

Voices

from the Sylff Community



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The Ryoichi Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship Fund (Sylff) Program

The Ryoichi Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship Fund, or Sylff, is a fellowship program for graduate students in the humanities and social sciences at 69 universities and consortia in 44 countries aimed at identifying and nurturing leaders who—in line with the Sylff Mission—will initiate action to transcend differences and address increasingly complex issues confronting contemporary society. More than 16,000 students have received fellowships since the program was launched in 1987. On the program’s 30th anniversary in 2017, the Sylff Association was launched to create a single, more closely identifiable community among all Sylff stakeholders. It also provides additional support for fellows’ academic advancement and leadership development and encourages networking and the sharing of knowledge within the Sylff community.

MISSION

To identify and nurture leaders
who will initiate action to transcend differences
in nationality, language, ethnicity, religion, and political systems and
who have the integrity, determination, and expertise to
bring about positive social change in
global society and the local community.

PHILOSOPHY

The Ryoichi Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship Fund (Sylff) seeks to develop socially engaged leaders committed to contributing to the happiness and well-being of others. Sylff fellows respect viewpoints that differ from their own and dedicate themselves to promoting justice and understanding—helping doors that had been closed open to new opportunities and a better future. Academic excellence is an important criterion for selection, but even more critical is a desire to apply one’s research achievements and expertise in addressing pressing social issues.

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PREFACE

I am delighted to present our seventh *Voices* booklet showcasing the social engagement and research activities of Sylff fellows around the world.

This booklet contains 25 articles that were uploaded on the Sylff website between June 2018 and October 2019. Many of them are about the activities undertaken by fellows through the various support programs offered by the Sylff Association. By grouping these articles by respective support program and compiling them into a booklet, we hope you'll gain a clearer idea of how you can make best use of the opportunities available to advance your academic or professional career.

I also hope that by reading about the experiences of fellows who are committed to making a difference, you'll find hints on how you, too, can make a contribution to your community, country, and international society. And I would be delighted to have you follow their path and share your experiences by writing a *Voices* article of your own so that we can all learn from each other in building a more dynamic movement facilitating positive change in society.

April 2020

Izumi Kadono
Sylff Association Secretariat
President, Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research

Voices from the
SYLFF COMMUNITY

April 2020
Vol.7

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Sylff Support Program

Sylff Project Grant (SPG)

The Sylff Project Grant is intended to support fellows who, for a significant portion of their careers, have been actively and deeply committed to helping resolve issues confronting contemporary society. This grant supports innovative, pioneering social action projects led by Sylff fellows with an award of up to US\$100,000. SPG assumes larger-scale projects than SLI that can be sustained, enhanced, and expanded over time.



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January 30, 2020

Developing an Inclusive Distribution Model Using 3D-Printed Prosthetic Legs

Yutaka Tokushima
Keio University

Keio University fellow Yutaka Tokushima—who became the first recipient of a Sylff Project Grant (SPG) in 2018 for an initiative to provide affordable 3D-printed prosthetic legs—recently completed the second year of his project. The grant enabled him to form a partnership with a university hospital in the Philippines to improve the functions of the prostheses by conducting usability trials with 49 patients. In 2019, he continued to produce and provide artificial limbs while also reaching out to local governments, donors, and the national insurance commission to help expand his project. The following is Tokushima’s account of some of the difficulties he encountered and the knowledge he gained over the past two years, which have engendered new aspirations and prospects. A video introducing his activities can be viewed at www.sylff.org/news_voices/27410/.

* * *

I am currently advancing an ultra-low-cost, 3D-printed prostheses project in the Philippines. The 3D-CAD software and 3D printer that we developed for prostheses can create a prosthetic leg from suitable materials (filaments) using data from a 3D scanner. At present, the price of producing one leg is 20,000 pesos (about US\$400), roughly a tenth the average price of a conventional prosthesis and equivalent to the starting monthly salary for a college graduate in the Philippines—making it affordable to the local people who in the past were not able to buy one.

In the past, prosthetic limb manufacturing required the patient to visit a production facility many times over several weeks, but 3D printing takes about 24 hours from scanning to production, so the patient only needs to visit the clinic twice; once for the diagnosis and again to pick up the leg.

What initially got me involved in this project was my experience working in Bohol, a small rural village in the Philippines, as a member of the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) between 2012 and 2014.

Diabetes was prevalent among the poor there. Without the means to go to a

hospital, they would not get regular medical checkups. Illnesses would get neglected, resulting in diabetic gangrene and forcing people to amputate their limbs or die from not being able to, as many actually did. Visiting the rural clinics where I was assigned as a volunteer, I discovered that about 1% of the residents had decaying legs. The major cause of this can be attributed to their eating habits. Poverty did not provide for more than a very small amount of salty fish or meat to go with a large amount of rice, resulting in an excessive intake of carbohydrates.

There are only three public facilities in the Philippines that manufacture prosthetics. During my research I asked people who had left their gangrene unattended why they did not get medical attention. I suggested that leaving the leg unattended might kill them, but most had no reply, their faces telling me that they had largely given up on life. Getting an amputation would only mean lying around at home because they could not afford prosthetics. They would just become one more mouth to feed, so they were better off dead. I was saddened and shocked when I first realized their plight.

From this experience, I decided to develop ultra-low-cost prostheses that could be made in emerging countries and purchased by anyone. I thought that this could save people all over the world who, like the diabetic gangrene patients I had met, had decaying legs but were not able to do anything about it.

I started by examining a wide range of possibilities regarding prosthetic limb production in emerging countries, including the use of construction waste, bamboo, and other readily available materials. I finally came to the conclusion that 3D-printer manufacturing was the best way to balance functionality and price to meet the demands of prosthetic leg production in developing countries. However, there were many problems in terms



Carefully measuring the dimensions of a patient's leg.



Understanding the structure of a patient's leg.



Scanning leg shape data.

of quality and cost in designing and manufacturing prostheses similar to existing types using commercially available 3D-CAD software and 3D printers.

After I returned to Japan in 2015, as a Sylff fellow at Keio University, I started developing 3D-CAD software and 3D printers specifically for prosthetic limbs that could overcome these issues. I set out to develop 3D-CAD software and a 3D printer exclusively for prosthetic 3D printing, eliminating all extra features and applications of commercial printers—a process that took three years.

From fiscal 2018, thanks to the Sylff Project Grant and in cooperation with the University of the Philippines, Philippine General Hospital (UP-PGH), we conducted material strength tests to secure patient safety and usability tests to obtain medical evidence while advancing preparations for local production.

In the usability tests, we asked 49 patients to wear our 3D-printed prostheses for three months while living as before. Compared to conventional prostheses for emerging countries, we were able to achieve a 128% functional improvement (based on patient evaluation using a prosthesis evaluation questionnaire).

Based on these results, in fiscal 2019, we started local production in the Philippines for the purpose of manufacturing and selling 3D-printed prosthetic legs in emerging countries. As of December 2019, we have been able to deliver approximately 20 prostheses per month to amputees in metropolitan areas in the Philippines, and 112 people now use our prostheses. We are aiming to reach annual production of 1,000 units in fiscal 2020.

Thus far, the people using our prostheses have been limited to those living in metropolitan areas who are middle- to high-income earners. As such, we can hardly say that the prosthetic problem in the Philippines has been resolved.



The ever-evolving 3D prosthetic leg printer today and artificial leg brace.



Visiting a patient who has started wearing a prosthetic leg.



A patient is able to climb up and down steep steps after regaining a normal lifestyle.

My next step is to deliver our prosthetic legs to amputees not only in Metropolitan Manila but also those in remote areas like Bohol, where I had previously served as a volunteer, and in the poorest areas where people cannot afford a \$400 prosthesis.

This is why I established the Instalimb Foundation, a nongovernmental organization whose mission is to develop a new distribution model for prostheses delivery catering to those who live in remote areas and who cannot pay \$400 for an artificial limb and to implement this model as a social business.

Through the activities of this organization, I hope to establish a sustainable system to ensure that all people who require prosthetic limbs, including the poor in developing countries, have access to them, starting with the Philippines in fiscal 2020.

As for our performance in fiscal 2019, five leg amputation patients were referred to us from local governments, and contributions from local donors were enough to pay for 12 prosthetic legs. Next year, we hope to expand our cooperation with local groups throughout the Philippines.



With fellow's project members and cooperators.

We have also begun approaching central government agencies in the Philippines, such as the Department of Health and the Department of Trade and Industry, as well as relevant Japanese ministries, such as the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry and the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare, to have our prostheses distribution model incorporated in the PhilHealth government health insurance framework that is being advanced by the Philippine Insurance Commission.

We will continue to consult with stakeholders and make policy recommendations in the hopes of quickly realizing a social system capable of providing prosthetic legs to all amputees in the Philippines.

September 19, 2019

Sylff: Making a Significant Difference to Early Childhood Development in South Africa

Louis Benjamin

University of the Western Cape

Sylff fellow Louis Benjamin has been proactively engaged in early childhood development in his home country of South Africa through the Basic Concepts Program. Developed by Benjamin, who has incorporated the contexts of the South African educational system into education for preschool and early primary school students in disadvantaged communities, the Basic Concept Program undertakes “a structured metacognitive intervention approach for educators to address language, learning, information processing and socio-emotional barriers in young children, particularly from disadvantaged communities” (quoted from the Basic Concepts Unlimited website: <http://www.basicconcepts.co.za/about/about>). Benjamin believes in the immense potential of early educational intervention for children in disadvantaged communities, which generates lasting impact on their motivation for learning, thereby contributing to their higher educational achievement for better career opportunities. Benjamin has received a Sylff Project Grant (SPG) to disseminate the Basic Concepts Program in the Northern Cape, one of the poorest provinces in South Africa. Over the three years of the SPG period and beyond, Benjamin is trying to achieve his vision to provide the program to all preschool and early primary school children through workshops and follow-ups for school teachers of the province.

* * *

I am most honored to have been awarded a Sylff Project Grant for the next three years. The funding will be used to implement an early years intervention program for children run by class teachers in the Northern Cape, South Africa. The program is called the Basic Concepts Program (BCP) and aims to improve both teaching and learning in the preschool years and first three years of formal schooling. The BCP was developed by me during my PhD degree at the University of the Western Cape, which was generously funded by Sylff.

I am a native of the Northern Cape. I grew up and was educated in the diamond town of Kimberley, a town well known for its Big Hole dating back to the

Diamond Rush at the turn of the twentieth century. It is therefore no surprise that I was drawn back to the province that holds my earliest and most precious memories. The Northern Cape is the largest province in the country but is also the most sparsely populated. Although it is endowed with many mineral deposits, the Northern Cape is one of the poorest and least developed provinces. More than half the population in the province lives in abject poverty (*Statistics South Africa [Stats SA], Poverty Trends in South Africa, 2017*). Research has shown that children from poor socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to fare poorly at school and/or drop out and have poor educational and vocational opportunities (as cited in the OECD Report *Equity and Quality in Education, 2012*), and the Northern Cape is no exception. Although approximately 87% of children attend school, only 1.5% attain a tertiary qualification (Stats SA, 2016). The Northern Cape has the second highest (28%) illiteracy rate in South Africa (Stats SA, 2016).

There is a critical need to improve these educational outcomes if children in the province are to break out of the poverty cycle. The focus of the current project is to give children who are starting school a preparatory boost to ensure that they are able to learn successfully when they receive formal instruction and are taught how to read, write, and calculate. The research data we have gathered over the years (2008–2018) show that the majority of learners who start school are very poorly prepared for school learning. These children without exception come from moderately to severely deprived living circumstances and consequently have limited exposure to the kind of early childhood experiences that would have prepared them for formal, higher-order school learning.

What Is the Basic Concepts Program?

In the BCP, there is a focus on both the development of cognitive processes, such as accurate perception, matching, comparing, classifying, seriation, perspective taking, and conservation (Figure 1), and the expansion of understanding of conceptually structured content (Figure 2). The content of the BCP includes the following higher-order conceptual domains: color, shape, size, position, number, and letter



A map of South Africa, with the Northern Cape in red.



The Big Hole, Kimberley.

and their associated subordinate concepts. These concepts are used to mediate the cognitive processes in the program and are particularly important for children who have not had adequate early childhood educational experiences or who start school with deficient language abilities. The BCP thus provides the classroom teacher with an extensive higher-order conceptual language for instruction that is easily transferrable and linked to the curriculum.

In addition, the Concept Teaching Model (Figure 3) provides a detailed, systematic scaffold for mediators of the program. While the program was developed as a cognitive intervention program, it can also be run in the mainstream classroom to improve teaching and learning. Teachers are trained and assisted to run the program with small groups of learners who need intervention, but in Grade R (Reception Year) the program is used as a curriculum and is run with all learners. While the teacher works with one group on the mat inside, the other learners work on related activities in rotation. The teacher works with each group for approximately 15 minutes and sets aside around 60 minutes per day to run the BCP sessions.

The Northern Cape Province was one of the first provinces to introduce the BCP. I in fact started my work in the province while I was still busy with my PhD. I conducted a trial of the program in the Namaqua Education District in collaboration with the Rural Namaqualand Education Trust (RNET), starting our work in a small cluster of schools before expanding to around 80 Grade R classes.

