese kingdoms, or fictional stories. Sometimes, though not very often anymore, stories are directly taken from other sources²; in these cases the "foreign" plays would be "Kethoprakised" (dekethopraké), which means to put into the "foreign" plays the other features mentioned below which are necessary to make it a Kethoprak performance.

Usage of correct Javanese languages³— even though sometimes (more often for Kethoprak on TV) the national language Bahasa Indonesia is used. People in Central Java generally insist that Kethoprak is not real Kethoprak if Javanese is not spoken.

Usage of a gamelan musical ensemble.

Usage of Keprak (a small wooden box), usually by the manager of the performing group, to control the momentum and

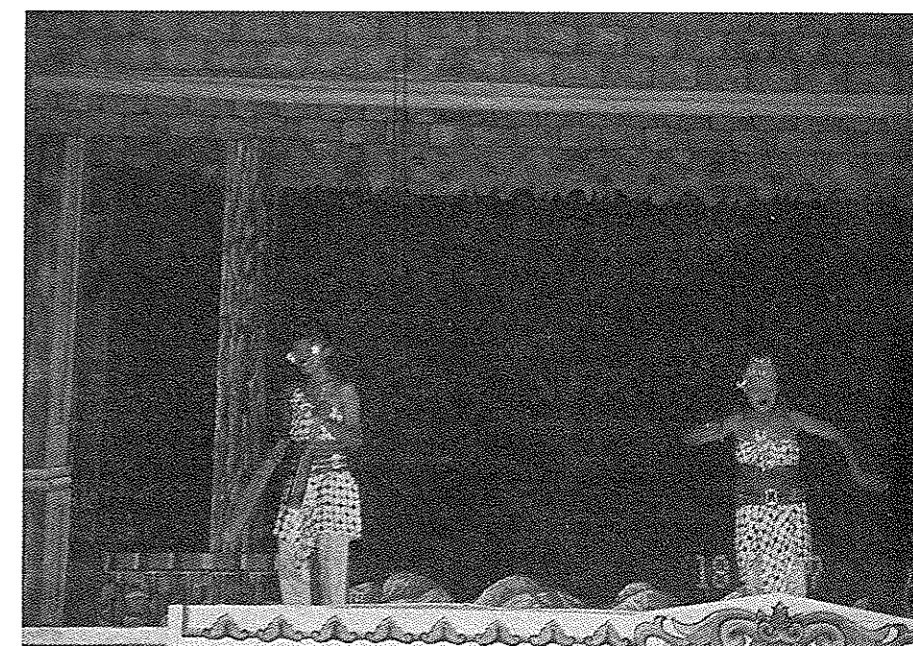
intensity of the performance. This is becoming optional now, as actors (especially the younger generation ones) are beginning to resist the usage of Keprak, holding the view that it restricts their own artistic expressions⁴.

Singing of tembang (Javanese songs), mostly Campur Sari (songs popular among the villages) during the performance.

At least one court scene in each performance. This would typically be a court gathering of a king and his court officials for discussion of some current issue in the country, or love scenes between handsome princes and their beautiful wives.

One (or more) clown scene, which most of the time does not have any immediate connection with the development of the plot.

Traditionally no script was ever used in



A Clown Scene.

¹ The history of Kethoprak will be dealt with in later part of the text.

² Such as stories about national heroes during nationalist movement years, or even stories taken from other parts of Indonesia and other countries. For example, Hatley (1972) mentioned "Romeo and Juliet" being performed in a Kethoprak performance. Also see Brandon (1967).

Kethoprak; the performance depends of simple stage direction given by the group manager before each scene and the improvisation of the actors. Nowadays, however, scripts are sometimes used, mostly in cases of Kethoprak on TV or in Kethoprak competitions and festivals⁵, where time limits have to be strictly followed.

Kethoprak has been experiencing a severe decline of public interest since the middle of the 1980s, resulting in the closing down of many commercial troupes. During my fieldwork in Java from October 1998 to April 1999 I was only aware of three commercial troupes still performing Kethoprak regularly: Ngesti Pandawa, Wayang Orang Bharata, and Siswo Budaya. Ngesti Pandawa in Semarang performs Kethoprak on every Monday and Thursday in their own theatre house; Wayang Orang Bahrata in Jarkarta performs Kethoprak everyday, but to small audiences; Siswo Budaya, on the other hand, is a bigger group which still enjoys relatively large audiences at each performance. Siswo Budaya is a touring group based in East Java, the group tours around some major cities and towns in Central Java, staying in each place for two to three months each time. Apart from these three, most of the former regular commercial troupes now only do contract perform-

ances for private celebrations mostly held in villages. Actors in these groups work on a freelance basis and usually have a regular job to support their daily living. Since the 1970s Kethoprak also appears quite frequently on TV as well as the government sponsored Radio station RRI, being shown as a "traditional performance," alongside other performances such as Wayang Kulit (the shadow puppet show), Wayang Wong (a court originated dance-drama), etc.

From what I could observe from my fieldwork in Java, performance of Kethoprak requires a strict following of the above listed features⁶. However, once these features are observed, performances then become incredibly tolerant to improvisations, to an extent that any actor with any role could possibly become a comedian at literally any point of the performance. A typical example would be a performance I went to by a very famous Kethoprak troupe Sapta Mandala in a village near Yogyakarta.



A fighting scene.

The village head, to celebrate a wedding as well as the graduation of two of his daughters, financed the performance. The director, Pak Gati, did not decide what lakon story to play until he and the other actors got to the village. The performance was scheduled to start at about 8:30 p.m., Pak Gati and his group arrived at about 8 o'clock and started having the meal provided by the family that sponsored the performance. At around 9 o'clock the lakon was decided and roles distributed, after which the actors started to do their make-up⁷. Gamelan

had been playing since much earlier that evening, with loud speakers hanging on the tree so that people from other villages could hear⁸. The proper performance finally started at 11 o'clock, no script was used, simple stage directions were given by Pak Gati and he controlled the development of the play by hitting the Keprak in various specific manners. Around half way through the performance the audiences became extremely responsive to the occasional improvised jokes made by the actors and actresses. As it turned out the jokes appeared more and more frequently and in the end practically every actor on stage became a comedian and they were just spending hours throwing witty jokes at each other. The audiences loved it and seemed to have totally forgotten about the main development of the plot. In the end the scene turned out to be two hours long instead of the usual fifteen minutes. When it was getting very late (five o'clock in the morning) and the performance really must end, the actors basically just exchanged a few words, the bad guy suddenly announced that he felt really bad for what he did, and a happy ending was ensured. The rough ending of the play disturbed none of the audience, almost as if the plot never mattered at all.

Background: Kethoprak in Central Java until the 1970s

It seems that Kethoprak was invented around the end of the nineteenth century⁹. Kethoprak at that time was a kind of folk drama performed in villages during harvest time, and the performances were accompanied by stamping rice in a hollow log called *lesung* as musical illustration. Such Kethoprak was called Kethoprak Lesung. Kethoprak Lesung went on to develop into more sophisticated form and it gradually gained in popularity among the people, and by the 1920s more than four hundred troupes were performing Kethoprak in the area around Surakarta and Yogyakarta¹⁰. It was also believed that Kethoprak performances did not use gamelan for musical illustration until Kethoprak Lesung was brought to the courts of Java when gamelan was gradually introduced to and incorporated into performances of Kethoprak. Gradually under the influence from the kraton that gamelan ensemble eventually became a definite requirement of a "real" Kethoprak performance.

In the 1950s, when the political situation was very volatile in Indonesia, different parties aggressively competed with each other for political support and in Central Java, Kethoprak was frequently used by these parties to promote their own political ideal. Among these political parties, the Indonesian Communist

Party (PKI) and the Nationalist Part of Indonesia (PNI) were staging and sponsoring the most Kethoprak performances¹¹. While PKI and PNI also staged other forms of performances, both of them gave special attention to Kethoprak. Such special attention given to Kethoprak was precisely because of Kethoprak's property as "the people's art", that people perceived it to be more with identified themselves. Moreover, since Kethoprak is more flexible in terms of choices of lakon than other means of performance, it is easier to stage stories with obvious political orientation¹². Indeed, special organisations of Kethoprak were formed on top of other organisations of art and culture. The Nationalist Cultural Association (Lembaga Kebudayaan Nasional), for example, was one of the affiliated organisations of the PNI - the largest political party in Indonesia during that time. Apart from organising various cultural activities through different departments, the Lembaga Kebudayaan Nasional had a special subsidiary organisation for Kethoprak called the Association of Nationalist Kethoprak (Lembaga Kethoprak Nasional). The Indonesian Communist

⁶ Apart from some of the Kethoprak performances on TV, where Bahasa Indonesia was used and not all the other features were observed. To many people, however, these TV Kethoprak are not real Kethoprak as soon as they do not follow the features listed. Moreover, sometimes other features are also emphasised by some of the more conservative Kethoprak actors and audiences. For example, I was told by some of my informants that in Kethoprak, a king must act like a king, meaning all the other actors with other roles can turn into a comedian except for the one acting as the king.

⁷ It is very common and pretty much expected for a performance not to start before 10 o'clock even though it was scheduled to start much earlier.

⁸ This is as much to inform people that there will be a performance, as to show off how wealthy this village is that it could finance a whole Kethoprak performance.

⁹ Brandon (1967) offers the following account of the "beginning" of Kethoprak. In his legendary book *Theatre in Southeast Asia* he wrote, 'In 1914, R. M. Wreksodiningrat, and official of the court of Pakubuwono IX of Surakarta, noted peasant women singing as they were stamping rice in traditional fashion in a hollow log (*lesung*). The sound and rhythm intrigued him. He brought this *lesung* to his residence and had it placed in the great hall. Every day he rehearsed with it, absorbing its rhythm. He added tambourine, drums, and flute and began composing music and dances based on the stamping rhythm of the *lesung*. He called his creation Kethoprak, the word *kethok*, meaning 'to knock.'" According to Brandon, who got the information from the article entitled "R.M.T. Wreksodiningrat", Kethoprak gradually gained popularity among the people. By 1920 both amateur and professional groups had formed in Central Java to perform Kethoprak, and later on in 1927 gamelan instruments were added for musical illustrations. I personally have reservations in fully accepting this account of the "invention" of Kethoprak for it seems to me to put too much credit to one aristocrat. The fact that an aristocrat was said to have created and invented Kethoprak seems to me not a logical explanation for the birth of a popular art form.

³ In its most simple context Javanese has three levels: Java Ngoko (low Javanese), Krama Madya (medium Javanese) and Krama Inggil (high Javanese). The usage of each level depends on whether the person one is addressing is from a higher, lower, or same social level. So when two persons from different social levels are talking to each other, the one from the lower level would have to speak high Javanese, whereas the other person would reply in low Javanese.

Nowadays, even in Central Java, few people are fluent in all three levels of Javanese. This is partly because of the aggressive promotion of the national language, Bahasa Indonesia, from the new order government in order to promote national identity, and partly the spread of mass media.