The results of the initial pilot projects were recognized by the Northern Cape Department of Education, which wanted to extend the program and make it available to all its Grade R teachers. (See an example of results in the chart below.) There are approximately 800 Grade R teachers in the province. A Memorandum of Understanding was subsequently signed between Basic Concepts Unlimited (the

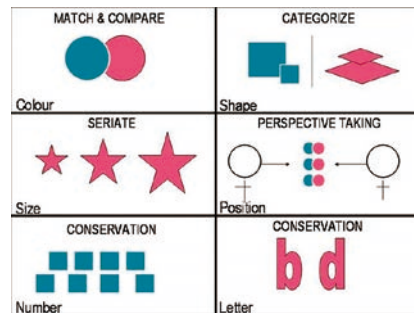


Figure 1

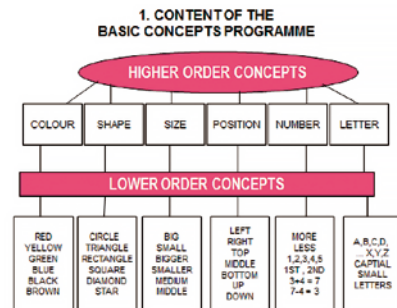


Figure 2

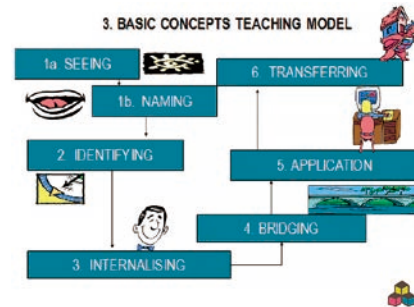


Figure 3

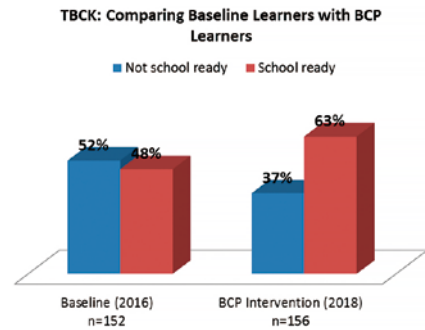
organization responsible for the Basic Concepts Program) and the Northern Cape government, and the Basic Concepts (BC) Advocacy Project was born. The BC Advocacy Project in the Northern Cape (2019–2023) aims to improve the school preparedness of Grade R learners by between 20% and 30%, thereby improving the overall literacy and numeracy outcomes of learners in the Foundation Phase (Grades 1–3). Baseline testing was done on a sample of Grade 1 learners drawn from the project schools. It showed that a majority (72%) of the learners were not prepared for school learning.

A total of 350 teachers from the districts of the province were selected to participate in the BC Advocacy Project. The district officials are responsible for supporting and monitoring the project teachers, and they will also be responsible for the continuation of the project and the training of the remaining teachers in the province once this project comes to an end.

Phase 1 of the project was initiated at the start of 2019 with approximately 85 teachers in two of the education districts. The teachers have thus far attended four days (out of the six days) of training and have implemented three of the six conceptual domains. Approximately 2,200 learners are receiving intervention. The project is supported and monitored by the local district officials who are ably assisted by teams of mainly retired teacher-volunteers who do regular classroom mentoring visits.

The teachers have already made wonderful progress as they learn to become mediators of the program. We have begun to hear increasingly more complex learner verbalizations while the teachers have become more confident in demonstrating the Concept Teaching Model.

The change in the teaching style of teachers has in many cases been dramatic. For many teachers this has been the first time that they have used more interactive and questioning-based approaches in their teaching. The majority had previously used more recitation-based approaches, where the children merely copied what the teacher said. While it is very exciting to see these initial signs of change in these



Provincial and district officials and volunteers in the JTG District.

classes, we are aware that it takes time for these to become a permanent part of the teaching repertoire. Admittedly, there have also been some teachers who have required additional support and encouragement to implement the program and to run it on a regular basis. It is for this reason that each phase of the project is run over a period of two years. This allows the teacher time to become a mediator and to use the program with increasing frequency and confidence.

In conclusion, we have been very pleased with what we have observed over the



Teachers at a training session in the Pixley Kaseme District.



Teachers mediating the BCP to small groups of learners. (2)

first six months of the project. The teachers have responded positively, and we have also been most encouraged by the response of the local and provincial officials to the project. The enthusiasm for the project remains high, with high levels of participation. As our baseline data show, it is essential that we try to shift the preparedness of the learners in Grade R for school learning. The BC Advocacy Project offers teachers a tool to significantly improve the prospects of their learners. The BCP not only provides teachers with a way to better access their learners but also develops those nascent and often fragile cognitive functions needed for school learning. The core philosophy of the BCP emerges clearly in this project—that children, notwithstanding their circumstances, have the unlimited potential to learn and to continue

learning, provided they are given regular classroom mediation by an involved and caring adult.

For more information about the project, visit the Basic Concepts Unlimited website at www.basicconcepts.co.za.

Sylff Support Program

Sylff Leaders Workshop

The Sylff Leaders Workshop provides graduated fellows from diverse backgrounds a forum for engaging in dialogue on current social issues. In addition to learning new facts and perspectives, participants discuss philosophical, ethical, moral, and value-oriented questions. During two, weeklong sessions in Japan, fellows also deepen their ties with one another and gain new insights into the host country.



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Ayo Chan (Peking University)

November 16, 2018

[Report] Fall Session of Sylff Leaders Workshop 2018–19

Keita Sugai

Sylff Association Secretariat

Introduction

An inaugural group of 20 Sylff fellows participated in the fall session of the newly launched Sylff Leaders Workshop from September 16 to 23, 2018. The fellows, who were selected from among 114 applicants, were a highly diverse group in terms of nationality, Sylff institution, field of specialization, and current occupation.

The main objective of the workshop was to provide graduated Sylff fellows an opportunity to experience diverse cultures through intensive discussions with people from different backgrounds and with varying viewpoints. Fellows were also able to deepen their ties to the Sylff community and gain new insights into Japan—not just the well-known aspects of the host country but also traditional and local areas off the beaten track.



Sylff fellows and secretariat members in Sasayama.

About Sasayama

All participants had been scheduled to reach Sasayama via Osaka, but some were forced to switch routes, as Kansai International Airport was heavily damaged in the catastrophic typhoon just prior to the workshop. From Osaka, fellows traveled an hour and a half by bus to Sasayama in Hyogo Prefecture, where most of the sessions were held.



Fields of harvest-ready rice in Sasayama.

Sasayama is a scenic farming community of low-lying hills famous for such products as *kuromame* (black soybeans), mountain yams, chestnuts, and tea. It is also a former castle town, and the castle originally built in the seventeenth century has been partly reconstructed. Some buildings and neighborhoods retain the style and structure of the castle town.

Sanae Oda, executive director of the Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research, welcomed the fellows on behalf of the Sylff Association secretariat. “One major aim in developing this program was to enable fellows to renew their understanding of the kind of leadership qualities we’re looking for,” she said in her remarks. “Society today has become very divisive. We need leaders who will bridge differences and promote understanding between people of diverse cultures and values. The message I hope you’ll take home from this workshop is that this is a role Sylff fellows should play in working for the common good.



Welcome remarks by Sanae Oda.

“Our second aim is to help you enjoy your stay in Japan and gain a better understanding of the country,” she continued. “Through your two visits, I hope you’ll not only get to know each other better but also come to appreciate the many faces of Japan.

Activities in Sasayama

Being a community with a vibrant agricultural sector, Sasayama was an excellent setting for the workshop, whose topic was “The Future of Food Production in 2030.” When considered in terms of the “food system,” the issue is of overriding concern across the globe, as it encompasses not only agricultural production but also transport, manufacturing, retailing, consumption, and food waste. There are

impacts on nutrition, health and well-being, the environment and ultimately, global food security.

The keynote speech for the three-day program in Sasayama was delivered by associate professor Narumi Yoshikawa of the Prefectural University of Hiroshima,



Keynote speech by associate professor Yoshikawa.

an expert on the agricultural economy, who described Japanese initiatives in organic agriculture and grassroots efforts to strengthen ties between consumers and producers.

The workshop was facilitated by methodology experts from German-based Foresight Intelligence, which supports strategic foresight and planning processes in various organizations. After the plenary session, fellows broke out into

smaller groups to discuss the topic under a subleader, delving into such issues as “food security through efficiency and resilience,” “ethical attitudes and awareness raising,” and “responsible and open innovation.” Fellows also conducted an online discussion with Philipp Grunewald of Oxford University’s Environmental Change Institute, who, in addition to running a mushroom farm, has expertise in such fields as the global food production system and organic farming. The three days in Sas-

ayama formed the foundation for the presentations by fellows on September 21 in Tokyo.

A majority of fellows stayed at Nipponia, a traditional wooden mansion that has been renovated into a *ryokan*, or Japanese guesthouse. On September 17, workshop participants were joined at



Plenary session.



Breakout session 1.



Welcome dinner at Nipponia on September 17.

dinner by Sasayama Mayor Takaaki Sakai, who introduced the city and welcomed the guests from overseas. On the following day, fellows got a taste of Japanese culture, choosing to participate in either the tea ceremony or a visit to a local *sake* brewery. In the evening, fellows enjoyed a Japanese style barbeque, sitting on small cushions on the wooden floor.

Kyoto Trip

Before moving to Tokyo, fellows spent a night in Kyoto, visiting the *Gion* district, where they were entertained by *maiko* (female performers-in-training between 15 and 19 years old) and *geiko* (trained performers over 20). *Maiko* and *geiko* are part of a social tradition in going back to the eleventh century, performing for members of the upper class.



A *geiko* (left) and *maiko* (right) play games with fellows.

Tokyo Session

On September 20, fellows visited the Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research, located on the 34th floor of a high-rise in the Roppongi area, for a session introducing the activities of Japanese think tanks and the current state of the Japanese economy. Foundation researchers later joined fellows for dinner on a *yakatabune* boat cruise in Tokyo Bay.

The following day, fellows presented the conclusions of their workshop discussions. They used a methodology called “visioning and road mapping” developed by Foresight Intelligence calling on fellows to start with a target year—in this case 2030—and to work backwards from potential scenarios. In thinking about the



A session with policy experts in Tokyo on September 20.

status of food production in 2030, fellows first discussed bad scenarios and then considered more desirable outcomes. They identified specific problems, developed the means to resolve such problems, and presented their visions of the future. These tasks were considered in reverse chronological order (using the “backcasting” approach), rather than by envision-



Final presentation by Rosangela Malachias (left of screen) and Stefan Buchholz (right).



Final presentation by Kabira Namit (left) and Evgeniy Kandilarov (right).

ing a future based on the current situation. Visioning and road mapping are tools enabling the normative construction of the future and are designed to remove current biases and to think about ethics and the values needed to build a desirable future.

Fellows divided into four groups to make their final presentations, expressing clearly how a desired future could be created.

The workshop ended with a lunch reception with Nippon Foundation President Takeju Ogata, who recounted how the first Sylff institution, the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, came to receive a Sylff endowment and how Sylff as a program has developed thereafter.

The same 20 fellows will meet again in April 2019 in Beppu, renowned for its natural hot springs, located in Oita Prefecture. The workshop will be hosted by Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, a Sylff institution located in the city. Fellows will wrap up their discussions and make their final presentations.

The workshop was launched to facilitate networking and to give fellows a fuller appreciation of the rich diversity of the Sylff community. The Sylff Association secretariat intends to offer this program biennially and is already planning ahead to the next round.

April 8, 2019

Holistic and Empirical Approaches to Ensuring Food Security

Nuruddeen Mohammed Suleiman
University of Malaya

Mohammed Nuruddeen Suleiman, a 2013 Sylff fellow at the University of Malaya and one of 20 participants in the first Sylff Leaders Workshop, reports on the fall session of the 2018–19 workshop, held from September 16 to 23 in Sasayama and Tokyo, Japan.

* * *

I was preparing to travel to Japan for a historic experience to participate in the inaugural Sylff Leaders Workshop when, exactly one week before my trip, a catastrophic typhoon struck Kansai International Airport, where my flight was supposed to land. The airport is a prestigious landmark that testifies to the ingenuity of the Japanese people, and it consolidates the imagination of mankind, the site being reclaimed from the sea to give way to a majestic structure. But now, the airport was closed, and my flight was cancelled about 24 hours before my departure due to the structural damage caused by the typhoon. Against all odds, however, the workshop organizers were determined to fly every participant to Japan. Their courage and determination paid off, as I was at Kansai International Airport barely 2 hours after its reopening.

I was more determined than ever not to miss this event, since the topic chosen for this inaugural workshop, “The Future of Food Production in 2030,” was very close to my heart. I felt this multicultural, multidisciplinary, and transborder gathering would provide some answers to food insecurity in my constituency. I am from Nigeria, a country in sub-Saharan Africa, a region where some countries are witnessing famine, poverty, hunger, civil war, and high infant mortality rates and where government corruption is preponderant.



Furthermore, despite all these delicate fragilities, the continent's population is growing at an alarming rate, implying with definite certainty that food insecurity would persist unless some radical measures are taken.

Fortunately, the Sylff Leader's Workshop provided approaches to incubating hybrid strategies for sufficient and efficient food production in the future. The diversity of the participants, coupled with the methodology of Visioning and Road Mapping provided by Foresight Intelligence, a German-based consortium that facilitated the workshop, was superb. Although the participants were not necessarily experts in agriculture, the methodology enabled their reasoning capacity to provide holistic and empirical approaches toward the future of food production. Amazingly, these approaches enabled us to envision how best to ensure food security through modern technology and good governance, particularly in the global South, where hunger has been one of the daunting challenges.

In the cultural and social realm, the majestic hospitality of our host throughout our stay in Japan was warm and breathtaking. In particular, the lovely Sasayama



Suleiman (standing) at the session in Sasayama.

community is one of the most amazing places I have ever visited. The mountains and architectural landscape of the community provided a spectacular window into the well-preserved and exquisite cultural heritage of Japan. My brief stay in Sasayama afforded me the opportunity to understand the significance of culture and patriotism through a Japanese prism. Likewise, years before, I read the history of great Japanese military warriors

like General Tadamichi Kuribayashi during the battle of Iwo Jima, and this eradicated my ambivalent notions about the history of Japan.