⁴ People are still arguing whether it is a must for Kethoprak performances to use Keprak. Keprak's function is only

to connect the director with the gamelan leader and the actors. For example, when the Keprak is knocked in a fast manner, the music will go louder accordingly, and the actors' expressions should be angry, also the acting should be intensified and the gamelan should be "seseg" (referring to the style of playing that is fast and loud in gamelan). Some people felt that the actors and the gamelan leaders can interact much better without the interference of the directors and thus give more expression freedom to the actors.

⁵ These competitions and festivals are organised by the state, each group is usually given one and a half hours for the performances. Because over-time would result in marks reduction, strict following of the written script is generally observed and improvisation avoided or even eliminated.

Party, on the other hand, indirectly controlled the largest politically oriented theatre group in Indonesia – BAKOKSI (Badan Kontak Kethoprak Seluruh Indonesia, or the All-Indonesian Kethoprak Organisation). It was said that as many as 801 professional and amateur Kethoprak troupes were affiliated to BAKOKSI¹³.

The flourishing of Kethoprak performances resulting from the active support of various political parties literally vanished after the final political clash that brought about the birth of Soeharto's New Order Indonesia. Countless members of the communist parties were killed or imprisoned during the 1965-66 massacres, among them plenty of Kethoprak participants. In the following years, until early 1970s, one saw a complete disappearance of any Kethoprak performances.

When Kethoprak finally reassembled again in the early 1970s, performances were almost sponsored by, and therefore under the control of, the New Order Government, especially the armed force.¹⁴ Kethoprak was extremely popular during this time, with many commercial troupes performing every night in their own theatre house, charging audiences entrance fees¹⁵. At the same time touring groups were very well received in villages and towns of Central Java. Apart from these live commercial performances, radio broadcast of Kethoprak by the state radio station RRI was immensely popular as well. Kethoprak's fast pace, and earthy style of performance was very much liked by the audiences.

The popularity of Kethoprak that lasted through the 1970s suddenly came to an end in the 1980s. With the rise of living standard in Java, western-influenced forms of entertainment became more available to the life of average Javanese. More and more households could afford their own TV, people began to go the cinema to watch Hollywood films. Compared to these new forms of entertainment, the Kethoprak performances that lasted for at least five hours became somewhat clumsy and dull:

There are many other kinds of entertainment [apart from Kethoprak] now. Technology has developed, before people rarely watched TV, now

¹⁰ Brandon 1967: 48

¹¹ The Muslim parties were not active in sponsoring performances, partly because performances were not fully approved by their religious orientation.

¹² Lakon for performances in the Wayang traditions, for example, are restricted to stories from the Indian epics Mahabharata and Ramayana. Although political ideal could be transmitted in a very subtle manner, it could obvious not be done as directly staging performance about, say, life of a communist hero.

¹³ Brandon 1967: 215-20. It should be noted, however, that neither LKN nor BAKOKSI were officially affiliated to PNI and PKI respectively. Also see Bradon (1967), p.218

they can watch TV everyday. On top of that, there are many private television, people can watch TV at home while they lie down, maybe have a drink or two, and they don't have to pay for it. As for the past, people wanted to go out to watch [Kethoprak], even when it was raining, they went by motorbike, or bicycle, or on foot, had a little walk. Before people needed entertainment [from outside the household], because, especially in Yogyakarta, people rarely had television. Perhaps in one village there were only two or three people who owned TV...

This was an account given to me by Pak Marjiyo, a famous Kethoprak producer and actor in Yogyakarta. Attempts, on the other hand, were made to modify Kethoprak to make it more competitive and more able to fit in modern life. For example, performing hours were shortened to two or three hours, sometimes the national language is used instead of Javanese to give the performance a modern touch. These attempts, however, have not been very successful. By the early 1980s there were no commercial Kethoprak troupes left in Yogyakarta. The famous Sapta Mandala, even though it still enjoys a good reputation, was not drawing enough people to support the nightly performances. Finally it stopped its 14 years of commercial performances in 1985 and became a non-active troupe. Since then the members of the troupe have changed from working on a full-time basis to free lance basis. The troupe only does performances by special arrangement, usually in a village for a one-night performance. The same thing has happened to other troupes as well.

Kethoprak in the 1990s

As it was mentioned in the introduction, I am only aware of three commercial troupes till actively performing Kethoprak in Central Java – all of them, except for the touring group Siswo Budaya, are barely surviving with monetary help from the government. As mentioned above, all the other troupes either were closed down altogether, or they survived as free lance performing groups. PS Bayu, one of the most famous Kethoprak groups based in Yogyakarta, enjoys a great reputation of being one of best – if not the best – Kethoprak troupes with the best directors and actors. PS Bayu does not do any commercial performances in theatre hall anymore, but it is still very much favoured by the people and was very often invited to perform in villages well into the early 1990s. The situation has got a lot worse since the beginning of the Asian financial crisis in late 1997, as people could no longer afford a Kethoprak performance, which on the average costs Rp5,000,000 (roughly equivalent to HK\$5,000) for a one-night

performance.

During my fieldwork in Java, what struck me the most was how little people refer to Kethoprak as a "people's art". The feature of Kethoprak as "art for the little people" (kesenian wong cilik) as opposed to the "high court art" has almost totally disappeared. Instead, people put different emphasis on "what Kethoprak is." From all the interviews, formal and informal, I conducted, I was told again and again that Kethoprak meant 'things Javanese' for them. Kethoprak as the 'kesenian wong cilik' was hardly mentioned at all. In fact, one of the Kethoprak troupe managers I talked to was literally offended when I mentioned Kethoprak as (the little) people's art as opposed to high court art. He insisted that Kethoprak has over the years developed into an art form enjoyed not only by the low people, but also by middle class people (and I had the impression that he was more keen to convince me that Kethoprak was more for the middle class people nowadays). Indeed, what seems to be the case is that in the twist of the last ten or fifteen years, Kethoprak's history as the "people's art" is no longer a relevant issue, and what is important is that it is a "traditional Central Javanese art". This is, as shown in the earlier part of this article, obviously not the case for Kethoprak in the 1950s.

As an art form, most people I talked to believe that Kethoprak will not die out. What amazes me so much, though, is not that they firmly believe that Kethoprak will not die out (bearing in mind that Kethoprak's popularity has dropped quite dramatically since the mid 1980s), but that they believe it will not die out because it is so importantly a "Central Javanese art." Here is what I was told by Pak Gati, the director of the troupe PS Bayu mentioned above:

No, Kethoprak will not die out, of course it will not die out. Kethoprak is about things Javanese. Producing, acting, and even watching Kethoprak is about learning to be a Javanese. Why is that the case? You learn [in Kethoprak] about Javanese history and legends, you learn how to speak proper Javanese language and thus proper Javanese

mannerism, you learn how to sing Javanese songs, you learn Javanese dancing, and you even learn how to wear traditional Javanese clothes properly. [emphasis added]

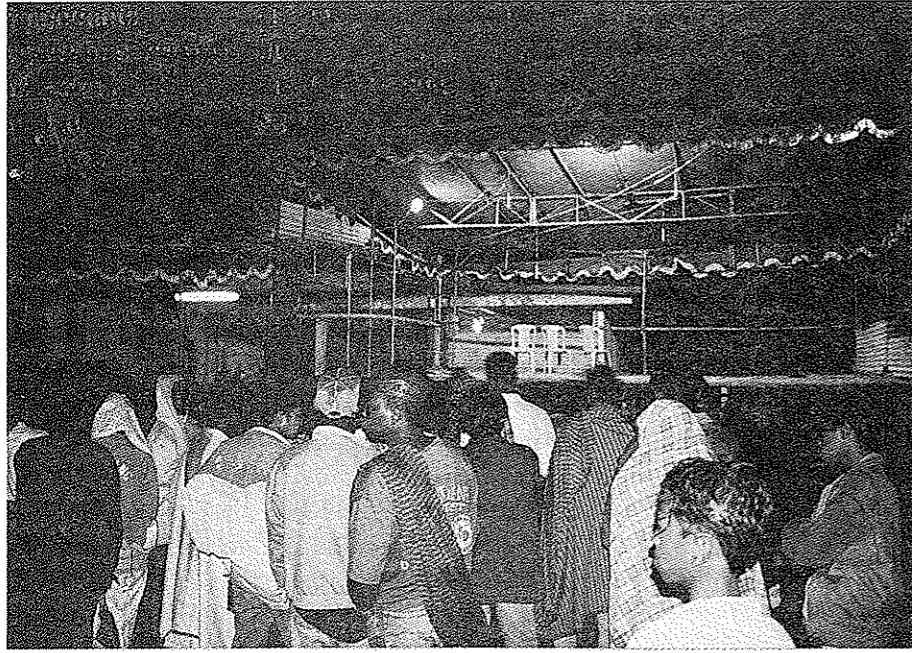
Similar remark was made by Pak Marjiyo:

I think [the things that make Kethoprak important] is that we can learn from Kethoprak proper Javanese language, proper manner and proper behavior.

What is being said by these Kethoprak artists (alongside with what I was told by countless other people I talked to informally) is very significant because it departs so dramatically from how Kethoprak was previously perceived. For up until the 1970s, it was clear that the most outstanding features of Kethoprak is its 'earthiness', its closeness to everyday life of the common Javanese. This means less restrictive usage of 'proper' Javanese language during a performance, since most common Javanese were only fully acquainted with low Javanese and a little bit of high Javanese. In fact, it was not rare that most of a Kethoprak performance in those time was enacted in low Javanese, regardless of the difference of social status between the concerning roles. Having said that, the emphasis that people learn in Kethoprak 'proper Javanese' now almost seemed to be a ridiculous account if one considered how Kethoprak was perceived 20 years ago. It used to be precisely the reasons that Kethoprak is less restrictive for features such as proper Javanese language, proper Javanese mannerism being enacted (and thus easier to be comprehended by the audiences) that granted Kethoprak its reputations and popularity. Now the level of precision in the Javanese being used in



Villagers preparing dinner for the members of PS Bayu before the performance.



Outsider-villagers waiting with much expectation.

Kethoprak performances is often time no less than even the Wayang performances¹⁶.

How did this change come about? Perhaps one should first look at the changing cultural environment in Indonesia, especially Java, in the 1990s. This aspect has been well discussed by Barbara Hatley in her article "cultural expression" in *Indonesia's New Order: the Dynamics of Socio-economic Transformation*¹⁷

Active participation in Indonesian cultural forms is open to a broader spectrum of people than in the past. Small town and village high school pupils stage poetry readings and form pop music bands; labourers and becak drivers rehearse along with college students in modern theatre groups. One possible effect of the process is a *greater sense of identification with such national culture, no longer seen as something remote, artificial, or the monopoly of a city elite...* But more important and more deleterious, many commentators suggest, is the *uniformity of thought and expression imposed by modern mass media*. Blank images of urban prosperity, consumerist values and conformist sentiments, prized for their 'modernity', prevail over previously varied and autonomous regional modes of expressions; the standardised Indonesian language of mass media and formal public communication undermines local linguistic diversity. [emphasis added]

Indeed, the period between the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s represents a time of rapid economic growth in Indonesia. Although admittedly only a small portion of the population shared in the wealth, people's life in general had improved much nevertheless. More people are receiving education, and more

households can afford their own television set as household income increases. And as the number of private owned television increased, the more television programmes began to dominate people's entertainment pattern. This has two main effects:

Central Javanese regional identity was threatened by Indonesian national identity; and

Traditional Javanese values were threatened by 'modern', and capitalist-oriented values

For the case of national versus regional

identity, whereas it has always been the case that programmes shown on television, under the control of the new order government, have always been keen to promote national identity (and deliberately discourage regional identification), it could not have great effect until people could actually afford to watch TV as daily entertainment. In another words, television really only began to take a much more active role in cultural shaping in the 1990s. Furthermore, through programmes shown on television (melodrama depicting love affairs between the urban elite in Jakarta, programmes directly imported from the USA. etc.) people are more vulnerable to conformist sentiments and an idealised material life as the ultimate dream. I would argue that the change of the emphasis of what Kethoprak means demonstrates Central Javanese resistance to such cultural changes.