Apart from the organizing team of the workshop, I have made 19 new friendships which are defined by multiculturalism from across the globe. And these friendships I am cherishing because of the love, devotion, and honesty each and every participant has shown to me, particularly on my arrival after a missed flight from Abuja to Osaka.

I strongly believe that at the end of the second session of the workshop in April 2019 the communiqué or report would certainly provide ample solutions to one of the most debilitating challenges facing mankind.

April 8, 2019

An Amazing Experience in Effective Teamworking and Accountable Leadership

Nermeen Varawalla

INSEAD, The Business School for the World

Nermeen Varawalla is one of the 20 fellows participating in the first Sylff Leadership Workshop. The following is her report, on behalf of Working Group 2B, of the fall session of the Workshop, held in September 2018. Varawalla received her Sylff fellowship in 2000 while studying for her MBA at INSEAD. Since then, based in London, Varawalla has combined her background in academic medicine with business skills to enjoy a career as a business leader in the global pharmaceutical and healthcare industries. She is passionate about innovative approaches to the cost-effective development of new medicines.

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The “Future of Food Production in 2030” proved to be an excellent and engaging topic for the inaugural Sylff Leaders Workshop held in September 2018. The reasons for this include the multidisciplinary subject matter, its global impact, and the urgency required to address this challenge. The fact that none of us were an expert on the subject matter but still cared deeply about this topic made it truly compelling. Sasayama, with its long-standing tradition of responsible farming and specialist, artisan food production, was an inspiring and picturesque setting for our deliberations.

Our working group comprised five fellows, namely, Anna Plater, Evgeny Kandilarov, Kabira Namit, Susan Banki, and myself, Nermeen Varawalla. The group was extraordinarily diverse, as we came from very different academic, professional, and cultural backgrounds. This enabled the sharing of different viewpoints, the application of varied experiences, and the examination of multiple social perspectives. The friendly but dynamic relationship within the group allowed for vibrant discussions that challenged conventional perspectives.

We embraced the Visioning and Road Mapping methodology that required us to present our ideas as punchy newspaper headlines. Further, each of us was able to credibly voice our particular viewpoints, namely, those of economic policymak-

ers, global business leaders, responsible academics, and politicians seeking reelection. In addition, we shared insights from our experiences of working in Africa, Asia, Central Europe, and the United States, hence able to imagine the impact of our proposals in different countries and economies.



Members of Group 2B, from left, Varawalla, Namit, Plater, Kandilarov.

After we had articulated our goals for Global Food Security by 2030, we undertook the back-casting exercise wherein we asked hard questions as to what would need to happen in 2028 before the realization of the 2030 goal. Having thus defined the necessary penultimate stage, we probed our collective understanding to figure out what factors could prevent the realization of that 2028 penultimate

stage. Once we spelled out the preventive factors—in other words, the hurdles that needed to be overcome in pursuit of our goal—we brainstormed how to overcome these hurdles, thereby landing on our action plan for 2026. We repeated these steps for every two-year interval until reaching the present in 2018.

Using different colored sticky notes, we assembled all our ideas jotted down as punchy headlines in to a roadmap encompassing 12 years, from 2018 to 2030. Furthermore, we were able to group the collection of hurdles, solutions, and outcomes into different strands, such as Innovation, Business, Policy, and so on, making our output comprehensive and multi-dimensional.

This was an amazing experience in terms of both effective teamworking and accountable leadership. Because of the special group dynamics, tailored methodology, and conducive working environment, we were as a group able to articulate ideas and a vision that we all felt committed to but would have never been able to derive in isolation. We exclaimed, only partly in jest, about how wonderful it would be for the world if global leaders were able to work through issues in the same manner that we had!



Banki

September 26, 2019

Sylff Leaders Workshop: Not Only a Global Partnership but a Global Friendship

Anna Plater-Zyberk
Jagiellonian University

Anna Plater-Zyberk, a 2014 Sylff fellow at Jagiellonian University and one of 20 participants in the first Sylff Leaders Workshop, held in fall 2018 and spring 2019, gives her impressions of the Visioning and Road Mapping methodology used during the discussions at the workshop.

* * *

It was nearly a year ago that 20 fellows from all over the world came to Japan for the first Sylff Leaders Workshop. We were a highly diverse group in terms of nationality, academic background, and occupation, but we also had some things in common. First, earlier in our career, Sylff helped us to achieve some of our academic goals, and, second, we were all focused on helping our respective communities.

My adventure with Sylff started in 2014 when I was struggling to finish my PhD thesis. This was particularly difficult as simultaneously I had to work full time. It is really thanks to Sylff funding that I was able to finish my doctoral thesis, obtain the degree, and move on to pursue a career at the Polish Academy of Sciences. Now, once again, I am truly thankful to Sylff for an amazing experience offered to us during the Leaders Workshop.

The workshop was composed of two one-week-long residential sessions (one in September and one in April) which took place in Japan, as well as reading assignments in between the sessions. The workshop's key topic, "The Future of Food Production," turned out to be an excellent field for a strategy thinking exercise and our further deliberations. The topic was preselected in such a way that none of the fellows was an expert on the subject matter. This made it easier to work without any preconceptions and to engage all of us in vibrant and stimulating discussions.

During our session in September, which took place mostly in Sasayama, thanks to excellent facilitators from German-based Foresight Intelligence, we learned



Learning about Visioning and Road Mapping methodology.

about Visioning and Road Mapping methodology. We applied a back-casting approach to the food production theme. This exciting planning methodology started with defining a desirable goal in the future and then working backwards to identify the actions needed to link that desirable future to the present.

In other words, we started with a desirable goal set in 2030 and worked step by step back to the present. For the purpose of the exercise, we adopted two-year time intervals: 2028, 2026, 2024, and so forth. With every step we had to ask ourselves what needed to happen at that stage and what factors could prevent us from achieving our 2030 goal. Again and again, we brainstormed, drawing on our diverse backgrounds and extensive work experience. At the end of the exercise, when we reached 2018, we had a detailed work plan with actions scheduled until 2030.

I come from Poland, which in Japan is mostly recognised as the homeland of Chopin or Maria Skłodowska-Curie. Apart from these two extremely talented and influential persons, Poland is also known for its turbulent past. The country's tumultuous history has heavily affected our behaviour, making us skilful improvisers and good short-term planners but less engaged in long-term planning activities. In our contemporary, strongly interconnected world, this attitude is significantly hindering our development. Thus, I found the back-casting methodology and other long-term strategy building tools extremely interesting and useful in furthering my work.

Apart from our stay in Sasayama, renowned for its picturesque landscapes and delicious food, including black soybeans, sake, and tea, during the September session we were also able to experience the stunning beauty of Kyoto and the vibrant capital of Japan, Tokyo. During our final presentation in the offices of the Tokyo

Foundation for Policy Research, fellows presented their vision of the future and discussed the main challenges that lay ahead.

The second residential part of the workshop took place in April 2019 in Beppu on the island of Kyushu. This beautiful town located in Oita Prefecture is renowned for its natural hot springs and delicious, steam-cooked food. Upon reaching Fukuoka we were extremely happy to meet other fellows, facilitators, and the Sylff team again. The training part was hosted by Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University. This time we were asked to come up with concrete project proposals that would strengthen global food security, broaden ethical dimension, or raise awareness in the area of food production.

The fellows came up with a number of extremely interesting applications ranging from a mobile phone app linking food grown by ethical producers to a network of vegetable community gardens set up for victims of sexual violence. Our projects were reviewed by Dr. Steven McGreevy, an expert in environmental science and associate professor at the Research Institute for Humanity and Nature (RIHN). His expertise was crucial and helped to both ensure the projects' relevance and broaden our perspective.

The Sylff Leaders Workshop was an amazing opportunity to challenge ourselves in a truly friendly and stimulating environment. I enjoyed every moment and every discussion with other Sylff fellows, Foresight Intelligence facilitators, and participating experts. For me, the key thought that came up during our workshop was the growing understanding that whatever bad happens locally has global consequences but that whatever good happens locally will have global applications only if we make a joint effort. In our interconnected world the global perspective is no longer a choice, it is an obligation and an opportunity. The amazing Sylff network provides us with tools to share best practices and to transform our initiatives into globally relevant projects.

The session in Beppu concluded with a number of exciting cultural activities set in the stunningly beautiful sceneries of Kyushu. We participated in a Buddhist ceremony at the Monjusen-ji and visited Dazaifu, including the ruins of the Mizuki and Ono Fortress.



Intensive group discussion in the spring session.



Participants of the workshop in front of cherry blossoms at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University.

The Sylff Leaders Workshop offered us a unique chance to see the most picturesque places in Japan and to immerse ourselves in the stunningly beautiful Japanese culture, not to mention the Japanese cuisine. Thanks to the truly friendly and hard-working staff of the Sylff Association secretariat who were our dear hosts and guides, we had a unique chance to gain new insights into the incredibly rich and diverse life of Japan. After this amazing experience we developed strong bonds, and it was really hard for all of us to say good-bye to a group of friends, as well as to the Land of Cherry Blossoms.

October 31, 2019

Designing Food for the Future

Kabira Namit
Princeton University

Global warming has accelerated sharply in the past five years. Mitigating the catastrophic effects of climate change will require path-breaking changes in every facet of our lives—particularly in the way we travel and the way we eat. Kabira Namit, a 2014 Sylff fellow at Princeton University, highlights a radical approach to revolutionize food production over the next few decades. This post was written in collaboration with Salvia Zeeshan, a post-doctoral fellow at Johns Hopkins University, with additional assistance from Prabhmeet Kaur.

* * *

What's Wrong with the Way We Eat?

To put it simply, we eat a lot of meat. Raising livestock produces a fifth of human-related greenhouse gas emissions. Also, livestock farming utilizes 70% of the earth's arable land, 30% of the earth's fresh water, and around 46% of all crop-production for feed.¹

Beyond the pressures on our environment, there is also an ethical argument to be made toward changing our current behavior. We slaughter more than 50 billion chickens per year—animals with abilities that may be comparable to human toddlers. Also, nearly 1.5 billion pigs and 500 million sheep² find their way to the abattoir each year. The conditions in which we keep these animals before they are killed are best left unimagined.

Also, meat consumption is linked to an array of health problems like the transfer of animal diseases, high cholesterol, and the increased risk of cancer.

¹ Ewing-Chow, D. (2019, June 20). "Is Cultured Meat the Answer to the World's Meat Problem?" Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/daphneewingchow/2019/06/20/is-cultured-meat-the-answer-to-the-worlds-meat-problem/>.

² Thornton, A. (2019, February 8). "This Is How Many Animals We Eat Each Year." Retrieved from <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/02/chart-of-the-day-this-is-how-many-animals-we-eat-each-year/>.

Is Vegetarianism the Solution?

Ideally, yes. Turning to vegetarian diets would reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce our expenditure on healthcare, and provide more food security to the world's population. There is definite evidence to suggest that people are becoming more conscientious and reducing their meat consumption. For example, in the US, consumers identifying themselves as vegans rose from 1% to 6% between 2014 and 2017;³ in the UK the number has grown fourfold from 150,000 to 600,000 between 2014 and 2018.⁴

However, this is not enough, as only 375 million out of the 7.7 billion individuals⁵ on this planet follow vegetarian/vegan diets. Also, let's be honest—given that humans have been eating meat since the dawn of our species, attempts to switch the entire human race to vegetarianism seem utopian. We get protein from meat consumption and tend to relish dishes like steaks, sashimi, and sushi. Eating meat on certain days is also considered a tradition and a symbol of prosperity.

Can We Continue Eating Meat while Combating Climate Change?

Lab-grown meat—cultured meat or clean meat, as it is also known—has been around for nearly a decade now and may be the solution to this intractable problem. Lab-grown meat is identical to conventional meat at the cellular level and is grown from animal muscle cells in a laboratory. The bioreactor that is used in producing this meat is similar to those used for the fermentation of yogurt or beer. No genetic modification is required for this process, and, since the process is sterile, there is no need for antibiotics.

It is also much better for the environment. Cultured meat requires 99% less land and 96% less water⁶ than livestock. Removing the consumption of conven-

³ Forgive, J. (2018, November 2). "The Growing Acceptance of Veganism." Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/janetforgive/2018/11/02/picturing-a-kindler-gentler-world-vegan-month/#2a6387252f2b>.

⁴ Smithers, R. (2018, November 1). "Third of Britons Have Stopped or Reduced Eating Meat: Report." Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/nov/01/third-of-britons-have-stopped-or-reduced-meat-eating-vegan-vegetarian-report>.

⁵ Figus, C., Cavaleri, A., & Mottadelli, R. (2014, October 27). "375 Million Vegetarians Worldwide. All the Reasons for a Green Lifestyle." Retrieved from <http://www.expo2015.org/magazine/en/lifestyle/375-million-vegetarians-worldwide.html>.

⁶ Ewing-Chow, D. (2019, June 20). "Is Cultured Meat the Answer to the World's Meat Problem?" Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/daphneewingchow/2019/06/20/is-cultured-meat-the-answer-to-the-worlds-meat-problem/>.

tional meat and dairy products from one's diet would reduce an individual's carbon footprint of consumed food by up to 73%. Moreover, we could reduce global farmland use by 75%,⁷ an area equivalent to the size of the US, China, Australia, and the European Union combined. Also, no animal needs to be slaughtered for your next steak!

With a soaring global population and a surge in demand for meat from people emerging from poverty, the burden on the earth's limited ecological resources is only going to worsen. The meat industry estimates an expected increase of 73% in global demand for meat products by 2050.⁸ Cultured meat may be just the pivotal revolution we need in food technology. It has enormous implications for meat eaters, the meat industry, and the environment.



©Just

So, What's the Problem?

Currently, costs. Producing meat in a lab remains an expensive affair. The first lab-designed burger that Mark Post produced had a price tag of \$330,000,⁹ compared to the \$2 that people tend to pay for burgers in the United States today. However, costs have been plummeting—Memphis Meats from San Francisco produced a lab-grown meatball for \$18,000 in 2016. Just a year later, it produced a synthetic duck à l'orange and chicken nuggets at \$6,000.¹⁰

Industry experts believe that upscaling and positive externalities will result in

⁷ Petter, O. (2018, August 29). "Going Vegan Is 'Single Biggest Way' to Reduce Our Impact on the Planet, Study Finds." Retrieved from <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/veganism-environmental-impact-planet-reduced-plant-based-diet-humans-study-a8378631.html>.

⁸ Salvage, B. (2011, December 14). "Global Meat Consumption to Rise 73 Percent by 2050: FAO." Retrieved from <https://www.meatpoultry.com/articles/4395-global-meat-consumption-to-rise-73-percent-by-2050-fao>.

⁹ Burningham, G. (2016, May 25). "Lab-Grown Beef Will Save the Planet—And Be a Billion-Dollar Business." Retrieved from <https://www.newsweek.com/lab-grown-beef-will-save-planet-and-be-billion-dollar-business-430980>.

¹⁰ Cassiday, L. (2018, February). "Clean Meat." Retrieved from <https://www.aocs.org/stay-informed/inform-magazine/featured-articles/clean-meat-february-2018>.

the same patty being produced for \$10¹¹ in the future. However, research and development remain a costly affair. Also, weaving together muscle and fat tissue is a major hurdle obstructing the production of complex structured cuts, such as steaks, pork chops, and ribs.

Understandably, the industry is also wary of people's attitudes and preferences. How many people will be open to consuming a lab-grown turkey next Thanksgiving? Or a cultured fish for Chinese New Year?

What Should We Do?

Invest in research! Cost-effective synthetic meat could prove to be a game-changer—not just for our fight against climate change and ethical food production but also in eliminating contamination due to bacteria such as *E. coli* and *Salmonella* (as lab meat is cultivated under sterile conditions).¹² Composition of the meat can also be altered to make it healthier by replacing the harmful fats in it to healthier fats, such as omega 3.

According to researchers at Oxford Martin School, we could save approximately 8 million human lives by 2050¹³ if we decrease our reliance on traditional meat production. We could also diminish greenhouse gas emissions by two-thirds, and save \$1.5 trillion in healthcare costs and climate-related damage.

We need to urge our governments and policymakers to invest more in such vital research and help feed populations in the future in ethical, eco-friendly, and efficient ways.

¹¹ Ireland, T. (2019, May 30). "The Artificial Meat Factory—The Science of Your Synthetic Supper." Retrieved from <https://www.sciencefocus.com/future-technology/the-artificial-meat-factory-the-science-of-your-synthetic-supper/>.

¹² Nishitani, A. (2011, March 30). "Food of the Future: In Vitro Meat?" Retrieved from <http://sitn.hms.harvard.edu/flash/2011/issue90/>.

¹³ Springmann, M.C.J., Godfray, H.C.J., Rayner, M.C.J., & Scarborough, P.C.J. (2016). "Analysis and Valuation of the Health and Climate Change Cobenefits of Dietary Change." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 113(15), 4146–4151. DOI: 10.1073/pnas.1523119113.kabi.

October 11, 2019

Thoughts Regarding Local Foods

Nomingerel Davaadorj

National Academy of Governance

Nomingerel Davaadorj, a 2009 Sylff fellow at the National Academy of Governance and one of 20 participants in the first Sylff Leaders Workshop, gives her insights into local foods in Mongolia, her home country, and Japan, where she spent two years in completing her LLM at Kyushu University.

* * *

I had the privilege of participating in the first Sylff Leaders Workshop, where Sylff fellows from diverse backgrounds discussed the topic of “The Future of Food Production in 2030” in the cities of Sasayama, Hyogo Prefecture, and Beppu, Oita Prefecture, in Japan. The workshop was a generous opportunity to experience Japanese culture and cuisine and to access important landmarks and places in Japanese history. It also motivated me to share my thoughts about local foods and food experiences I enjoyed in Japan during the workshop.

Food production and food security are not directly my professional concerns. However, I became interested in these issues through my research into pastoral livestock husbandry management. Pastoral livestock husbandry is still practiced in Mongolia today, and it is considered a main producer of organic food. I remember being surprised when I discovered that there are restrictions on the intake of milk and dairy products by young children in some countries. This was because I was taught as a child that milk and dairy products are good for our teeth and bone development. Fortunately, we had organic milk and dairy products produced through traditional, free ranching practices. They were all locally pro-



Describing local foods in Mongolia at the final presentation in Beppu.

duced or processed, and we did not need to worry about high levels of hormones, antibiotics, or pesticides. Since initiating my research on pastoral livestock husbandry, I have come to know the significance of locally produced foods and their benefits to our wellbeing and environmental sustainability.

One solution toward ensuring food security generated from our discussions was to utilize cultural knowledge of staple foods. During my two years living in Japan, I have noticed that the eating habits of the Japanese people are very healthy and that Japanese-style dishes use very nutritious ingredients. The keynote speech in Sasayama by Professor Narumi Yoshikawa, an expert on the agricultural economy, about the *teikei* organic agricultural movement initiated in the 1970s was intriguing because it is based on traditional culture and embraces eco-friendly practices. It was an example of how local foods and traditional, indigenous knowledge could become part of a national trend.

Until recently, I believed that we, Mongolians, are lactose-tolerant, meaning that we can digest milk and dairy products with an enzyme called lactase in the body.¹ Dairy foods make up a significant share of our food consumption even in adulthood. But recent research revealed that only 5% of Mongolians actually have lactase persistence alleles. Additionally, findings indicated that traditional knowledge of producing dairy products played a significant role in changing the microorganisms in milk.² In brief, traditional food culture and its food processing technology, passed down from generation to generation, simply changed the “game” to compensate for lactose intolerance.

Local food items, naturally, form the core of local cuisine. In Japan, many localities have developed their own typical dishes that are only available locally. Examples include Kobe beef, Hokkaido’s soft serve ice cream and seafood, Okinawa’s *yagi* sashimi (raw goat meat), Fukuoka’s Hakata ramen, Itoshima’s oysters, Osaka’s *takoyaki*, Hiroshima’s *okonomiyaki*, and so on. They all use common foods like vegetables, fish, and meat, but the uniqueness lies in the way they are prepared or cooked, which is linked to traditional knowledge.

Discovering and eating famous local foods can be fun and delicious, almost like participating in a food marathon. During our workshop, we had opportunities to experience many traditional Japanese dishes, including black soybeans (*kuromame*)

¹ <https://www.webmd.com/digestive-disorders/digestive-diseases-lactose-intolerance#1>, last visited Sep 25, 2019.

² Choongwon Jeong et al., “Bronze Age Population Dynamics and the Rise of Dairy Pastoralism on the Eastern Eurasian Steppe,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 115, no. 48 (November 27, 2018): at E11253, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1813608115>.

and boar meat in Sasayama, Edo-style cuisine on a *yakatabune* cruise in Tokyo Bay, Kyoto-style cuisine (*kaiseki*) in the Gion district of Kyoto, Buddhist cuisine (*shojin ryori*) in the Monju Senji Temple in Oita, and a pufferfish course (*fugu*) in Beppu. They were all special because they were prepared with local know-how and ingredients only available in the respective areas.

Shojin ryori is a meal without meat, fish, or other animal products, being based instead on grains and vegetables. It is the cuisine of Buddhist monks at Japanese temples. The main source of protein is tofu and other soybean-based foods. Before having *shojin ryori* at Monju Senji Temple, I expected simple dishes since my friendly coordinators from the Sylff Association secretariats told me so, and I was looking forward to experiencing the elegant austerity of the monastic life. Indeed, *shojin ryori* turned out to be a beautifully arranged and tasty set meal. It was evidence of how simple and humble ingredients can be rendered into a charming and fulfilling meal. Of course, the secret was traditional cooking knowledge and locally prepared tofu made with water from a spring. As the head monk explained, both my mind and body were gratified after having *shojin ryori*.



Shojin ryori.

Fugu, or pufferfish, is a Japanese delicacy. *Time* magazine called *fugu* one of the Top 10 Most Dangerous Foods, saying “*fugu*’s intestines, ovaries and liver contain a poison called tetrodotoxin, which is 1,200 times deadlier than cyanide.”³ *Fugu* has been eaten for centuries in Japan, though, and “poison-free” methods of preparation have been handed down from generation to generation. Currently, only licensed chefs who have two to three years of training are allowed to prepare *fugu* dishes. Another interesting fact is that *fugu* is the only food the Emperor of Japan is forbidden to eat by law. It was my first time to have a full set of *fugu* dishes, including *fugu* sashimi, fried *fugu*, *fugu* sushi, *fugu* soup, and *fugu* rice porridge.

Shojin ryori and *fugu* are examples of local foods that developed as part of traditional culture using indigenous knowledge. Thanks to the support of policy-makers and an effective tourism policy, local foods have taken root in every part

³ http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1967235_1967238_1967227,00.html, last visited Sep 25, 2019.

of Japan. The traditional foods we encountered during the two sessions of the workshop were wonderful, yet quite different. Countries like Mongolia that face challenges in preserving local foods in the era of standardized food production should draw lessons from these initiatives in Japan. Locally grown foods are considered the most delicious and nutritious. Should we lose such local foods in today's globalized world, this would be like losing one's national identity. It would indeed be boring if everything was the same wherever you went. So, I hope that everyone will consider local foods seriously and support their survival into the future.

Finally, I want to thank the Sylff Association for giving me the opportunity to participate in a highly enjoyable experience during the Leaders Workshop. I treasure the friendship with the 19 other fellows who continue to inspire and motivate me in promoting my professional and personal growth. Thank you all!

September 26, 2019

A Journey in the Land of the Rising Sun

Ayo Chan
Peking University

Ayo Chan, a 2011 Sylff fellow at Peking University and one of 20 participants in the first Sylff Leaders Workshop, reflects on his journey in Japan during two eight-day sessions of the 2018–19 Sylff Leaders Workshop.

* * *

I think that life is a journey on which we are presented not just one path but a series of opportunities to experience and be experienced by others, each one of which makes us wiser, stronger, and in most cases happier. I am very thankful for having this fortunate opportunity to participate in the inaugural Sylff Leaders Workshop. There is no doubt that Japan is an internationally renowned hub for workshops, conferences, and other academic activities, and Tokyo, Osaka, and Kyoto are popular choices for hosting international events. However, this Sylff Leaders Workshop was such a unique experience in terms of not only intellectual exchange among Sylff fellows from a wide range of personal and professional backgrounds but also in the thoughtful arrangements that allowed us to immerse ourselves in the culture, customs, and traditions of the Land of the Rising Sun.

I still remember the excitement during my flight from Singapore to Osaka to join the fall session of the workshop in 2018. As a lover of the Sengoku Period in Japanese history, I always feel excited to visit the Kansai region, where various daimyos and heroes fought and sacrificed themselves to restore harmony, peace, and order 400 years ago. I arrived late but managed to wake up early the next morning to visit Osaka Castle. The castle was built by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, a legendary daimyo who was born to a peasant family but eventually succeeded Oda Nobunaga to become the ruler of all Japan. I was amused by the castle's picturesque gardens and historic architecture, and the stunning view at the top of the castle tower. The renowned farewell poem with which Hideyoshi ended his legendary life was also on exhibit: "Appearing like dew, vanishing like dew—such is my

life. Even Naniwa (Osaka)’s splendor is a dream within a dream.” Indeed, the impermanence of being is a major theme of Japanese Zen.

From Osaka, it took us an hour and a half by bus to travel to Sasayama in Hyogo Prefecture, where the fall session of the workshop was mainly conducted. Sasayama is a small, quiet, and beautiful castle town surrounded by hills with a scenic natural landscape. Under the theme of “The Future of Food Production in



Chan, center, with Sasayama Mayor Takaaki Sakai, second from left.

2030,” the workshop aimed at equipping us with approaches to envision a better future for the world and providing a systematic framework to approach conflicting scenarios and to bridge different stakeholders toward common goals.

Despite the intensive schedule of the workshop, we were given some free time to explore the town and visit small shops and houses with centuries-old wooden

architecture. As the tallest structure in the town, Sasayama Castle was built under orders of Tokugawa Ieyasu, who succeeded Hideyoshi as the de facto leader of Japan in the 16th century. I was told that the castle’s architectural style was similar to Nijo Castle in Kyoto, and it is exceptional to see such a luxurious castle design outside of Kyoto.

In this historical town gifted with good quality agricultural land and environment, we had the privilege of trying different types of Japanese delicacies with local ingredients. While it was our great pleasure and honor to have French-Japanese fusion, full-course welcoming dinner with Sasayama Mayor Takaaki Sakai, having a Japanese-style barbecue with wild boar meat, black soybeans, and Japanese yams and drinking home-brewed sake was also great fun. We spent a few days in Sasayama before moving to Kyoto and Tokyo, but the tranquility and peacefulness of Sasayama was deeply rooted in my mind in the remaining days.