For as far as the spread of national identity and the chasing of a materialistic life are in concerned, Javanese thinking (or some people might prefer putting it as Javanese philosophy) represents itself as the opposite. For example, in traditional Javanese thinking, uncritical respect should always be paid to people of a higher social class by people from

¹⁴ Hatley (1994)

¹⁵ There were groups performing Kethoprak Tobong (commercial Kethoprak) in Yogyakarta in the 1970s, they are Sapt Mandala, Ringin Dahana, Sari Komat, and Padmanaba.

¹⁶ Again I am excluding Kethoprak on TV which mix the usage of Javanese and Bahasa Indonesia in the performance. Most people I talked to in Central Java insisted that Kethoprak on TV, if they don't use proper Javanese, is not Kethoprak and should not be considered as such.

a lower social class. This idea is challenged in many western influenced TV melodramas, which encourage the idea that everybody is equal regardless of ones social background. While the Central Javanese society is definitely less hierarchical than before, it is still considered as very poor manner for a young person (or a person from a lower social class) to openly challenge the knowledge or the authority of an older person (or a person from a higher social class). Also, the Javanese have always see themselves as ethnically superior to other ethnic groups in Indonesia. In this sense, the new order government's 'requirement' that the Javanese de-emphasise their Javanese identity, and see themselves as Indonesian, is in itself a threat to the Javanese. Apart from that, with the spread of TV in the 1990s, the spread of Bahasa Indonesia also intensified. This national language of Indonesia, Bahasa Indonesia, was deliberately introduced to fight against regional identity and to encourage *one national identity*. In the schools in Java, all subjects are being taught in Bahasa Indonesia. Javanese, on the other hand, was marginalised as a special subject in itself, and students only have classes once or twice per week. People use Bahasa Indonesia at school and at work, and at home, they watch TV in Bahasa Indonesia for entertainment. Increasingly the younger generation Javanese no long speak good Javanese, especially when it comes to the high Javanese: krama inggil. The result of these phenomenon is that Javanese is further culturally marginalised. Facing that, I would argue, people begin to emphasis in Kethoprak the usage of proper Javanese. Indeed, even when only low Javanese is being used in a Kethoprak performance¹⁸, emphasis is still being made on the fact that Javanese is such a clever language that a lot of the time the typical Javanese jokes simply cannot be said in the clumsy Bahasa Indonesia¹⁹. Even though increasingly there are Kethoprak, especially those on TV, being enacted in Bahasa Indonesia, most Central Javanese do not consider them as real Kethoprak. As for those who consider themselves as more 'modern' and 'open-minded', they still told me it is okay for Kethoprak to be enacted in Bahasa Indonesia, so long as the actors managed to tell all those clever jokes in the clumsy language. Another dimension of the conflict between Bahasa Indonesia and Javanese lies in the Javanese belief of proper manner. As mentioned in the earlier part of the text, Javanese proper manner not only expresses itself in behaviour, it also directly expresses itself in its usage of respectively high, medium and low Javanese. Bahasa Indonesia, on the other hand, does not have such ways of distinguishing classes and social status. In fact, some people nowadays in Central Java would

deliberately use Bahasa Indonesia instead of Javanese in order to free themselves from static social hierarchy. For a lot of Javanese, however, this is not totally acceptable, or at least, not truly Javanese. So even though it is relatively general, especially among the younger generation; to use Bahasa Indonesia in daily life, the ability to speak (especially) high Javanese is very much treasured. People who could master perfect high, medium, and low Javanese are considered as the real Javanese and are very much respected.

After considering all the above cultural phenomenon, I would argue that it is the cultural crisis experienced by the Central Javanese that brought about the changing meaning of Kethoprak. In another words, the emphasis that people learn through Kethoprak how to become a Javanese 'because Kethoprak is so Javanese' provides a very obvious demonstration of the cultural resistance to the major cultural threats to the life of the Central Javanese in the 1990s. In this sense, it is no wonder that people stop talking about Kethoprak as 'kesenian wong cilik', and start to only talk about how all the Central Javanese can learn in Kethoprak how to speak proper Javanese, how to behave like a real Javanese, the knowledge of Javanese legend, how to wear traditional Javanese dress and so on (i.e. to be a *real* Central Javanese). Indeed, one could say that the Central Javanese identity has never been under so much threat than in the 1990s. In the course of cultural resistance, Kethoprak as Javanese²⁰, turned out to be a perfect medium for the Central Javanese to express themselves²¹.

Conclusion

While it is true that the features of an art form do change over time, the meaning of an art form can also change without any alternation to its performance features per se. In terms of performance features (including performance technique and stylisation, etc.) Kethoprak, at least since the 1980s, has not changed much in itself, yet the changing social environment brought about changes of the meaning

¹⁷ Hatley (1994).

¹⁸ Especially during clown scenes when usually only low Javanese is being used as the clowns are usually servants in the play, thus they use low Javanese when conversing with each other.

¹⁹ One of the characteristics of Javanese is the fact that it has different words and phrases for the slightly different actions. For example, there are different words for hitting a person's forehead, shoulder, and other parts of the body. Bahasa Indonesia, by comparison, is much simplified and it does not have much variety as Javanese. Therefore, many Javanese refer to Bahasa Indonesia as a 'clumsy language.'

people attach to Kethoprak. In another word, given the social condition of Kethoprak in the early 90s, it has become less associated with aristocracy versus peasant, than about what it means to be Javanese.

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²⁰ Although Wayang performances can theoretically serve the same purpose, wayang performances and kethoprak departs in a sense that wayang performances are in a way more readily available to tourist; in this sense it is often not clear whether performances are meant for the Javanese or the tourist. Students from the various institutes of art studying traditional art form – become performers in hotel, the better ones get the chance to teach or perform abroad. Kethoprak, because it is so hard for tourist to understand, give the impression it is solely for the enjoyment of the Javanese.

²¹ The Central Javanese always take much pride in their ethnicity, associating themselves with one of the greatest ancient civilisations of the world.

一種藝術形式的意義變遷：由爪哇九十年代的社會環境的變遷看Kethoprak

Nancy Tsui-Han Yu

文章摘要

本文試圖研究隨著爪哇文化與社會的變遷，一種劇院藝術：Kethoprak的社會地位的變遷。在以前的大量研究與爪哇人的意識中，Kethoprak經常作為中爪哇人的大眾戲劇的形式，而與來源宮廷的藝術形式，例如Wayang表演，相對立。但是作者指出，在過去的二十年間，Kethoprak正逐漸從被看作一種“低級”和“傳統”的藝術形式而登上爪哇宮殿的舞台。并逐漸幾乎具有同Wayang表演一樣的地位。

TOILETS & CLEANLINESS AS A WINDOW TO HONG KONG CULTURE

Viki Li

Introduction

Hong Kong is a prosperous society, with a well-developed infrastructure, public facilities, and attractive environment. What surprises tourists though, is the condition of its public toilets: Western architectural design with Chinese way of using the toilet. The poor condition of our public toilets is inconsistent with Hong Kong's prosperous image and disappoints many travelers, as well as its own citizens. How can we understand the poor state of Hong Kong toilets?

First, I shall discuss the general conditions in public toilets. Mary Douglas pointed out that dirt is not an isolated event, rather, "Dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements" (Douglas 1966:48). I attempt to explain why the majority of people refuse to follow the socially expected "appropriate" toilet behavior by showing how it is related to people's interpretation of dirt.

Second, I discuss how gender differences in the perception of toilet functions and toilet cleanliness lead to different toilet behaviors.

Finally, I will look at how the notions of "face" and impression management regulates people's toilet behavior. According to

Erving Goffman, "The norms supporting public order, as public order is traditionally defined, regulate not only face-to-face interaction but also matters that need not entail immediate contact between persons..." (Goffman 1966:8). My aim is not to judge how "civilized" are Hong Kong people, but to study the ideas and behavior that underpin Hong Kong people's use of the toilet.

Data for the study were collected by interviews

with twenty university students and recent graduates in Hong Kong and two janitors who have worked at the Chinese University of Hong Kong for more than nine years. My observations focus on toilets in the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), where users of the toilets are mostly university students. One might expect students to be better educated and thoughtful, but the problems at CUHK are similar to those outside the university.

I shall define 'private' toilets as the toilets at people's home. In contrast, 'public' toilets shall be defined as those open to everybody. 'Semi-private' toilets are provided only for people who possess specific identification or permit, such as toilets in the offices, or dormitories. Throughout this paper, un-



Urinals in public toilets in HK are built close together. Men's eyesight may easily enter the other's personal territory.

less specified, or the word "toilet" will refer public and semi-private toilets, or "non-private toilets."

Public order

Hong Kong Urban Council conducted two surveys of forty-five toilets, one in September 1993, and the other in January 1994, concerning the habits of Hong Kong people in using public toilets. It was

found that many Hong Kong people do not wash their hands, fail to flush the toilet, dump trash everywhere, write graffiti on walls and doors, and have the habit of squatting on toilet seats (Ming Pao Daily 1994). Urban Council Chairman Dr. Ronald Leung Ding-bong JP, was disappointed by the results. He believed that there is a need to strengthen the education in "appropriate" toilet behavior and to raise public awareness of toilet hygiene.

Architects like Wallace Chang¹ believe that a better toilet environment would lead to more "appropriate" toilet behavior. In their *Design Proposal of the Prize Winning Project – A Case Report*, the architects echoed Dr. Leung's view that the messy and unmanageable image of public toilets



'Semi-private' toilets are provided only for people who possess specific identification or permit.

resulted from "the lack of the sense of citizenship, the abuse of public properties, and the preconceived attitude in design and construction" (Lo, Chang and Lo, n.d.). Hence, the Environmental Health Branch planned to spend an estimated HK\$520 million on two expensive public toilet improvement programs²

¹ Wallace P. H. Chang, associate professor in Architecture Department, the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He was one of the architects of the prize winning public toilet in the public toilet design competition organized by the Urban Council and the Hong Kong Institute of Architects in 1992.

, which will be completed in a few years. However, such an effort invited a lot of criticism from the public who said that the government should spend the money on social welfare issues rather than on toilets. And, can we blame the messiness of public toilets all on the lack of a sense of citizenship?

At CUHK, many students do keep toilets clean, according to the two janitors. However, only some sick students and inconsiderate students mess things up. There are three most commonly found "inconsiderate behaviors." First, it is common to find people not flushing the toilets after use. Second, people often squat on the toilet seats. Third, people often leave urine stains on the plastic toilet seat regardless of whether or not toilet paper is provided. The situation is worst at the stalls where toilet paper is not provided. Leaving urine stains always results from the squatting position or the sitting-on-invisible-chair position. In fact, if there are urine stains of former user(s) left on the toilet seat, who will wipe them except the janitor? All of my informants would try to avoid using such a stall. Yet, the question also depends on how urgently they are in need.

Before we proceed, we must bear in mind that only one person is enough to mess up the toilet. No matter how responsible are other users, if only one of them leaves urine stains on the seat, for example, it is very unlikely that the next person will clean up the seat and use it. Other users would probably leave the stall dirty or continue to mess things up by not using the seat properly. A vicious circle will then be created. Therefore, we must take into account that some responsible toilet users are sometimes 'forced' to mess the toilet up.

Why people do not flush the toilet? Mary Douglas pointed out that dirt is not an isolated event, there must be a system that buttresses the concept of dirt. Our sense of dirt and cleanliness is indeed a cultural construct. In Hong Kong, the perception of dirt in toilets is largely influenced by the concept of health and pathology rather than religious beliefs. It is not surprising that body waste is dirty, yet dirt is not an absolute concept; rather, it is a relative idea. Individuals may not be able to give an index for the cleanliness of a toilet, but they can always rank places in the order

² The first improvement program is the conversion of 21 trough-type toilets into squatting or pedestal-type toilets, and the refurbishment of some 600 aqua privies, including their conversions into flush-type units by connecting them directly into sewers whenever feasible. The other program includes the refurbishment of internal or external finishes and fittings, upgrading of ancillary facilities as well as improvement of the environment of toilets. Source: <http://www.info.gov.hk/rsd/english/vsd3/toilet/htm>

of cleanliness. For instance, a physically clean private toilet is always perceived as dirtier than a kitchen, and it would be much dirtier than one's bedroom. We can, therefore, imagine how low a public toilet may rank in one's sense of cleanliness. Though people may use the term "clean" to describe a toilet, they are judging from a relative point of view, from a specific cultural standard for toilets. One's own body waste is perceived as dirty, yet it is always cleaner and is less harmful to the self than the waste of others. Everyone believes he or she is one of the cleanest persons in the world, or at least above average. They therefore cannot trust other toilet users because most are dirty.

Individuals may not be bothered by not washing their hands after using the toilet, but they are not willing to touch the handle or button for flushing because touching the handle or the button is like touching someone else's body waste indirectly. After all, we do not know which hand former users used to clean their bottom and to flush the toilet. By the same token, toilet users usually wash their hands after using the toilet. Hence, the taps are perceived as dirty. In addition, since the toilet is a dirty place, tap water provided in a toilet is inevitably perceived as dirtier than usual, even though it is not at all dirty. Therefore, it is not uncommon to find people not washing their hands after using the toilet since it is felt that it does not really clean their hands.

Which is the most hygienic way? From the individual's point of view, the so-called "appropriate" position—sitting on the toilet seat covered with tissue paper or toilet seat cover—is indeed not hygienic. Squatting on the toilet seat and sitting-on-an-invisible-chair may mess up the toilet seat, yet, many believe these are the most hygienic ways to use toilets because their body does not have any kind of contact with the dirty toilet seat. Since no one knows if the body waste of the former user carries any disease, people believe that by not touching the toilet seat they can prevent infectious diseases, such as hemorrhoids and AIDS.

Of course, many people know they cannot get infected with the diseases supposedly carried by former users merely through touching the same toilet seat. Yet, they still fear and believe that "somehow" they will get infected. After all, no matter whether such a belief is scientific or not, body waste is dirty and full of diseases in a symbolic, if not medical, sense.

How to improve toilet environment? At CUHK, after renovating the toilets, fewer people mess up the toilets. For instance, after the renovation, fewer people draw graffiti on the doors or walls of stalls (it may also be due to the nature of the material; the new doors and walls are hard to write on or scratch), and fewer people leave the toilet unflushed. After

adopting a policy of providing an unlimited supply of toilet paper (in New Asia College), fewer people squat on the toilet seat. Although a well-designed and managed toilet environment leads to "proper" toilet behaviors, this is indeed not simply because individuals like the design or appreciate the management. Rather, it is because a clean and pleasant toilet environment helps overcome or lessen the individual's worry of harm that a dirty toilet brings. Before the government or the toilet management sector can "educate" and change people's perception of toilet cleanliness, it can only conform to the prevailing toilet behaviors. Almost all urinals nowadays have automatic circulation system; the water circulates periodically, or there is a sensor that flushes automatically after the person has gone. The use of the squatting toilet with a foot pedal for flushing and automatic circulation system urinals are required for the new generation public toilet. Toilet design thus needs to conform to individuals' behavior, taking "inappropriate" behavior such as squatting and not flushing and turning it into "appropriate" behavior through automatic flushing systems and squat toilets.

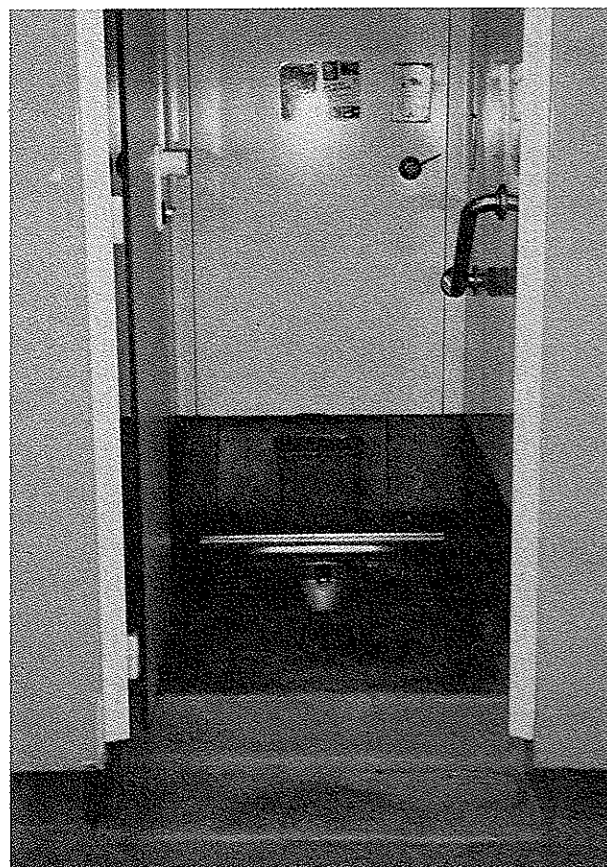
Perceptions of Toilet Cleanliness & Toilet Functions

When people need to empty their bowels, they always go to toilet alone. However, when they just need to urinate, men go to toilet alone, whereas women usually go with good female friends. Asking friends to go to the toilet together is normally a taboo for men, except for special reasons. It is extremely common for women to ask female friends to go with them if they only need to urinate, so that they can have "companion(s)." Certainly, they use different stalls. There are two different situations. In one, the woman asks if any of her friends need to use the toilet, and whether or not her friends will go depends on their biological needs. Another situation is that if the woman asks one or more good friends to go with her simply as her "companion", and those friends are always willing to go with her. The companion may or may not use the toilet; she may simply wait for her friend next to the sinks. The 'invitation' indicates the good, not necessarily close, relationship between the two. It is very unlikely that the 'companion' refuses without a good reason; if she does, it will be a sign of problems in their relationship. Then the 'companion' will not be invited again.

Needless to say, going to public toilets together serves safety purpose for women because they do not know who might be hiding inside the toilets. Yet, this can only explain part of the phenomenon. It fails to explain why girls go to toilets together in safe place like schools toilets. Be it in primary or

secondary schools, or even in universities, female students often go to toilets together with their good female classmates during breaks, but this almost never happens among boys.

The above phenomenon may be due to their different interpretations of toilet functions. My male informants told me that the toilet is merely for relieving biological needs—to urinate or to empty their bowels. Women, however, say that besides being a place for relieving biological needs, the toilet is also a place to talk about personal things, to put on make-up, and so forth. At the same time, it may be due to biological structure and the cultural construct of personal space. When men urinate, they need to expose their private parts. Urinals in public toilets in



The use of the squatting toilet is regained for the new generation public toilet.

Hong Kong are built close together. "When two men are urinating next to each other, their eyes will have a very narrow surface territory that will be safe" (Goffman 1971:59). Their eyesight may easily enter the other's personal (spatial) territory, intentionally or unintentionally, so they look forward and tend not to socialize. In addition, men need to avoid the attribution of homosexuality. Thus, men who create the illusion of privacy at the urinal by looking forward view urinating as a private experience, not a time for socializing.

Janitors at CUHK found that more boys than

girls do not flush toilets. In addition, more boys than girls squat on the toilet seat when using water closet. Male informants view the water closet as dirtier than female informants. So, are men by nature messier than women? In general, the differences between the perceptions of toilet cleanliness of men and women might be due to biological difference. Most people using the toilet are defecating. Body excrement is generally perceived as dirtier than urine. In fact, body excrement carries more disease than urine. Not knowing who has used the public toilet, and given the perception of the possibility of the spread of disease through body waste, a lot of people are unwilling to sit on the toilet seat even if toilet paper is provided. Men do not need to sit on the water closet unless they need to empty their bowels. Therefore, to men, the toilet seat or the water closet, is often associated with the dirtiest and the most dangerous thing—body excrement. Women, on the other hand, need to use the water closet and sit on the toilet seat in any case (or use a sitting-on-an-invisible-chair position). Everyone needs to use the toilet a few times everyday. Hence, women are more used to using the water closet and touching the handle than men are, and fewer women than men squat on the toilet seat when using the water closet.

"Face" and Impression Management

Erving Goffman defined face as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes." (Goffman 1967:5) Face is an important concept in every culture, though people may use different terms to describe it. People do not only care about their face in balls and banquets; they are concerned about their face even in toilets.

Semi-private toilets like those in offices and planes are often cleaner than public toilets. One main reason might be that semi-private toilets have fewer users than public toilets. Second, each individual's responsibility for keeping a semi-private toilet clean is greater than that of public toilet.

The responsibility for keeping a semi-private toilet clean for a person is shared by a limited number of people; yet, the responsibility for keeping a public toilet clean is shared by millions of users. And, it is less likely that the people would mess semi-private toilet up because the person may use it quite often. Third, people encountered in public toilets will rarely meet again; even if the person has messed up the toilet, one may lose face for only a few seconds. Besides, since every person knows the messy and dirty condition of public toilets, one may blame a former

user for the terrible situation one made in order to save one's face.