The spring session was conducted in Beppu in Oita Prefecture on the island of Kyushu, the southwestern part of the Japanese archipelago. Beppu is a famous hot spring resort in Japan, and naturally onsens became one of the biggest highlights for this session. It was a long but joyful journey from Fukuoka to Beppu. The weather was great, and the views of coastlines, forests, and mountains of Kyushu were magnificent. Also, the Sylff Association Secretariat thoughtfully prepared some culture tips and fun facts about onsens to share with us. I could feel the enthusiasm in the coach when we were told that the baths still maintained ancient traditions, including bathing naked with strangers!

Another distinctive cultural highlight that is not easily found outside the country is *fugu* cuisine. Because of pufferfish's deadly, toxic parts, the preparation and cooking of *fugu* are strictly regulated and licensed by the government, and only seasoned chefs are qualified to do the work. From *fugu* skin and *fugu karaage* to *fugu* sashimi and *fugu shabu-shabu*, we celebrated our successful teamwork and friendships with one of the most dangerous dishes in Japanese cuisine.

The final presentations took place at the beautiful campus of Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (APU), located on the top of a mountain in the Jumonjibaru area of Beppu. This was an ideal choice, since the university is one of the most internationalized tertiary institutions in Japan. This echoed the purpose of this workshop to nurture a new generation of leaders who could interact with and learn from people from a variety of cultures and backgrounds.

We were delighted to present our key takeaways, thoughts, and stories to Mr. Yohei Sasakawa, Chairman of the Nippon Foundation, APU President Haruaki Deguchi, and other distinguished guests and to have a dialogue session with Mr. Sasakawa. I spent considerable time in Myanmar where Mr. Sasakawa is well-known in the field of charity and education, development, humanitarian assistance, and the peace process. I had visited a school donated by the foundation in Kayah, a landlocked state in Myanmar, and was very pleased to learn of his views on and insights into the country's development.



Chan's final presentation at APU.

Words are not enough to express my deep gratitude to the Sylff Association Secretariat at the Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research and to the Nippon Foundation for the warm generosity and hospitality throughout the workshop. “Ichi-go ichi-e” is a saying in Japanese that describes the treasured but unrepeatable moment of every get-together. While we will never have the same kind of meeting again, I do look forward to catching up with my dearest Sylff friends again soon.

Sylff Support Program

Sylff Leadership Initiatives (SLI)

SLI supports Sylff fellows wishing to undertake a social action project or to organize a forum, conference, seminar, or workshop addressing social issues. Projects involving one or more Sylff fellows are eligible for an SLI award of up to US\$10,000. The organizing team may include non-fellows in a subordinate or supporting capacity.



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Joe McCarter (Victoria University of Wellington)

September 20, 2019

Carceral Logics and Social Justice: Women Prisoners in India

Rimple Mehta

Jadavpur University

Rimple Mehta, a Sylff fellow at Jadavpur University, and her project partner, Mahuya Bandyopadhyay, an associate professor at the School of Development Studies of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, implemented a year-long social action project with funding from the Sylff Leadership Initiatives (SLI). Their project is intended to build a network with practitioners, scholars, and activists to work as a pressure group to ensure the rights of women prisoners in India and raise awareness beyond the network to change the negative perceptions around the issues at hand. In this article, Mehta and Bandyopadhyay write about their SLI-funded project.

* * *

Women Prisoners in India

Women prisoners in India constitute five percent of the prison population. They are often incarcerated in wards within larger prisons for men. Women prisoner wards then become “prisons within prisons.” There are only a few all-women prisons. Once in prison the women are ostracized by their families, as they are perceived as breaking not only legal codes but also social norms, therefore doubly deviant. Ostracization by families means that their access to justice is limited. Seclusion through imprisonment is not just a physical seclusion but also an alienation from their familial and kin networks. This indicates their marginalization both within the institution and outside it.

Institutions like the prison in India do not receive adequate media or public attention because of the perceptions around crime and criminality. Although the ideas of incarceration have shifted from punishment to reform, in reality prison administration and the public beyond prison walls continue to be dismissive of any efforts toward reform and rehabilitation and of any attempts to talk about the concerns of prisoners and prison administration.

Conceptualizing Social Justice

Social justice for women prisoners in India is a neglected area but has been the focus of our research for a decade now. This project, although in continuity with our efforts, marks a departure in two ways: First, it expands the boundaries of research and understanding of the lives and contexts of women's imprisonment through the inclusion of activists, scholars, social work practitioners, and administrators. Second, we have consolidated our previous ethnographic fieldwork experiences to move beyond the specificities of site and initiate discussions on advocacy around issues of women prisoners. One of the first steps toward social change, we believe, is reflexivity. While evaluating our research on women prisoners, we felt compelled to reflect on our positions and our location within the academic and certain disciplinary contexts. With years of research on, learning about, and understanding of women's imprisonment, we were able to see the need to move out of the confines of our locations to collaborate with those who are engaging with similar issues in different capacities. The SLI award enabled us to put this idea to action.

Activities and Approach

The main foci of the project were to find and engage with those committed to bringing about a change in the lives of women prisoners and to open up a space for discussions on their lives. We have realized this by organizing meetings—in Mumbai, Kolkata, and Delhi—and a workshop titled “Carceral Logics and Social Justice: A Dialogue between Practitioners, Scholars and Activists” that brought together scholars, activists, social work practitioners, and administrators.

Most of the participants in the workshop contributed papers detailing their work and experiences with women prisoners to our book, *Women, Incarcerated: Narratives from India*. Through this edited volume we will be able to reach out to the general reader interested in women offenders, concerned citizens, and organizations working for social justice. The narra-



Professor Surinder Jaswal, deputy director, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, speaks at the workshop in Mumbai titled “Carceral Logics and Social Justice: A Dialogue between Practitioners, Scholars and Activists.”

tives of women prisoners from different parts of the country featured in the book will enable readers to access their lives and conditions of imprisonment, which are otherwise invisible.

Further, the book, as it moves beyond the constrained domains of academic disciplines, is written in a manner and style that are easy to connect with and enable a wide readership. In including various perspectives outside of academic research, we have broadened the horizons of knowledge and understanding about women prisoners in India.

Dialogues

We were able to enter into multiple dialogues through this project. The process of organizing the meetings enabled us to understand the complexities and the challenges involved for those working on the ground to address concerns in women's imprisonment. The meetings that we held in different cities brought forth diverse concerns from specific local contexts of women's imprisonment. For instance, at the meeting in Kolkata, the absence of sanitary napkins and baby food for children in prison emerged as a major concern. When this issue was brought up in the Mumbai meeting, it was observed that this was being provided and was, therefore, not an issue of prime concern in that locality. At the meeting in Delhi, the need was emphasized for formalizing alliances to work on specific issues around women's imprisonment.

The participants of the three meetings asserted the need for an online platform to share existing knowledge, brainstorm on emergent issues, and respond to crisis situations with regard to women prisoners. They felt that even though individuals and organizations were doing substantive work trying to push for reforms in the treatment of women prisoners, much of this work remained isolated efforts. Consolidation of this work through a larger and formalized network was suggested. The Indian Prisons Network (IPNet), for which these three meetings were held, was endorsed and has been initiated through this project.

The need for different people to speak at a common forum and the difficulties of doing so were highlighted in our workshop, which was organized with the contributors to our edited volume. The different ideological positions initially generated some discomfort among the participants. But the discussions stand testimony to the fact that the participants' work was geared toward bringing out a change in the everyday lives of women prisoners. The papers in the volume lay bare women's experiences of exclusion, marginalization, and violence and the ways in which incarceration intersects with different institutions in their everyday lives. The ongoing

ing dialogues with our contributors as we edited the papers have added a qualitative edge to the way in which these issues of women prisoners have been represented.

In this entire process, we have also built stronger connections with some of our supporters and collaborators who have been actively working within the prison space. These connections have opened up the space to work toward making the prison more accessible to researchers and practitioners. The opening up of the prison through dialogue and writing disrupt the singular narrative of the woman prisoner as “mad woman,” “socially deviant,” and “morally bankrupt,” paving the way for empathy.

Looking Forward

The significance can never be overstated of the publication and dissemination of ideas in an area where information and knowledge are scarce and, even when available, are articulated only in terms of certain dominant and powerful narratives. Through this project we have attempted to communicate the lives, contexts, and treatment of women prisoners in India. By presenting multiple perspectives, we have countered the idea of a single narrative about a woman prisoner that rests on an assumption of breaking a moral code. We seek to continue this effort through more field engagement, research, and writing about prisons in India.

Moreover, this project has brought forth and strengthened the idea of experiments within governance and reform, such as the cultural therapy initiative in West Bengal. We would like to further explore and document these ideas, to see if there are other experiments in the country including documentation of the open prison. Advocacy initiatives through networking can further strengthen these activities, and we hope that through IPNet we will be able to harness the strength of a collective. Networking on an issue that has limited field accessibility increases the value of networking. We envisage that this may be possible because IPNet has adopted a multi-stakeholder approach, where individuals and organizations value empirical research and experiential participation in prison administration.



Uma Chakravarti speaks at “Carceral Logics and Social Justice: A Dialogue between Practitioners, Scholars and Activists.”

June 7, 2018

Catalyzing Cultural Revitalization in Western Province, Solomon Islands

Joe McCarter

Victoria University of Wellington

Indigenous knowledge and practice are critical on Kolombangara Island, but they are often not visible in discussions of conservation and resource management. In response, Sylff fellow Joe McCarter and the Kolombangara Island Biodiversity Conservation Association (KIBCA) initiated a workshop to discuss cultural revitalization, as well as teach practical documentation skills to rangers and community members. The workshop was held in Hunda, a village on Kolombangara Island in the Solomon Islands' Western Province, and was led by representatives of the Vanuatu Cultural Center (VCC). The VCC team included three fieldworkers (ni-Vanuatu researchers) and the head of the Vanuatu Women's Culture Program. The workshop covered a variety of topics, including the challenges and ethics of cultural maintenance, techniques and best practice, and the importance of such activities. On the final day, the group came up with several action points and next steps, including community and home-based recording and maintenance and agreed to create a new network focused on Kolombangara Island and run through KIBCA.

* * *

Project Background

Indigenous knowledge and practice are important components of everyday life in the Solomon Islands. Most people live in rural areas, and gardening, fishing, and food gathering are the basis of income and nutrition. Most land is managed under customary tenure, and people's links to the land can be traced back several generations. Local languages and cultures are important and diverse, and cultural practices guide interactions and governance over much of the country.

On Kolombangara Island, a high volcanic island in Western Province, local knowledge and practice play a key role. Over 6,000 people live on the island, largely in small rural communities on land that is managed under customary tenure. Kolombangara is a biodiversity hotspot, and KIBCA has been working since



2008 to coordinate and promote biodiversity conservation activities around the island. However, there has been little attention to the maintenance of language and *kastom* (a Solomon Island Pijin concept referring to history and tradition), and KIBCA has been seeking to increase its focus on maintenance and revitalization.

This work is driven by fears that elements of *kastom* are being lost. In the present day, local language and knowledge are often not valued by education systems, cash economies, and the time pressure of everyday life. For example, school systems usually focus on Western educational techniques and may not support traditional forms of knowledge transmission. There is concern that this may lead to the erosion of knowledge, practice, and language over time. In everyday life, knowledge of language and history can help students to excel at school and can guide healthy food practice based on local and organic food produce.

Moreover, and more pressingly, ongoing commercial logging on Kolombangara continues to threaten sacred sites and people's links to land. Often, logging operations will destroy cultural sites (for example, old village sites or shrines), which in turn weakens knowledge and the cultural histories associated with place. Because land is under customary tenure, and this knowledge is often orally transmitted, these activities can result in people losing their claim to land and a reduction of the biocultural values of the landscape.

The Workshop

With generous funding from Sylff Leadership Initiatives, KIBCA coordinator

Ferguson Vaghi and Joe McCarter worked together to bring participants to Kolombangara the maintenance of knowledge and practice. This was relevant to KIBCA's work because it focuses on maintaining ecosystem services and values associated with intact biodiversity areas. Vaghi led and facilitated the workshop, set workshop goals and objectives, and liaised with the Hunda community to arrange accommodation and housing for the workshop. I assisted with designing the workshop, liaising with the Vanuatu group, arranging logistics, and setting the agenda for the meeting.

The major goal of the workshop was to allow the chance for exchange between



Participants outside the venue in Hunda.

Kolombangara and fieldworkers from the Vanuatu Cultural Center (VCC). The VCC group comprised Evelyne Bulegih, Numaline Mahana, Chief Jamesan Sanhambath, and Chief Joachim Moleli. The VCC has been working for over 30 years to promote the maintenance of traditional knowledge, practice, and language. The heart of its operation is the presence of a nationwide network of over 100 “fieldworkers”, volunteer indigenous an-

thropologists who meet annually and are trained in various forms of cultural documentation. They typically work within their own community to record cultural histories and traditional knowledge, which are then stored in the community and in the national archives. The fieldworkers also act as the gatekeepers for external agencies seeking to work on cultural or social issues in Vanuatu, providing advice and guidance that ensure that ethical concerns and intellectual property are appropriately addressed.

The objectives of the workshop were to:

1. Provide training in methods for documentation of oral histories and traditional knowledge and practice
2. Provide training in methods for mapping and recording of sacred sites using GIS technology
3. Provide a forum for sharing and exchange between Solomon Islander conservation practitioners and ni-Vanuatu indigenous anthropologists
4. Produce and publish a short article for the national media about the importance of cultural knowledge and practice for the management of the environment

Attendance varied between 20 and 23 people across the three days of the workshop. Participants included KIBCA staff, among whom were four rangers (responsible for carrying out KIBCA's work, including enforcement and awareness activities); community representatives from the neighboring communities of Votuana, Cana, and Ireke, as well as from the host community Hunda; and community representatives from Vavanga and Kalina (Parara Island), which also form part of a biocultural network. These representatives included two village chiefs. Attendance was largely male, but there were at least five women attending each day of the workshop.