People want to give the best impression to others and to save face in a semi-private toilet. Semi-private toilets can be treated as a "social establishment" as proposed by Goffman, which is "any place surrounded by fixed barriers to perception in which a particular kind of activity regularly takes place." He suggested that any social establishment could be studied "from the view point of impression management" (Goffman 1969:210). Semi-private toilet users might not know each other. However, they may often meet each other as they are in a closed setting. There is a possibility that others might know the way one uses toilet. Due to the need to create the best impression for others and to save face, one might follow the "appropriate rules" more strictly. Excretion is a basic need, an expression of our animal-self. Human are no different from any kind of animals when they are removing body waste. It is the "appropriate" toilet behaviors set by our culture that distinguish us from other animals during excretion. Therefore, failure in following those culturally expected rules in the presence of others is comparable to disclosing one's "uncultured" animal self to others. This is very embarrassing and destructive to the person's image and face.

Users waiting in line serve as supervising agents in semi-private toilets. According to the interviews and my observation, I have found that people follow the expected rules when people are waiting in lines. For instance, toilet users generally spend less time in using the toilet when somebody is waiting in line. If one fails to flush all the waste at one time, one would wait till he or she can flush everything before leaving the toilet when somebody is waiting. Or, one might explain to the person who is waiting in line that it is the problem of the flushing system. If no one is waiting in line, people are less likely to wait and flush again. The greater the number of people waiting in line, the greater the pressure and responsibility one has to keep the semi-private toilet clean to give others a "civilized" and "well-educated" impression.

Conclusion

To not follow the socially constructed "appropriate" toilet behavior does not mean that Hong Kong people are uncivilized. Educating the public about the "appropriate" toilet behavior may not be the most effective way to combat problems arising from the lack of public responsibility because there are other factors influencing toilet behavior. The perception of dirt in public toilets, prevention of infection, and the concept of hygiene all contribute to the negligence of the socially constructed rules. Although a

well-designed and managed toilet environment leads to more "appropriate" toilet behavior, it is indeed not because individuals like the design or appreciate the management. Rather, it is because a clean and pleasant toilet environment helps overcome or lessen the individual's worry of the potential harm that a dirty toilet brings. It is interesting to see the use of squatting toilets and foot pedals for flushing in the new generation public toilets, because it represents government's conformity to the society's practices.

Male toilets are dirtier than female toilets not because men are by nature messier than women. Rather, it is due to the different perceptions of toilet cleanliness and its function that lead to different toilet behaviors. In the end, we can see that in order to avoid losing face and to give others the best impression, toilet users are willing to conform to the expected toilet behaviors more strictly.

Removing body waste is a basic animal instinct, but humans' toilet behavior is a cultural and social construct. The three aspects I have presented are only part of the toilet culture. There are many more symbolic messages we can discover from toilets. Yet, having the public neglecting the expected toilet behavior, we might need to rethink if this set of American-based standards fits the Hong Kong context. The problem also occurs in Mainland China. The government does not need to "teach" the public what to do. Instead, it should focus on changing the public's perception of toilet and its cleanliness. Then, people's behaviors would change accordingly. In addition, the question of who makes the toilet dirty is worth thinking about because people always draw a casual relationship between education level and sense of public responsibility. I cannot answer the question of which particular group of people makes the toilet dirty. However, given that such problems also occur in a university, a question should be raised as to whether education level is directly related to the sense of public responsibility.

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從公眾洗手間看香港文化

Viki Li

文章摘要

對香港的公眾廁所的研究可以讓我們窺見香港的文化與意識形態。本文從三個不同的角度來了解港人如廁的習慣不一定與個人的教育程度和公德心相關。首先，從“髒”這個相對概念極其個人對衛生的理解這一角度，本文發現市民為什麼有時會“被迫”做出漠視公德的行為。再者，對洗手間不同功用的理解和男女生理結構的差異也會令兩性如廁行為大相逕庭，相對而言，男性更被認為天生比較邈邈。最後，在洗手間這一“另類”社交場所內，用廁者為了給人“有教養”的形象以及避免暴露自己的動物性，因而常常根當時廁內的人數而“調節”自己的如廁行為。

An Anthropological View of the Hong Kong McDonald's Snoopy Craze¹

Joseph Bosco

On September 25, lines suddenly appeared at Hong Kong's 147 McDonalds. Customers were queuing up to buy a three inch tall plastic doll of Snoopy dressed in a Mexican costume and wearing a sombrero. Press coverage and conversations at the time noted the absurdity of cosmopolitan, modern, sophisticated people standing in line for a \$6 doll. The Hong Kong Standard (28/9/99) quoted a Filipina domestic helper as saying "I really don't know why Hong Kong people are so crazy for that. In other countries there is panic buying of rice. People here are panic buying a toy."

McDonald's offered a 28 piece set of plastic Snoopy dolls with different national costumes, selling one particular doll each day, from 11 September to 8 October 1998. Customers could buy a Snoopy doll for \$6 with the purchase of a \$17.80 McDonald's "extra value meal" (not the children's "happy meal," as in most places). This promotion was remarkably successful. Despite initial negative news stories that pointed out that to collect the entire set one would have to eat at McDonald's each day for 28 days, and that high-fat and low fiber hamburgers and fries are unhealthy, the promotion became very popular.² The Asian Wall Street Journal reported on September 30 that a McDonald's in Wanchai sold out its daily allotment of 1200 Snoopys in 90 minutes, and that bigger stores with an allotment of over 3000 Snoopys also sold out early in the day (Lande 1998). Despite the promotion's success, McDonald's did not seem to have planned well since it is unreasonable to expect people eat a McDonald's happy meal every day for 28 days, and they clearly did not anticipate the long lines and running out dolls. On September 27, McDonald's announced that it

would make additional dolls available to any customer who filled out a form. Newspaper stories focused on the fact that now the dolls had lost their scarcity and thus the speculative value (see e.g. Hong Kong Standard 28/9/99), but the lines did not ease. News reports focused on long lines, on fights that occasionally broke out, and even suggested there were organized gangs involved in speculation (Oriental Daily News 1998a:A20).

Stories in the press also focused on foreigners' reactions to the queues (Ribet 1998) and to the television stories and newspaper photographs that went round the world (Sam 1998; Ribet 1998; Cook 1998). Ribet (1998) notes that there was media interest because this is one of the most successful promotions McDonald's has launched anywhere in the world, but also because this "is seen as extremely bizarre behavior or even lunacy on a massive scale."

Because the queuing was so public and so surprising, observers tried to find explanations. The main explanations can be grouped as: 1) speculation, 2) a Hong Kong culture of collecting, 3) and social pressure and marketing. We will review these explanations as discourses (ways of speaking about reality) and see how much they help us understand the phenomenon, and then add another explanation that was not emphasized in the press but came up in our interviews months after the craze.

Speculation

The most popular explanation for the craze was speculation. Newspapers had many stories that fit with a neoclassical view of human behavior that assumes people seek to maximize income. A shop owner in Wanchai told a reporter she bought 50 to 60 dolls at \$20 each from students every day (Lu 1998:A18). Prices quoted for dolls on the secondary market were as high as \$200 in the Ming Pao (1998:A3)(for the Great Britain and Mexico Snoopys), and \$300 for the Great Britain's Snoopy (Lande 1998). Several periodicals published tables

¹ This article was written by the author with the research reports of all the students of his Economic Anthropology class. All students contributed to the research and the discussion of ideas that went into the article, and the article could not have been written without their work. They could be considered co-authors of the article, except that they have not had a chance to read and comment on it. Their names are: Carmen Chan Ka Man, Susanna Chan Suk Ha, Frances Chau Fei, Jackie Geissinger, Ho Wing Shan, Viki Li, Siu Yuen Man, Josh Stewart, Wyman Tang Wai Man, Simone Tin Pui Fan, Ting Suk Yee, Wong Chan Wah, Wu Sui Chu, Yukako Yoshida. The author is responsible for all errors of interpretation and fact.

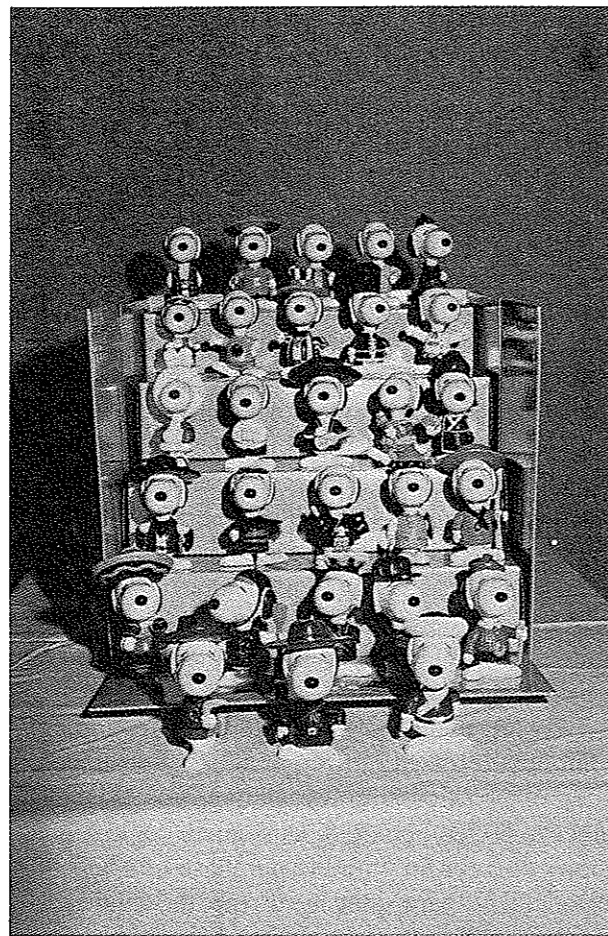
² McDonald's is a part of everyday life in Hong Kong: it has 147 restaurants in the SAR, and company statistics show half the city eats in a McDonald's restaurant every week (AWSJ; see also Watson 1997).

with the "going rate" for dolls (see e.g. Ming Bao 1998:A3; Touch 1998). The entire set was said to be available for \$800 in a shop (Lu 1998) and for \$700 as part of a charitable foundation fundraiser according to an ad in Touch magazine (Touch 1998) (which comes to an average price of \$25 each).

Jackie Sam, Hong Kong Standard's associate editor argued in a column that the queuing for Snoopy was all for speculation. "Just look at the young children some of the women have in tow, all glassy eyed, eagerly waiting to lay hands on Snoopy, not to play with, but to make a quick buck" (Sam 1998). Interestingly, Sam went on to note that previous "speculation" in handover stamps and Queen's head coins had seen prices fall a few months after the mania. Given that speculations therefore is irrational, he resorts to the "herd instinct." "This is Hong Kong culture, no matter how crass it may appear to some; an extension of the materialism which permeates this whole society. This collection of Snoopy is little different from those in the upper levels amassing wealth, and so cheap to come by if one is prepared to spend up to four hours in the queue. The herd instinct of Hong Kong people is a contributory factor. Put out the word that stocks are limited and some people will rush for it, never mind that the supply may be plentiful as in this instance." The Asian Wall Street Journal cited the 20 million sets of postage stamps commemorating Hong Kong's return to Chinese sovereignty that were sold in June 1997 and quoted a retail analyst as saying "The psychology in Hong Kong is that you buy anything that you think you can sell for a profit."

A Filipina helper told us she thought the craze was unimaginable and would never have happened in the Philippines. She was surprised that so many Hong Kong people like to collect things, and thought that Hong Kong people must be very rich to be able to afford to invest such a lot of time and money in collecting dolls. Moreover, she had the impression that Hong Kong people have a culture of speculation; everything, when it reaches the hands of Hong Kong people, can be speculated on for profit, she said. She thought that Hong Kong is a very money oriented society, since everything involves money and profit.

Another example of this discourse comes from the Ta Kung Pao, a pro-China paper. An article by Guan Zhao first claims that many people are buying the Snoopy dolls to turn a profit: just spend a little time and you can make your investment back several times. But then the author criticizes this speculation as blind, asking how much can a plastic



Snoopy Dolls. (Courtesy of Lee Tsz Wah)

doll ever be worth? The author claims that at first a few stores bought the dolls and purposely listed a high price. The addition of media reports led to "a swarm of bees." The article then asks how many people actually made money from past speculative bubbles such as those for stamps and coins.

One young man we interviewed who did buy dolls to resell for profit found the existing market wasn't as prevalent as rumored. Although he found people who would purchase the dolls from him, the prices were much lower than reported in newspapers and rumored by friends. Since prices were so low, he just gave them to his sister.

The speculation should have ended once McDonald's announced on 27 September that it would make additional dolls available through the mail, but the lines continued. Newspaper articles expressed surprise that the lines continued (see e.g. Ta Kung Pao 1998, though the writer claimed the lines were shorter). On the October 1st National Day holiday, lines formed even earlier than usual for the China Snoopy doll, however, showing that the fad was still very much alive and did not depend on speculation at all. On the other hand, according to one shop owner, the mail back-order system de-

stroyed the speculative value of the Snoopy dolls, even of the entire set. Because the sale of the 101 Dalmatians dolls and Winnie the Pooh dolls were so successful, and prices of those dolls went up many times, many assumed the same would happen to the Snoopy dolls. The sudden announcement of a future increase in supply led to a sharp decline in the resale price of Snoopy doll. The Snoopy lovers could back order the most popular dolls so no one was willing to pay a high price for Mr. Chan's set.

Still, the scarcity of the doll was important to many informants. Many people who waited in line for hours were very angry that some dolls could be back-ordered in the end. A Mr. Ho we interviewed said he would have been real mad if he had had to wait in line himself and people could back order the most popular dolls afterward. He said his time is valuable; fortunately he had his employees wait in line for him.

Hong Kong culture

A different sort of explanation simply claimed that this was Hong Kong culture. Resorting to "culture," of course, is not an explanation at all, but just an act of labeling. Calling something "cultural" does not explain why people behave in a certain way, or make it seem rational; it merely claims that others are different and must be accepted as such. The fact that Hong Kong people themselves found it bizarre makes this problematic. Yet many resorted to some sort of cultural justification, including a love of collecting, the notion that the dolls are cute, and the tendency to follow fads. Rather than using culture as a causal factor, one needs to understand the cultural context to better understand the Snoopy craze.

Collecting. Many reports claimed that Hong Kong people love collecting.³ Cheung Yew-meng, a sociologist at the Hong Kong Baptist University, was quoted as saying:

"Hong Kong people are almost unique in the world. They'll queue overnight for special edition MTR tickets or the first-day cover of new stamps," he says.

"To explain why, you have to understand their history. This is a city of migrants who fled from communism, taking almost nothing with them; only the bare essentials. Once they got here they had to start anew, to regain the house filled with belongings they had before, so they developed the habit of collecting things.

"At the same time, there's a sense of economic insecurity here. By collecting things which might be worth something at sometime in the future, people are trying to gain some control over

their lives. Most of these things have been collected by so many people that they won't be worth anything, but the impulse to collect isn't a rational thing it's a habit they pick up from the parents, who fled China," Prof. Cheng says.

"People will tell you they want a complete collection of Snoopies because he's cute, but they are unaware of the real reason for their behavior, this non-rational preoccupation to collect. In the time of recession when they don't have any money, Snoopy is a cheap way for them to satisfy it." (Ribet 1998)

Despite calling collecting "irrational," Prof. Cheng tries to make it seem rational by suggesting the refugee experience continues to haunt Hong Kong people, making them collect things. But Hong Kong homes are very small and have little room to display collections (though Snoopy is small enough to display). More importantly is the fact that many were collecting the dolls for children; if people need to collect, why not collect Waterford crystal, ceramic figurines, or gold coins? Why Snoopy dolls?

In our interviews, we did find collectors. A number of persons who had started collecting the dolls from the beginning felt compelled to continue collecting the whole set despite the later problems with lines and crowds. One reason many people used to explain why they continued to seek the dolls was completeness; people persisted for completeness after making an initial investment in some of the dolls. One informant said "if you missed one of the Snoopies, all of them become valueless, and you would always feel something is missing." Note that the "value" mentioned here is not an economic value, but a symbolic value. Furthermore, collecting the dolls had value in and of itself. One informant who only had two dolls said she was proud of herself when others noticed her dolls and said "You were so clever to get the China and Hong Kong Snoopies before the mail-order purchase." Thus, getting the doll (in part because of its scarcity) was a kind of prize in itself. The dolls are a kind of trophy; one 15 year old boy collected an entire set for his six-year-old sister (with help from relatives), but his sister is not allowed to play with the dolls because they're supposed to be used for decoration only. They are displayed in the cupboard in the sitting room.

Dolls Cute: Many informants said the dolls were cute. This is subjective, and could be considered cultural. In interviews it became clear that people were not fond of Snoopy per se, so it is not the char-

³ This explanation was most clearly spelled out in the English language media, because such cultural explanations are more believable when discussing other cultures rather than one's own.

acter itself that they found cute. The Snoopy character itself is not very popular and does not seem to carry any strong meaning in Hong Kong; it certainly does not carry the fond memories and the symbolism of simplicity and eccentricity that it does for Americans of the baby boom generation. It was mostly the clothes that made him attractive. Miniaturization is well known to be attractive cross-culturally; the small (3 inch) size and the different costumes, some with removable hats, made it cute for many. The fact that it was a set of 28 further made it "cute," some reported. One said that if it had only been 10 it would not be enough to be cute. In addition, it seems the difficulty in getting the whole set is part of what makes it attractive. Some admitted that they did not think Snoopy was cute, but that they like the costumes. The commercials on TV were also clever, because the dolls could move. The animation was attractive, creating a seemingly live doll.

Part of the explanation rests on the popularity of dolls generally, especially the small dolls known in Cantonese as *gong tsai*. As Dr. Twila Tardif noted at the time, "Kids, students, everybody here adores *gong tsai*. You see them everywhere." "Lots of different versions of the same one in different costumes was bound to be popular" (quoted in Ribet 1998). Indeed, *gong tsai* can be seen on the dashboard and in the back window of automobiles and on desks of many secretaries. But, since the *gong tsai* are not found in many BMWs and Mercedes, but rather in small Japanese cars, and are rare on men's desks, there are doubtless class and perhaps gender differences in this.

Follow Fads. The Asian Wall Street Journal quoted Gary Wong Wing-kin, and associate professor of pediatrics at Chinese University as saying "Across social income lines, the psychology here is that when there is a fad, people follow it blindly. Companies exploit this." Many noted that there was not much interest in the Snoopy dolls at first, but once people saw that some people were standing in line to get the dolls, interest exploded. Some referred to this as a herd instinct. One teenage student told us he decided to queue for 30 minutes to buy one because everyone else was also buying them. Three of one student's five informants who had dolls only became aware of the dolls after the promotion had begun. A 30 year old female we interviewed said at first she only collected some, but later when she found so many people lined up for the dolls, she felt a need to collect the whole set. The company itself promoted the idea of collecting the whole set with the print ad that said "Try to collect them all, because missing even one makes a big difference" (Lande 1998). It is not clear, however, that Hong

Kong people are more attracted to fads than others; Japanese, Taiwanese, and youth in North American are also said to be very fad oriented, so this explanation does not help much in explaining the Snoopy craze.

Note that in contrast to the discourse of speculation where the actors take the initiative (indeed, excessive initiative) to make money, the idea of following fads makes the actors passive followers afraid of missing out. Some even argue that Hong Kong consumers are afraid of missing out, and it is indeed not uncommon to find ads saying "Don't miss out" or "This is a chance you can't afford to miss."⁴

When we conducted interviews in March and April, many informants commented that standing in line was stupid, and they felt foolish about the participating in the craze. But digging deeper, our interviewers discovered some positive qualities associated with waiting in line. The 15-year-old boy who collected a set for his sister commented that, first, he would gain complements from his friends for his greatness, which made him not feel stupid at the time. Second, he could show off his ability to himself: he continued to stand in line even after McDonald announced that the Snoopy dolls and could be ordered later because, he said, he would feel proud he could collect the dolls in the shortest possible time. It would reflect his patience, consistency, serious attitude, as well as being an affirmation of love for his sister and friendship with those with whom he traded. He was involved in a relationship of balanced reciprocity with relatives, helping them on school days when he could wait during his lunchtime, and receiving help from them on weekends when he had tutorials which did not allow him to wait in line. Thus, waiting in line was not just a crazy fad but could also be a display of positive qualities such as consistency and reliability.

Social Pressure

As mentioned above, many people said that they thought the doll were cute and interesting because each one had a different costume. But for some this was just a discourse, a socially acceptable explanation for an embarrassing craze. A 14-year-old girl, for example, at first claimed she liked the dolls because they were cute, but could not remember what countries her seven dolls represented. She then admitted that it was a fad, and that she wanted the dolls because friends at school talked about which doll was available what day. The truth is students felt

⁴ Large font slogan at the bottom of a flyer for a Ricacorp Properties seminar.

pressure to have the dolls. All the friends around her talked about the Snoopy dolls. "Hey, you know that the Japanese Snoopy is for sale today?" "Yeah, I saw the advertisement yesterday, I like that costume. ..." Although students didn't have to buy any particular Snoopy doll, it seemed something was wrong if they didn't have any dolls at all. An 11-year-old boy said that there was a competition in his class to see who would get the most Snoopy dolls. This competition was organized informally, and classmates agreed that the one who got the most dolls would be the winner. He thought that being the winner would mean getting prestige in his class, and every classmate would admire him. During the competition, he had taken the dolls to school every day to show his classmates. Now he stores them in his Snoopy house in his bedroom.⁵ One high school student commented half a year after the craze: "When the classmates around you think that a particular Snoopy is pretty it can also make you think the same way. But when you bring it home, sometimes you wonder if it's really worth buying." By March, a 14-year-old girl looked at her 28 beagles on the wall and thought she was silly. For many children, having Snoopy dolls was important for being "cool." They brought them to school, and displayed them prominently at home, typically on the TV, desk, wall display cabinet, or windowsill. Older informants deny that social pressure was a factor in making them want the dolls, preferring personal explanations such as "it's cute" and "I like them." Yet many adults also displayed the dolls at their office, living room, or in their car.