Vanuatu and New Zealand workshop participants: from left to right, Joachim Moleli, Evelyne Bulegih, Joe McCarter, Numaline Mahana, and Jimesan Sanhambath.

The meeting was held at Hunda, a small village of around 200 people on Kolombangara. All catering and accommodation were provided by the village.

Outline of Events

Wednesday, February 21

The aim of day one was to understand the context of work in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. The meeting was opened by the chief of Hunda village and then formally begun by Vaghi. During the day, participants worked to compile lists of challenges around the maintenance of *kastom* and culture in their communities. The Vanuatu fieldworkers were able to provide input to these solutions with their practical experience. Discussions particularly focused on governance and how it was important to record knowledge on genealogies and leadership protocol; the participants felt that one of the key issues in the communities at the moment was a lack of legitimate leadership, combined with a lack of respect from youth. In the final part of the day, the Vanuatu fieldworkers went into greater depth about their work, including a discussion of some of the challenges of maintaining *kastom* and culture in Vanuatu.

Thursday, February 22

The aim of the second day was to pass on skills to assist with some of the chal-

lenges that were identified on the first day. The day began with a discussion of the “*kastom* economy” and the ways in which tradition and culture intersect with daily life in the village environment. For example, Chief Moleli discussed an initiative in his community, Tavendrua, to use traditional wealth items such as yams and pigs to pay teachers in the *kastom* school, while Mahana discussed traditional marriage arrangements on Tanna Island. Participants then split into small groups to document the *kastom* economy in their communities. These groups focused on a variety of topics including traditional medicines, fishing techniques, and exchange items. In the afternoon, there was a practical session on the maintenance and recording of *kastom* and culture. Each of the fieldworkers gave a talk and held trainings on an area within their expertise: Bulegih discussed the written recording and storage of *kastom* stories, Mahana the written descriptions of weaving and woven products, Chief Moleli the recording of *kastom* stories, and Chief Sanhambath the use of handheld units to document sacred sites. The focus on all these presentations was to try to make sure that participants understood that technology should not be central for this work—that it is better to record things in a basic format (e.g., with pen and paper) and store it securely, to ensure that it is accessible to future generations.



Small group work on day two (photo by Piokera Holland).

Friday, February 23

The aim of the third day was to define next steps. Throughout the day, participants worked in small groups to define what practical steps could be taken to halt the erosion of *kastom* and culture. These were discussed in a closing plenary session. Topics included home-based recording with family members, consultation throughout the communities to decide which components of traditional knowledge and practice are at risk, and a cultural documentation network run through KIBCA. The group decided it was important to maintain linkages with the Vanuatu group, through Facebook and email, so that lessons could continue to be shared.

Saturday, February 24, and Sunday, February 25

On Saturday and Sunday, the Vanuatu group traveled to Imbu Rano field station on Kolombangara. During this trip they were able to observe KIBCA's biodiversity conservation work in practice, as well as learn about threats to the area and the challenges that the rangers face on a daily basis.

Outputs and Outcomes

The workshop was lively, well attended, and able to produce the outputs that were intended. These included:

1. Provision of a discussion forum and practical trainings around the maintenance of *kastom* and culture on Kolombangara
2. Initiation of efforts on Kolombangara to maintain *kastom* and culture, at a household level and through the networks of KIBCA
3. Creation of linkages and exchange between Vanuatu fieldworkers, biodiversity conservation rangers, and community members
4. A draft newspaper article, which has been submitted for publication in the *Solomon Star* and *Vanuatu Daily Post* (find it in the full report)

We are confident that these outputs will lead to a range of outcomes. For one, this workshop gave the Solomon Island participants an introduction to the skills needed to monitor, record, and maintain cultural knowledge and practice, including the mapping of sacred sites around their home communities. More importantly, the discussions and activities of the workshop provided a forum for dialogue on the value of cultural knowledge and practice, which can sometimes be lost in the day-to-day focus on livelihoods and living. The participants agreed to some solid and measurable next steps, so we are confident that this workshop was a first step toward an ongoing network of cultural monitors and the maintenance of knowledge and practice on Kolombangara.

Over the longer term, we see these efforts as being a small but necessary contribution to the overall goal of maintaining the biocultural resilience of rural communities in the Solomon Islands. Both cultural and biological diversity are critical to the ongoing vitality of communities, and we believe that more of these kinds of activities and discussions are needed into the future.

Personal Reflection

From both a personal and a professional standpoint, it was a pleasure to be involved in organizing this meeting. On a personal level, it was a privilege to reconnect with the VCC group after several years, and it was exciting to begin to foster some dialogue around the importance of *kastom* and culture on Kolombangara. The VCC has been a regionally leading institution, and there would be much to be gained from further collaboration. From a professional standpoint, it is clear that the maintenance of knowledge and practice should form a key plank of ongoing efforts to support conservation work around the island. This work aligns well with other Kolombangara projects, including a push by KIBCA to seek national park status for the area above 400 m. The partnership with KIBCA was absolutely critical to the success of the meeting, and while there were challenges (for example, arranging logistics for Hunda, setting the agenda remotely, and the difficulties of scheduling across several different calendars), Vaghi and his team worked hard to make the meeting a success. I look forward to our working together to turn the discussions in the workshop into solid progress over the remainder of 2018 and 2019.

Find more details of the project in the original report (https://www.sylff.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/03-McCarter_full.pdf).

Sylff Support Program

Sylff Research Abroad (SRA)

SRA supports academic research related to a doctoral dissertation, conducted at a higher education institution, research institute, think tank, non-governmental organization, private firm, etc. in a foreign country. Applicants are limited to past or current fellowship recipients who are PhD candidates. Up to US\$5,000 is awarded per successful applicant.



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October 9, 2019

Political Reconciliation in Postcolonial Ghana

Frank Afari

Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies

Frank Afari, a 2017 Sylff fellow from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, visited Northwestern University in the United States to conduct archival research at the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, which holds the largest African collection in the world. Using an SRA award, his project centered on Transitional Justice, defined as a field of activity and inquiry focused on how societies address legacies of past human rights violations through the use of truth commissions and other mechanisms. His focus was on Ghana's National Reconciliation Commission, a truth commission set up in 2002.

* * *

Since independence in 1957, Ghana has had a reputation for being a relatively peaceful and stable country. While the country has not experienced any civil war or violence on the scale that has wrecked other countries in the West African sub-region, there are still isolated pockets of simmering conflicts in parts of Ghana. Most conflicts in Ghana revolve around chieftaincy disputes¹, ethnicity², and power struggles between and within political parties. Though isolated, these conflicts have often resulted in loss of property and lives. In the northern part of Ghana today, most of the conflicts pertaining to chieftaincy and ethnicity have long historical roots and were complicated under British colonial rule. In theory and practice, the British colonial policy of indirect rule compelled strong powerful chiefs who wielded centralized authority to rule over noncentralized acephalous states, a move that facilitated the imperial bureaucracy of ruling through powerful indigenous political structures. Consequently, hitherto independent societies and polities lost political autonomy and control over their land and resources. This system of subjugating acephalous or stateless societies under powerful centralized

¹ Examples of such places are Yendi, Bawku, Anloga, and Accra.

² Examples of such places are Alavanyo, Bawku, and Nkonya.

states perpetuated a legacy of contentious subject-overlord relations. Unfortunately, the postcolonial state did not redress these colonial anomalies.

In 1992, Ghana transitioned from a military dictatorship to constitutional rule, ending a spate of military truncations of democratically elected civilian governments, and this birthed the Fourth Republic. The Fourth Republic ushered in a culture of smooth transfer of power through the ballot box. An outgrowth of the country's growing democratic culture since then has been its capacity to deal with internal conflicts through institutional means. One such institution is the National Peace Council (NPC), a statutory body created to effectively resolve conflicts and build peace in Ghana. The NPC was established in 2006 by the Government of Ghana under the aegis of the African Union, with operational support from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

A decade ago, while I was pursuing my graduate studies in Ghana, I interned as a part-time research assistant with the NPC. I understudied the working staff during its numerous field trips to conflict-ridden communities and major flash-points in northern Ghanaian towns such as Bawku. Bawku is plagued by regular outbreaks of inter-ethnic and chieftaincy-related violence. During my several field trips to Bawku, I encountered victims of horrendous atrocities. These conflicts, whose effects I witnessed firsthand, got me interested in the history of politically motivated and state-sponsored violence, human rights violations, extra-judicial killings, and illegal confiscation of property. I later discovered that I could use the findings of another statutory body, the National Reconciliation Commission (NRC), a truth commission established in 2002 to investigate past human rights violations and foster reconciliation in Ghana, as a window into the history of state-sponsored political violence in postcolonial Ghana. Until the establishment of the NRC, so much of Ghana's turbulent past had been obscured by its recent democratic successes. When I was admitted into the PhD (International History) program at the Graduate Institute in Geneva in 2016, I chose to investigate as a doctoral project the historical undercurrents of the NRC's reconciliation exercise under the rubric of transitional justice and human rights.



At the entrance of my host center, the Buffett Institute for Global Studies, Northwestern University.

On October 27, 2018, I traveled from Geneva, Switzerland, to Northwestern University (NU) in the United States to conduct seven months of archival research at the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, which holds the largest Africana collection in the world, and also to conduct interviews with experts for my ongoing doctoral thesis. I sought to explore what the archives contain about governance in Ghana over the *longue durée* since its independence in 1957, but more specifically to learn more about the phases bedeviled by authoritarian and turbulent military upheavals with their associated human rights violations.

My method of research included searching through troves of archival repositories and printing and digitally scanning relevant primary and secondary texts into assorted file formats from a catalog of sources using personal handheld digital scanners and the libraries' scanners. Additionally, I consulted various rare books and manuscripts of substantial historical value, which as sources provided me significant interpretative frameworks for drafting aspects of my thesis. Among my most important archival findings was the specialized Africana Vertical File Index, which contained numerous correspondence, papers, memos, press statements, and articles written in the 1980s and 1990s by Ghanaian expatriates abroad who sought to bring to light the gross human rights abuses and violence of Ghana's military regimes. These diasporic communities and individuals, drawing upon their understanding of international human rights treaties and conventions, made sustained agitations to end political violence and restore Ghana to democratic rule in the 1980s and 1990s. Their writings have great significance, because in them is evident the agency of diasporic actors as historically noteworthy drivers of political change.

Additionally, I devoted some time to writing drafts of my thesis while interviewing some of NU's experts on Ghana's recent past. Here, I wish to gratefully mention Professor Sean Hanretta, an intellectual and cultural historian of Ghana, Professor Naaborko Sackeyfo-Lenoch, a visiting scholar at NU's Program of African Studies (PAS) who specializes in the social and political history of Ghana, and Professor Richard Joseph, a political scientist and expert on African governance. All three scholars shared insights from their expertise on Ghana's recent history, pointing to pertinent sources and suggesting alternative frameworks for crafting my main themes. Professor Joseph, in particular, who was a one-time fellow of the Carter Center, shared his experiences as the program director of the Ghana Election Mission, an international election monitoring body that oversaw the milestone 1992 general elections that transitioned Ghana from a military dictatorship to an electoral democracy. As a governance expert, his role positioned him to engage directly with political leaders and with transitional processes and activities that

inaugurated Ghana's return to democratization. Thus, interviewing him uncovered an invaluable firsthand account of a frenzied political transition involving international and domestic actors, choices, and decisive trade-offs that have permanently shaped the trajectory of Ghana's current democracy. In this respect, the pledge by all political party leaders to cooperate toward conducting free and fair elections set a standard for the subsequent nonviolent electioneering culture for which the country has come to be known.

Northwestern's Program of African Studies also provided a warm intellectual environment through its weekly graduate student seminar series (Afrisem) and its sponsored Annual Graduate Conference (April 4–6, 2019), all of which I participated in. Through these wonderful opportunities, I productively engaged scholars in conversations relating to issues of human rights, political violence, reconciliation, and transitional justice, which are the core themes of my research.

The overall importance of my project lies in its capacity to deepen scholarly understanding of the undercurrents of Ghana's attempt at national reconciliation and the impact of that exercise on the country's democracy. Such an understanding has practical applicability for policy formulation in the field of human rights and the rule of law—the two areas where Ghana in particular and most African countries in general have considerable challenges. Moreover, a critical analysis of Ghana's postcolonial history through the lens of the NRC offers an opportunity to reexamine the evolving *modus operandi* of truth commissions and their role as mechanisms in the politics of justice and reconciliation in Africa.

July 12, 2019

Listen to Your Uber Driver: A Comment on the Economic and Emotional Vulnerability of Uber’s Silent Partner

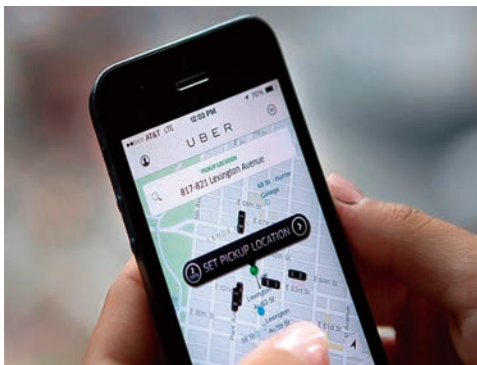
Emma McDaid
UNSW Business School

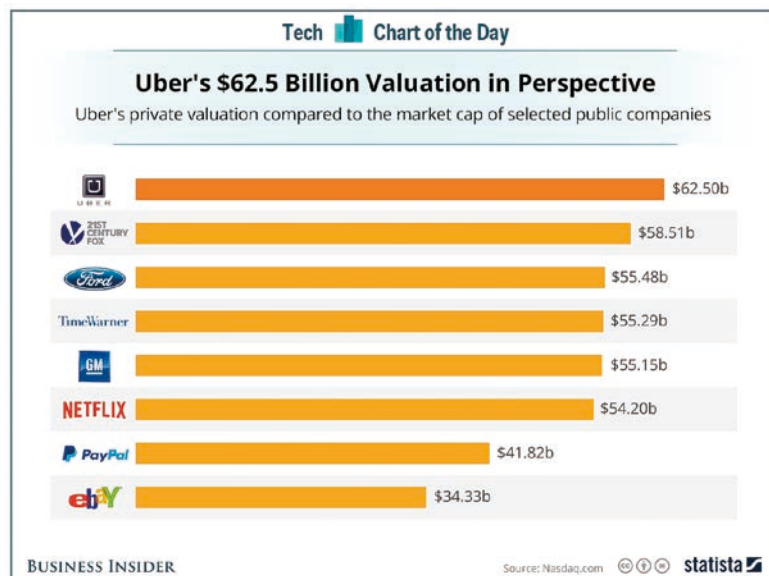
With the support of the SRA award, Emma McDaid, a 2017 Sylff fellow at the UNSW Business School, carried out her doctoral dissertation research concerning “sharing economy” through interviews of Uber drivers on active duty in Europe. In this article, McDaid shares her research findings as well as her personal experience and viewpoints on fieldwork.

* * *

With the advent of sharing organizations, or platforms, like Uber and Airbnb, consumers and entrepreneurs have inherited more choice and flexibility. Sharing marketplaces are disintermediated, meaning that they operate without a middle partner, so information is shared by individuals online in a reciprocal fashion when they leave star ratings or reviews on their peers. As accounting scholars, we have been busy investigating the impact that such online ratings and rankings (the TripAdvisor ranking index and Amazon product ratings, for example) have on traditional notions of accountability and, indeed, how these mechanisms are responsible for a new audit society—an era heralded by

a heavy focus on the verification of lived experience. However, a small number of us are also beginning to address how these metrics are used by organizations to manage platform users. For example, Uber drivers must maintain a customer rating of 4.6 stars (out of a possible 5 stars) in Sydney, Australia, if they want to maintain job security. A rating lower than this and “deactivation,” or dismissal, oc-





Source: Retrieved from Business Insider, December 2015, <https://www.businessinsider.com/uber-valuation-vs-market-cap-of-publicly-traded-stocks-2015-12>.

curs. Hence, for these drivers, a 3-star rating often means the difference between being employed and being unemployed. In my research, in addition to conducting research in Australia, I have been able to travel overseas with the help of the Sylff travel scholarship to investigate how the rules of platform organizations affect the service providers who hold a key position in the value chain.

The Uber organization reflects a new kind of disaggregated labor market, accessible to its users through a technology application on a mobile device. It is the largest of the ride-sharing model, holding over two million drivers in partnership around the world. With Uber, the users are passengers who request a ride (consumers) and drivers who have the time, skill, and vehicle to provide the service (service providers). Physically, Uber's service providers are globally distributed, rarely coming face to face with a manager in any centralized hub or factory floor; the nature of work also means that they rarely come face to face with each other. Indeed, the courts continue to deliberate over whether these drivers hold the status of employee or contractor. Regarding this, Uber has argued from the start that its drivers are independent contractors, citing the drivers' freedom to choose when they source work through the application and the legalities surrounding freedom of uniform and insurance requirements. However, drivers counterargue employee status based on the control that Uber sets over remuneration rates and the limitations surrounding a driver's rights in choosing trips and accessing such information as trip desti-

nation. But while the contractor-employee debate rages on, the critical role that drivers play in the value chain for the Uber organization is sharp and definite. They are the key stakeholders responsible for the creation of economic value for the Uber empire. And this is a valuation that is continuing to rise; the organization was recently valued as the wealthiest privately owned company in the world, with its market capitalization at US\$62.5 billion.

Their unique conditions of work prompted me to investigate how drivers were being managed by the organization. Data collection and analysis is ongoing in this regard, but in the following paragraphs, I outline some of the reflections that I have formed from my 2017 and 2018 data collection in Europe and Australia. These reflections are twofold: the first is with respect to conducting field research in these new technologically mediated and disaggregated workforces, and the second regards the most material challenges that I feel Uber drivers are currently facing.

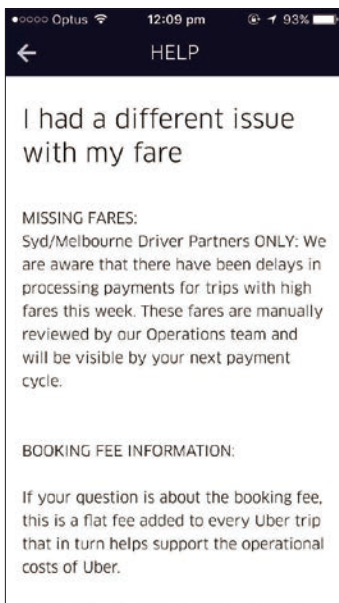
Field Research and the Sharing Economy

I initially collected data in Australia from around the end of 2015. But in 2017, using my Sylff SRA, I left Sydney and arrived in London to conduct field interviews. From there, I traveled on to Paris and Copenhagen. The duration of my research abroad was four weeks in total, and I conducted ten formal interviews with Uber drivers, which supplemented the interviews that I had conducted in Australia. While in Europe, I also gathered a significant amount of data from drivers via phone and through online chat rooms. Although I had mapped out the field and my intentions for data collection, I found that the logistics surrounding field interviews of this type meant that my plans changed frequently. I had to be resourceful and at times imaginative so that I could conduct interviews. Most Uber drivers work perilously hard, and although many expressed interest in being part of my research, interview times were often restricted to moments when demand was low on the application. It was not unusual to have drivers cancel an interview because they had just been pinged through their device for a trip. It was also not unusual to interview drivers before the sun came up, in coffee shops in suburbs surrounding airports—where they might expect a surging fare to come about soon. In short, without the humdrum of everyday organizational life, the field researcher needs to be sensitive to a highly changeable environment, building a significant degree of flexibility into their data collection plans. This requires more perseverance in the field, but being agile in an environment like this can also be deeply rewarding. When successful, researchers are immersed in the participant's natural lived experience and thus extract a richer ethnographic account of the field.

An Uber Driver's Challenges

In conducting the interviews, it became clear that Uber drivers are facing a number of challenges. Changes to the minimum fare for a trip, accessing Uber personnel to resolve pay disputes, and defending themselves against customer complaints are examples of some of the more rigorous challenges. These challenges have both economic and emotional effects on drivers. For example, when Uber entered the French market in late 2011, the minimum fare that a driver could demand was approximately €20. Over the past number of years, this has dropped down to €6, marking a 70% reduction. And while advocates for the organization will likely insist that higher minimum fares were required in order to enter new markets, many drivers have become financially vulnerable after signing on with high expectations. Drivers can also be financially vulnerable in times when their pay is incorrect, is delayed, or fails to arrive in their bank accounts—common war stories that participants offered. In these cases, they reach out to Uber through the “Help” function on the application—essentially a chat bot—waiting up to five days for an adequate, non-system-generated response. An Australian driver provided an example of a standard response issued at times like this in the image below.

Unsurprisingly, drivers go through a range of emotions in respect to this treatment. A sense of frustration was commonly expressed. While they accept that the terms and conditions of operating as a driver can often change, these unilaterally imposed rules often change without warning and explanation. Drivers describe



having little control other than to start and stop driving. Driver John* commented, “They call it a partnership; there’s no partnership,” while another, Driver Mike*, explained, “See, I’m just a number. I’m just a nobody.” The setting of prices or fares by the technology proved most frustrating, as drivers believe they personally incur costs that should be built into the fare. Driver Paul* described the logic as follows: “They just don’t get it. They have no idea what it costs to run a motor vehicle. To us, us guys who do it full time, it’s a business, a small business. . . . Ask us. Have a round table conference. What are your costs? How can you set base fares and not know what people’s costs are?”

The drivers’ levels of take-home pay are inadequate, which is highlighted in an Australian govern-

ment report that finds that their earnings fall short of the minimum wage (Stanford, 2018). This has led many people whom I have talked with to use metaphors of slavery when discussing the nature of platform work. And the use of technology as a tool to delegate terms and conditions on a platform does nothing to sooth the feelings of low self-worth that people doing this work experience.

These challenges exist for drivers in an environment where the customer's voice has much more power than their own. Again, the Uber organization will say that customer complaints should be taken seriously, and indeed they should because of the nature of the service being sold. But drivers complain that their voices often go unheard when complaints are raised. At times like this, refunds are frequently and immediately given at the expense of the driver, and drivers are often deactivated from driving until they protest their rights. For this reason, many drivers now operate a dashcam in their vehicle—as a means to record trips and protect themselves in the event of an unfair complaint.

Dashcams are one of many responses to the position that drivers find themselves in. Other academic studies are reporting evidence that they have worked together to try to manipulate surge pricing by organizing mass deactivation, effectively gaming the technology (Mohlmann and Zalmanson, 2017), and that they continue to engage in strikes and efforts to join trade unions around the world. The precarious legal nature of the work is a problem faced by drivers fighting for change and for solutions to the challenges they face. In researching this field, it is hard not to empathize with their position. It is clearly one that belies the rhetoric often heard with regard to the sharing economy.

Conclusion

Uber has done great things for customer choice, achieving global disruption of an industry long considered the gold standard of secure economic sectors. Introducing competition has made transport more affordable and reduced unemployment rates. However, investment has fallen out of the taxi industry, with market value wiped from taxi plates in many major cities and reduced demand affecting that workforce. And taxi drivers have been vocal about these effects. But despite all the noise that Uber has created, it is important to be mindful of the challenges that are imposed on the Uber driver. We hear frequent hagiographic accounts of what it is like to “be your own boss,” in the media and in society in general, but less about the effects of working in these conditions. These are new industrial practices that use technology in new ways—creating, in effect, a new employee. Action in this regard may need to be taken if consumers want to responsibly enjoy the Uber service.

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*Names have been changed to preserve confidentiality.

June 27, 2019

Beyond the Treasures? Beyond the Nation? Museum Representations of Thracian Heritage from Bulgaria

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Ivo Strahilov is a Sylff fellow from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski." His doctoral dissertation scrutinizes the social construction of the ancient Thracian heritage and its uses in modern Bulgaria. With the support of the SRA award, he visited Paris where he explored the making of three museum exhibitions of the so-called Thracian treasures. In this article Strahilov discusses some of his findings and suggests a direction for future debate.

* * *

Introduction: At the Margins of Europe

The notion of "Europe" alongside its territorial borders is not self-evident, nor coherent. One of the major uncertainties in this seemingly apparent concept is marked by the tension between the western and eastern parts of the continent. During the last decades, this problem has been investigated at length in academic literature, and several new analytical paths have been opened. Scholars have questioned both the cultural cultivation of the idea of Europe and its various regions, which are differently positioned on the symbolic geography around the prestigious core.¹ The Balkan Peninsula or Southeastern Europe, which also includes Bulgaria, represents a peculiar case in this regard. Recent critiques have delved into the historical role of "the Occident" in the "invention" of "Eastern Europe" as a specific category that is rarely recognized as truly European.² Other studies have

¹ On the concept of "Europe" see Delanty, Gerard. 1995. *Inventing Europe: Idea, Identity, Reality*. Basingstoke and London: Macmillan.

² See, e.g., Wolff, Larry. 1994. *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

outlined a hegemonic Western discourse that ascribes the Balkans to a zone of backwardness between “Europe” and “the Orient,” seeing them in a predominantly negative way and reproducing their stigmatization.³ This, however, is not simply a foreign categorization; it is also shared by the people in such countries as Bulgaria, where this traumatizing lack of Europeanness equally functions as a self-perception. On the other hand, Balkan political and intellectual elites adapt themselves to this framework, manipulate it, and take advantage of their position in diverse situations and with varying goals. This is why some authors have also underlined that Balkan states have appropriated this understanding and even contributed to the reinforcement of the “otherizing” discourse and thus to the regionalization of the continent.⁴

Thrace as a European Heritage

This rather complex constellation is one of the starting points of my doctoral research. Examining the museological representations of the ancient past, I hypothesize that Bulgaria exploits the potential of cultural heritage to overcome its assigned position at the margins of “Europe.” To explore this assumption, I focus on the international exhibitions of the so-called Thracian treasures. These exhibitions have been organized by the Bulgarian state for more than 40 years in some of the most prominent museums all over the world, including India, Japan, Canada, the United States, Mexico, Cuba, Russia, and especially Western Europe. This project originated in the early 1970s, and since then it has been an indispensable instrument of Bulgaria’s national cultural diplomacy, which involves significant political and academic commitment.⁵ Today it is deemed by some historians the most successful cultural product of Bulgaria. At the core of the project are ancient archaeological objects excavated within the territory of the present-day country. Many of them are made of precious metals and provoke strong interest both in professional circles and in the general public. The exhibited objects themselves are traditionally

³ See, e.g., Todorova, Maria. 2009. *Imaging the Balkans* (updated edn). New York: Oxford University Press; Goldsworthy, Vesna. 1998. *Inventing Ruritania: The Imperialism of the Imagination*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press; and Bjelić, Dušan I., and Obrad Savić (eds). 2002. *Balkan as Metaphor: Between Globalization and Fragmentation*. Cambridge and London: MIT Press.