Peer pressure is thus a major motivation for the craze: a 15 year old female student said many classmates were collecting the doll and the doll was the hot topic among classmates at the time. She thought that if she did not collect the dolls she would be teased. Therefore, she followed the craze. Afterwards, she put the dolls and a paper box under her bed. She added that she does not actually love Snoopy; she just used the dolls to tell her classmates in the she was not outdated, and hoped that they would have some value. Later she gave the dolls to her cousin.

One woman said "in Hong Kong, it makes no difference what the item is; if the people want it, and you have it, then you are popular". But more benignly, one woman claimed that they appeared to bring enjoyment to others, so she decided why not try them to see if a little happiness would shine on her. She claimed that they did actually bring enjoyment for several weeks, until the original hype was over, at which time she dropped them off at her grandchildren's house.

Some of the social pressure was, of course,

choreographed by McDonald's, and the amazing marketing power of McDonald's was mentioned in many articles. One mother wrote a letter to the editor which captures this perspective of a parent trying to fight this marketing pressure: "No matter how we may try to guide our children according to our own beliefs and values, ultimately what they think, wear, eat and play with — and whether or not they smoke — are decided not in the home but thousands of miles away on Madison Avenue" (Carver 1998). She notes that once children go to school, parents lose control.

These distant moguls, cynically wielding their immense power with eyes only on the next dollar, also control what we as parents spend. No better illustration is available than the current hysteria over the McDonald's Snoopy dolls.

Simply by buying in a line of trashy plastic figurines this hamburger giant has virtually required every parent to buy their children the McDonald's "meal" a day as long as the promotion lasts—and pay an extra \$6 for the privilege.

Failure to do so will leave their children languishing in a limbo of deprivation, facing playground mockery and personal distress.

McDonald's management will doubtless say it's a matter of choice and no one is being forced to buy anything. Their own psychologists, who help plot these advertising assaults on children's minds, will tell them that is rubbish. (Carver 1998)

Thus, another way to look at the craze is that mass media created interest in children; children put pressure on their parents; the parents, in turn, exert pressure on other people like the elderly and Filipino maids to stand in line to fulfill their children's desires. But this chain effect is only a partial explanation because in the past, when children asked for things, they were ignored. There has been a major change in society when adults do things because children want it. McDonald's promotion in Hong Kong took full advantage of this new culture when it released one per day.

Snoopys as Gifts

Some people *did* hope to make some money from Snoopy dolls, but speculation is also a discourse, a way of speaking about behavior. It seems more acceptable to say one is collecting dolls to make money than to say one wants to compete for popularity or to impress friends. From our interviews and analysis, it seems that newspapers were overly eager to use speculation as an explanation for the phenomenon.

⁵ We know from our interviews that this was not true at all primary schools, but do not have enough data to find a pattern.

Sunday Morning Post

AGENDA


GREENER PASTURES Find out more about the ancient Chinese instrument. METRO, PAGE 3

THE AGES OF QIN This man can make your art look as good as whole. DESIGN, PAGE 8

WHO DO YOU CALL? Anne Hingwai on what Greengrace has achieved on the mainland. FEATURES, PAGE 3

CASHING IN ON COLLECTORS

McDonald's McNospys are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to peddling memorabilia



Citizen's Test
FIND a tiny shoe in McDonald's early collection, Mark Chan says. Chan says he is a collector of Chinese memorabilia. He says he has a collection of 100 items, including a pair of shoes, a pair of glasses, and a pair of shoes. He says he has a collection of 100 items, including a pair of shoes, a pair of glasses, and a pair of shoes.

MARK UP! Mark Chan can make \$2000 in investment by selling collectible items. Chan says he has a collection of 100 items, including a pair of shoes, a pair of glasses, and a pair of shoes.

Reports on Snoopy crazy

We have already seen that the popularity of *gong tsai* and peer pressure were important aspects of the craze.

All the above are factors necessary to understand the Snoopy craze, but one final factor was largely overlooked by observers at the time: Snoopys as gifts. With the focus on speculation and on cultural differences, many observers missed the fact that many of the dolls were collected as gifts. The significance of this was largely missed even though evidence can be found in newspapers reports. Steven Ribet, for example, interviews two women. One collected complete sets for a cousin, a nephew, and herself, though she adds that her children are in their 20s and "when they marry my collections will be for their children." Thus, her three sets are all for gifts. The other woman bought 15 meals, saying: "I've got two complete sets for myself; the rest I'm giving to friends" (Ribet 1998). Many grandparents got dolls for their grandchildren, and many people stood in line for friends and relatives.

Our interviews on this were open-ended and thus difficult to quantify, but for the 66 informants for whom we have data, 25 indicated they obtained some dolls as gifts or with help of friends and relatives, 20 gave dolls away, and only 21 got their doll themselves. Some of these 21 may have received some help but did not mention it in the interview since they were not all asked directly, but in any case, less than a third of informants obtained dolls for themselves and by themselves.

Despite the widespread news stories on

speculation, it is clear most people exchanged the dolls as gifts or at list price of \$6. Informants tended to say "I gave it to my friend" or "I asked my friend to buy one for me." Most transfers were at the list price, as favors or help.

Anthropologists have long studied gift giving and its symbolism, and these dolls are classic gifts (Mauss 1967; Yan 1996). One grandfather said he used the dolls as away of showing his love for his two grandsons. Most children themselves would not have stood hours in line for the doll. Children were pleased to receive them, but adults may like them even more as expressions of love. Though a surprising number of adults did collect the dolls, the fact remains that children were the primary targets and consumers of the dolls. According to a shop owner in Wanchai, most buyers for entire sets (at HK\$800) were parents buying for their children. One interviewer found a grandfather and a mother who collected dolls for their granddaughter and son respectively; both knew this would be a passing fad, but they collected the dolls on behalf of the children anyway.

Significantly, however, these gifts were considered appropriate for adults and not just children. One woman received the Italy doll from her boyfriend whom she met in Italy, and she placed the doll on her bed. A 19-year-old university student displayed the dolls in her hostel room because she felt proud to have such a good boyfriend who was willing to stand in line to exchange the dolls for her. She said she viewed it as a kind of test of whether her boyfriend

would do this "hard" thing for her. One man bought one for his girlfriend before the lines had formed because he thought they were cute, just as he had bought other McDonald's toys for her before. One student noted "Snoopy dolls mean you have spent a lot of time. That means you love the other person deeply." In Hong Kong, where everyone is busy making money, spending several hours to get a doll represents a lot more, and says the person is very important, a really romantic thing. One young woman who was very proud of her seven dolls that she received from her boyfriend, said she was glad she did not buy the dolls herself. She said she would not be that stupid to wait in line for hours just for Snoopy doll. If she would have had to wait in line by herself, she would not have collected them. In saying this, she showed that it was not the doll itself that was valuable, but the gift.

A university student named Chris cherished two figurines that her boyfriend had given her by placing them neatly on her desk. She said that when one of her friends would walk in, typically the first topic of conversation would revolve around the dolls. She noted that many people admired the chivalrous act of queuing up that her boyfriend displayed. Currently, the Snoopys still are on her desk, but as her boyfriend points out, they are placed much less prominently. Chris said (out of earshot of her boyfriend) that she never really wanted the doll, but many of their friends who are couples were purchasing them for each other, so she thought it was cool. She said that after she got the doll, she didn't like the plastic figurine itself, but the thought of her boyfriend queuing up at a ridiculous hour gave her a sense of love and care. When asked why she didn't buy one for her boyfriend, she noted that the originality of the gift would be lost if she gave an equal present in return. One young man admitted to us that he had given his girlfriend two dolls, but because the lines had become too long, he simply bought the second doll at a store, though he did not tell the girlfriend. Since he bought it and gave it to her on the day that the doll was first available, she did not suspect he had spent money and not time on her behalf.

The low cost of the doll is also important; at HK\$6 each, plus the \$17.80 for a meal, parents can make the kids happy without much cost. Just as for the Beanie Baby craze in the US (small stuffed animals sold for US\$6.95), a key to marketing success is getting the right price. The price must be low enough to encourage impulse purchase, but high enough to suggest sufficient quality (and to make a profit, in the case of the Beanie Baby), but not too high so it becomes considered expensive. The manu-

facturer of Beanie Babies had to strictly enforce the list price to prevent speculation by retailers; a price set low enough to encourage impulse buying for gifts may be "too low" once the product becomes popular and scarce, but if the price is raised to meet demand, the image of the product may be ruined and demand destroyed. It is this marketing consideration that led to lines and stories of speculation, and McDonald's decision to sell additional dolls by mail.

Conclusion

Neoclassical economics and its logic pervades our modern society, leading many to assume humans act "rationally," wholly in accordance with their economic interest all (or at least most of) the time. By this explanation, the Snoopy craze can be explained simply as speculation. We have tried to show that this explanation is weak, and that understanding the sociocultural context can help us better understand the phenomenon. If all humans were 'rational' economic persons, marketing and advertising would not be necessary or effective. It is because rationality is cultural that we have such differences in economic behavior as the burning of blankets in potlatches in the Pacific Northwest, the trading of stocks on Wall Street, and lining up for Snoopy in Hong Kong. Good marketing is only partly science; a lot of it is art, and it requires an understanding of culture.

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人類學的視野：香港麥當勞的史諾比狂潮

Joseph Bosco

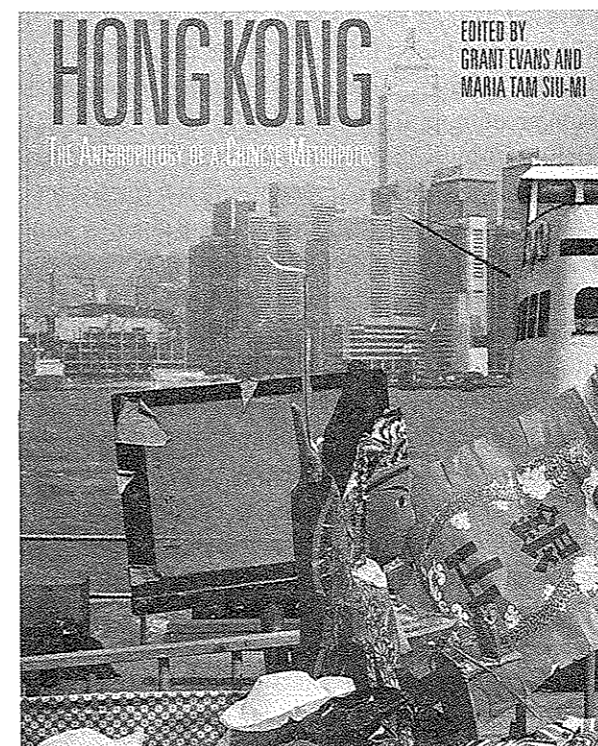
文章摘要

本文檢驗了關於一九九八年九月和十月間引起國際媒體關注的“史諾比”玩具購買狂潮的一些解釋。本文指出將這一現象歸因于“投機”是不能令人信服的。而認為這是收集和跟從時尚的香港文化的觀點也既不可信，也不真實。相反，本文指出禮物交換的重要性。因為許多人排隊是爲了其他朋友，而許多人是爲了他們的孩子、侄女和外甥來買玩具。

Review Essay

- Evans, Grant & Maria Tam S. M., eds.
1997 *Hong Kong: The Anthropology of A Chinese Metropolis*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon.
- Cheung, Sidney C. H., ed
1998 *On the South China Track: Perspectives on Anthropological Research and Teaching*. Research Monograph No. 40. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Sidney W. Mintz



Reading these two many-faceted and largely “native” volumes of anthropological essays on Hong Kong— of the 26 authors and three editors, eleven are *Gwongdung yahn*— brought to mind a conversation I had, now nearly forty years ago, with the late Professor C. Daryll Forde, at that time director of the International African Institute, and Head of the Department of Anthropology at University College London. Forde had been trained in Geography, then had a fellowship year at the University of California at Berkeley, with Kroeber. While there he conducted research among the Yuma, and published a monograph on them in the California series; surely the most serious work on North American Indians ever written by a leading figure in British anthropology. I told Forde of my intention to invite Maurice Freedman, who was then teaching at the London School of Economics, to visit my Department at Yale. Forde said: “Oh, he is awfully good. But”—

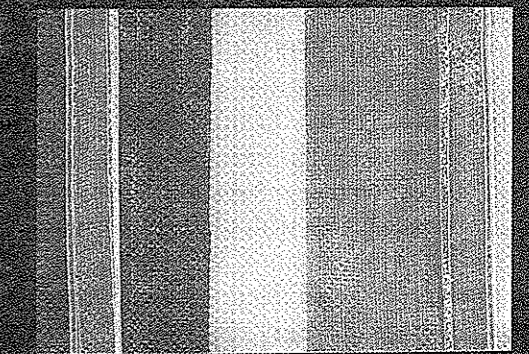
lowering his voice confidentially—“he is not really an anthropologist, you know.”

I understood immediately that Forde had on his mind where Freedman had worked. How could you really be an anthropologist and work in Hong Kong? Though Forde and I were quite close friends, it struck me at the time as particularly odd, since he knew perfectly well that I had worked in Puerto Rico—hardly Tikopia or the Trobriand Islands. But of course the Caribbean region had been made anthropologically acceptable for Forde by his own student, the late Michael G. Smith; by Fortes’ student, Raymond T. Smith; and by Julian Steward’ students, including Eric Wolf and myself. In those days, it took an

On the South China Track

Perspectives on Anthropological Research and Teaching

Edited by
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imprimatur to win acceptance of fieldwork in a "nonprimitive" site—and even then, the acceptance was grudging and often disdainful. As Graham Johnson points out in his contribution to *On the South China Track*, China itself, like India, fell between the stools of sociology and anthropology, neither "nonprimitive" enough for anthropology, nor "Western" enough for sociology (see also Mintz 1996). Under those circumstances, Hong Kong could hardly be taken seriously by establishment anthropology. I recollect only to suggest how far anthropology has come during this past half century; and of course the study and doing of anthropology in Hong Kong has been part of that progress.

As Evans and Tam recall in their thoughtful editorial introduction to *Hong Kong*, when Barbara Ward first came here, every inch of its flatlands was given over to paddy cultivation. The rural character of Guangdong life pressed up to the edges of the exotic, foreign commercial and financial community that British imperialism had established here. But since those times the transformation has continued, taking new forms. If one notices the vestiges of agrarian villages along the roadways and trainways, the tiny clusters of plantains and manioc sequestered alongside weathered squatters' shacks in the gullies, surrounded so often by soaring residential high rises, one realizes that Hong Kong has given a resounding *coup de grace* to the so-called folk-urban continuum. "rural" and "urban" do not mean much here. Neither do "Western" and "non-Western." Now that anthropology has awakened from its deep romantic slumber, places like Hong Kong and the Caribbean region have begun to show us what we were missing.

I cannot review these books adequately in a review of reasonable length, and so—with sincere apologies to the many contributors I have slighted—will comment mostly on a few papers that caught my eye. *Hong Kong* is composed of twelve essays in addition to its editors' introduction, in five sections: identity (two essays), cultural studies, gender and kinship, religion and beliefs, and language (one essay only). The editors tell readers a little about each contribution, but the essays themselves vary greatly in orientation, theoretical perspective, and scale. Those three in the section on gender are linked to older anthropological concerns with social organization and also practical application.

Martin's research on foster care and maternal attitudes suggests strongly that many Hong Kong mothers value their jobs highly, and are really uninterested in being with their children if they can work instead. Her essay is provocative not only because her findings seem to run so counter to stereotype, but also because they are counter to the impressions

a stranger receives from observing families in the street, on trains and in restaurants and malls.

In her essay, Eliza Chan explains a Hong Kong women's movement that struggled for the right of female inheritance from the father. The case arises because New Territories law disinherited indigenous women, in effect, even if there were no sons, and even if the father wanted to bequeath them property. Their political activity was attacked as destructive of the lineage system. But in fact they were fighting for their rights to inherit if they *had* no brothers—in which case property customarily passed to uncles or cousins to whom they were not consanguineally related. Chan shows us how the claims made were in fact respectful of the lineage idiom, and rooted in notions of the blood integrity of the nuclear family. Rich data in many spheres of life make this contribution an ethnographic model of a kind.

Selina Ching Chan's paper on customary succession, like Eliza Chan's, documents the persistence of lineage integrity in the face of radical change. Land and housing are no longer what they once were; and daughters' statuses and roles in relation to their own families have taken on more weight than before. The lightning speed of urban growth and the economic expansion of the last decade or two have put heavy pressure on traditional social forms, and these essays document the procedures by which it has been handled.

In some ways, it might seem that the essays on gender and kinship differ basically from those on belief and religion, because their subject matter is "more concrete." But of course the fact is that ideology figures just as importantly in the first category as in the second. Janet Lee Scott's highly entertaining analysis of paper offerings, in the light of the much-noted "materialism" of Hong Kong people, is diverting, it seems to me, because our western interest in what we take to be the triviality of the offerings is itself so materialistic. The paper offerings, which render the material wealth of contemporary Hong Kong life "virtually," so to speak, fit with funerals that are often extremely costly, indeed; the interest in sending the dead off properly is very robust. Scott shows how the care for the dead may involve an element of self-interest grounded in the belief that life and death are conceived of as not so different from each other. Caring for the dead can yield rich rewards for the living.

Grant Evans's essay on ghosts and governors recalls a 1992 ghost story that arose in connection with a TV commercial for the Kowloon-Canton Railway. Evans seeks to link the story to a critical moment in Hong Kong political life, and sees it as a manifestation of the discomfort created by a changing and un-

certain political future for the territory.

Graeme Lang's essay on religious centers in Hong Kong does not lend itself to summary, but affords the reader a swift overview of the manifestations of Chinese religion as embodied in shrines and temples.

On the South China Track is a different book. Its subtitle—Perspectives on anthropological research and teaching—shifts the subject toward the significance of the discipline itself.

The four sections of this work move from the theme of indigenous culture, through culture change and issues of community, to the teaching of anthropology in Hong Kong. It is, then, a more observer-centered and self-conscious collection than is Hong Kong; but it takes up fewer familiar ethnographic subjects.

Many of the contributors to *China Track* are interested in the heightened geographical mobility, transnational movement, and micro-sinitic migration (if I can be forgiven for a barbarism for the movement of people of Chinese culture who are *not* moving from China). Gordon Mathews uses the polar concepts of state and market to ask what the people of Hong Kong will become, as the power of the free market confronts more baldly the restraints of the state. Joseph Boscò asks how being a "native" anthropologist affects the task of fieldwork, with reference to Chinese anthropologists and anthropology, and weighs nicely the pros and cons of studying one's own culture. Josephine Smart looks at the Chinese diaspora, and invokes a special concept ("creolization") to describe/fusion or blending of cultural elements in the modern context. (As a Caribbean scholar, I am fascinated by the way the world now appears to be catching up with cultural processes that are centuries old elsewhere—especially since the Caribbean, like Hong Kong, was considered beneath ethnographic contempt, not that long ago. Could it *really* be that in the Caribbean, this kind of culture change once led the world?)

One of the papers in *On the South China Track* that I found most engaging was Liu's and Cheung's first-person-plural description of their initiation into fieldwork as assistants to a team of Japanese ethnographers, and how that fieldwork experience then significantly affected their own future research. While autobiographical on the one hand, the paper provides explicit assessments of the ethnographic enterprise and anthropology tools for carrying it out, in an informal and unthreatening way. Such detailed accounts have become much more common in the literature, and are valuable tools for the fledgling anthropologist, trying to find out "what it's like" in the field.

The peculiar power and distinctiveness of Hong

Kong as a human community has caught the attention of observers worldwide. It has depended in part upon simply astonishing contrasts. Some may be as stunned as I am, for instance, by the fact that New Zealand, with about 260 times the surface area of Hong Kong, has less than half its population. The enormous economic influence and the vertiginous material development of this former British colony are equally arresting. But what the editors and authors of these books have managed to do is to help to restore the everyday face of this unique community. At the same time that they show us what some of Hong Kong's (and South China's) problems are, they also make clear that, after all is said and done, studying them is amenable to the same research techniques that anthropologists have used everywhere, in order to *make more sense of the ways people behave*.

What is Anthropology?

Gordon Mathews

In recent months, I've occasionally been asked by perplexed first-year university students about the Hong Kong Anthropological Society's lectures: "Is Cantonese pop music anthropology?" "Is language policy in Hong Kong today anthropology?" "Are the ways in which shopkeepers in Tsim Sha Tsui cheat customers anthropology?" Their confusion is mirrored in the general public, which tends to see anthropology as a matter of studying bones and traditions.

In fact, all of the above topics are anthropology. In the past, anthropology was indeed primarily the study of traditional ways of life—of, in the Hong Kong context, Hakka villages, New Territories lineage halls, and old customs still surviving in rural pockets where Hong Kong's skyscrapers and superhighways hadn't yet reached. Such study continues to be a part of anthropology; but anthropologists have come to realize that to accurately understand culture, we must focus not only on the old, but also on the new; not only on tradition, but also on modernity. In today's Hong Kong, Big Macs are just as authentic a part of Hong Kong culture as pun Choi; Shanghai Tang is just as integral a part of Hong Kong culture as the street hawkers' dai pai dong; Cantopop is just as authentic a part of Hong Kong culture as Cantonese opera; the bankers in Central and shopkeepers in Tsim Sha Tsui are just as important in understanding Hong Kong culture as the fortune tellers on Temple Street. Anthropology is the study of culture: not just the culture of exotic others, but the culture of us all.

Many of us find this shift in anthropology's focus to be deeply exciting, for it makes anthropology directly relevant to the world that most human beings today actually live in—how, in today's complex, mass-mediated world, do human beings culturally comprehend their lives? The Hong Kong Anthropological Society will continue to try to bring you some of the exciting new developments in anthropology today and tomorrow; we look forward to your continuing support in this endeavor.

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