⁴ Mishkova, Diana. 2018. *Beyond Balkanism: The Scholarly Politics of Region Making*. London and New York: Routledge.

⁵ The history of this exhibition is thoroughly presented and analyzed in Roumentchéva, Sofia. 2014. *Exposer les Thraces. Les collections thraces de la Bulgarie. Politique d'exposition officielle à l'étranger de 1958 à 2013*. Mémoire de recherche. Paris: École du Louvre.

attributed to the Thracian tribes that inhabited the area of present-day Southeastern Europe in antiquity.⁶

In 2015, however, the fundamental premises of this project were reconsidered. During the preparation of the upcoming exhibition for the Louvre Museum in Paris, it became clear that the long-held concept and reading of the ancient past are becoming a subject of tense negotiations. The remaking of the exhibition's narrative, which was produced through a dynamic Franco-Bulgarian collaboration, highlighted the complexities of setting a new mutually agreed interpretation of cultural heritage. Hence, I decided to pay particular attention to this exhibition in order to track the dynamics underlying the process of social construction of heritage. Thanks to the SRA award I was able to conduct fieldwork in Paris in 2018, where I interviewed museums curators, archaeologists, historians, and other experts. I also explored different institutional archives and media reports, and I contextualized them further through examination of previous studies available in specialized libraries.

The concept of the Thracian exhibition is a heterogeneous phenomenon with many aspects, but here I would like to underline its presentation in a Western European context.



Opening of the exhibition "Découverte de l'art Thrace: Trésors des musées de Bulgarie" at Petit Palais Museum (Paris, 1974). © Archives of Petit Palais Museum.

As mentioned above, one of the hypotheses of my dissertation is that the Bulgarian state introduced this self-representational strategy and mobilized precious ancient objects to compensate for its marginal position on the continent. Thracian heritage, in this sense, is one of the usable concepts for the desired symbolic repositioning because it supposedly refers to Europe's origins. To put it in a simplistic way, ancient heritage "europeanizes" Bulgaria retroactively.

The making of the exhibition at the Louvre in 2015, however, revealed for the first time that the heritagization of the Thracian legacy and its valorization abroad could entail serious turbu-

lences. My findings suggested that discrepancies had occurred not only between Bulgarian and French (together with other foreign) scholars, but also within Bul-

⁶ The chronological and territorial aspects are the subject of ongoing academic debates. A recent overview of the question about the Thracians is available in Valeva, Julia, Emil Nankov, and Denver Graninger (eds). 2015. *A Companion to Ancient Thrace*. Wiley-Blackwell.

garian academia itself—between museologists, art historians and archaeologists, and between politicians, administrators, and scientists. Although the discussions and preparations resulted in a well-publicized exhibition accompanied by a conference and a representative catalogue including a significant number of authors and institutions,⁷ it is worthwhile to revisit the representational logic that underlies the Thracian exhibition as a phenomenon. There is no doubt that the latter is an essential promotional tool for contemporary Bulgaria, but it also raises some questions.

One of the questions comes from the fact that the Thracians' legacy is spread across the territories not only of Bulgaria but also of neighboring countries—especially Romania, Greece, and Turkey. This is why their national historical disciplines have elaborated a rather ambivalent partnership on this issue.⁸ Although with different intensity, they all research and popularize the Thracian past and thus transform it into a topical scientific problematic on a global level. The perimeter of their joint efforts is nevertheless restricted, and this limitation is exemplified by such exhibitions. The very act of an international presentation tends to legitimize a given national state as an heir of a certain legacy, and this is a well-known approach. A significant illustration here, captured in archival photos, is the Bulgarian national flag that covered the display cases in the museums during some inauguration ceremonies in the 1980s.

Heritage beyond the Nation?

Admittedly, organizing glamorous events abroad that promote the official image of a country is understandable and expected within the framework of cultural diplo-



Promotional material of the exhibition “L’or des Thraces, trésors de Bulgarie” at Jacquemart-André Museum (Paris, 2006–2007). © Archives of Jacquemart-André Museum.

⁷ Martinez, Jean-Luc, Néguine Mathieux, Alexandre Baralis, Milena Tonkova, and Totko Stoyanov (eds) 2015. *L'épopée des rois thraces: Des guerres médiques aux invasions celtes 479-278 avant J.-C. Découvertes archéologiques en Bulgarie*. Paris: Musée du Louvre/Somogy éditions d'Art.

⁸ Marinov, Tchavdar. 2016. *Nos ancêtres les Thraces. Usages idéologiques de l'Antiquité en Europe du Sud-Est*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

macy. The point here is whether, after becoming a member of the European Union, Bulgaria (and other respective states) should maintain the same strategy driven by national interests. Would it not be more appropriate for political and academic authorities to enable transborder and transnational cooperation in terms of cultural relations that would demonstrate the richness and complexity of Thracian heritage? Hopefully, such an approach, which reconsiders archaeological practices

and broadens the horizon of historical reading, would be a modest response to rising nationalisms. Thus, I would argue for a new multinational Thracian exhibition that would gather together scholars as well as precious collections of national museums in Southeastern Europe and beyond.

While academic and governmental inflexibility predominates in terms of advanced cooperation, we are also witnessing new tendencies. For example, in 2018 an agreement was signed between archaeological museums in North Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Serbia that envisages a joint exhibition on the Necropolis of Trebeništa. The ancient site is situated in the Republic of North Macedonia, but due to complex and controversial historical developments it was excavated consecutively by Bulgarian, Serbian, and Macedonian archaeologists. Thus, the objects that were found have been dispersed in the three countries,



Promotional material of the exhibition "L'Épopée des rois thraces. Découvertes archéologiques en Bulgarie" at the Louvre (Paris, 2015). © Archives of the Louvre Museum.

and their interpretations have been incoherent.

Time will show whether this project will succeed in reconciling national historiographies and overcoming the restrictive representational narratives that traditionally accompany heritage. Yet it is already a sign of positive and needed change. Surely such a collaborative process will be slow and difficult; it will require concrete efforts and provoke shared uneasiness. But if we manage to take such a step, we will have a greater chance of developing a more constructive understanding of the territory we live in. After all, this is the territory in which we will have to face many new challenges; and making out of the past something that further divides us is definitely not relevant to the more acute economic, social, and ecological threats that affect our lives. On the other hand, if we leave aside the representational aspects of heritage, perhaps there would be room for a type of archaeology that would be engaged in a different way. Instead of being a tool that supports tight national agendas, it could be a bridge between them. Instead of delivering "trea-

sures” for the tourist industry that deepens the gap between local people and elitist touristic imagery, it could be in service of some larger issues or specific environmental needs of the explored region itself. In sum, going back “down to Earth,” tracking the old answers and new questions that Earth contains will eventually help us to realize that the presentation of ancient heritage in seemingly stable national categories is possible but is only one of many options.⁹

⁹ Part of this conclusion has been inspired in a certain way by Latour, Bruno. 2018. *Down to Earth: Politics in the new climatic regime* (translated by Catherine Porter). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Sylff Support Program

Local Association

Networking Support (LANS)

LANS facilitates the organization of gatherings and other activities by groups of Sylff alumni, including local Sylff associations. Groups of five or more fellows and/or alumni from the same institution can apply for a maximum of US\$5,000 per gathering to cover the long-distance transportation costs of participating fellows.



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May 21, 2019

JU-SYLFF LANS Meet 2019

Report prepared by Amrita Mukherjee, Sreerupa Bhattacharya, Moitrayee Sengupta, Sawon Chakraborty, Sudeshna Dutta and Sujaan Mukherjee
Jadavpur University

When the Local Association Networking Support (LANS) was launched in September 2017, the Jadavpur University Sylff Association (JU-Sylff Association) was the first to take advantage of it. In March 2018, the association organized a two-day event in Kolkata, India, inviting JU-Sylff fellows from other parts of India, as well as Britain and Ireland. This year it organized another one, as successful as the first but with more depth in contents. The following is a report on the meeting.

* * *

Our Vision for LANS 2019

JU-SYLFF began in 2003 with the vision to create an interdisciplinary research platform for students who hold the capacity to lead social change. Fifteen years on, the collective has grown to number over 40 fellows who have carried within themselves the ethos of SYLFF in their deeply diverse yet convergent projects.

In 2018, JU-SYLFF received the inaugural Local Association Networking Support (LANS) grant from the Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research. The meeting organized with this grant brought together fellows, graduated and current, along with mentors, who discussed their research and deliberated over the potential of capacity-building measures. They attempted to imagine ways in which collective goals could be achieved that may go on to address social, cultural, and environmental issues that concern us all in different ways.

It also marked the beginning of something new—the potential to create something whose impact could be greater than our individual projects and research interests. The note of enthusiasm on which LANS 2018 had ended ensured that the conversation would be carried on beyond the one-day meet. Several months of meetings and electronic communication later, the theme for LANS 2019 was centered around the idea of inclusivity, interpreted in its widest possible sense.

It became a matter of great honor for JU-SYLFF to receive the LANS grant for a second time in 2019. LANS 2019 gave us a fresh chance to create stronger networks within the SYLFF community for building an inclusive sphere of knowledge within academia and beyond. The meet was held over two days, March 14 and 15, 2019. The first day consisted of our annual visit to the Premananda Leprosy Mission Hospital as part of the Social Action Program at JU-SYLFF. The second day was assigned for capacity building through deliberation on four different areas in which the academic and professional experiences of fellows converge. The aim of creating such panels was to provide a thematic direction to our discussions on inclusivity.

JU-SYLFF LANS Meet 2019, Day One

Visit to Premananda Memorial Leprosy Hospital

As part of the JU-SYLFF Association's Social Action Program, current and graduated fellows visited the Premananda Memorial Leprosy Hospital on March 14, 2019. The hospital is located adjacent to the Manicktola Christian cemetery in the northern part of the city and was established in the year 1986 by Reverend Premananda Sen of the Oxford Mission as a treatment center for leprosy sufferers. It is currently run by the Leprosy Mission Trust India.

As with every year, fellows gathered at the SYLFF office in the morning to set out for the day. Reaching the hospital at 11 am, the team, along with the head of staff, Mr. Mark Moloy Ambros, went around the inpatient and outpatient wings to meet everyone at the hospital. The fellows met Dr. Helen Roberts, medical superintendent of the hospital, to learn about the many positive changes that had taken place at the hospital since their previous visit. Among the new additions to the existing infrastructure of the hospital was an elevator that could accommodate stretchers; the previous could only accommodate patients who were sitting or standing. Hospital beds with side rails had also been arranged for patients who might run the risk of falling off. The hospital has also begun to visit schools and organizations by invitation for the purpose of conducting awareness campaigns on leprosy free of charge.

As the helpful staff of the hospital took us around, they introduced us to individual patients. Our exchanges with them were heartening. But the story of one patient, Jamshed, particularly inspired us.

Prior to his ailment, Jamshed worked as a bricklayer in his village, Gangarampur, in South Dinajpur. He not only sustained himself with the money that he

earned but also took care of his siblings and supported their education. He was admitted to the Premananda Memorial Leprosy Hospital in 2016 with the help of Pastor Nicholas Hembrom shortly after he was diagnosed. Despite his severe ailment, Jamshed was not only determined to recover from leprosy and begin working again but was also committed to bringing the services of the Premananda Mission Leprosy Hospital and the Leprosy Mission Trust India to his hometown, where many men, women, and children similarly suffered from leprosy. The hospital has been engaged in community outreach for over two years, ever since Jamshed's efforts began to take shape in 2016. In their many visits to Gangarampur as part of their community outreach program, the hospital has conducted extensive surveys and awareness campaigns across the village with the help of Pastor Hembrom and Jamshed to tend to the poor who suffer from leprosy. Medical treatment and supplies have been distributed for free.



Our team interacting with patients at the Premananda Memorial Leprosy Hospital.

In 2017 the total number of patients treated at the village was 187, whereas this year over 360 patients were treated on the hospital's visit on March 9. The hospital envisions more frequent visits to the village, perhaps on a quarterly basis from this year onward. Jamshed has also been rehabilitated by the hospital and is currently employed as the watchman of the premises. His story and his determination to help his people are heroic and of unparalleled inspiration to all of us

at JU-SYLFF.

With contributions from the JU-SYLFF family, the fellows were able to offer medical supplies, fruits, and sweets for the patients at the hospital. Along with the supplies offered, a sum of 3000 INR was donated for prosthetics. It will be of foremost interest to us in all our future visits to the hospital to continue collecting funds for prosthetics.

A special lunch was arranged for the patients. Our team was delighted to be accompanied by the doctors and staff for lunch. A popular film, *Dangal*, was screened in the afternoon. The team departed from the hospital in the evening after a truly inspiring day.

JU-SYLFF LANS Meet 2019, Day Two

Introspections on Inclusivity

Day two at LANS 2019 was arranged around the academic and professional experiences of fellows and the theme of inclusivity. The discussions were divided into four panels on pedagogy, environment and sustainability, gender and sexuality, and historiography. The 12th edition of the annual newsletter of JU-SYLFF, *Fellows*, was released.



The 12th edition of the annual newsletter of JU-SYLFF, Fellows, being released.

Pedagogy

“Why is difference important?” was the question that opened the first session of LANS 2019. In order to make it interactive, the audience was divided into groups and asked to present their views. A number of varied responses were recorded. While some thought that difference is required as a marker of distinctiveness, others noted how difference is imperative to the very foundation of democracy. This process of debating and deliberating in turn became an exercise in including difference. What emerged was a holistic perception of “inclusivity” that caters to the recognition and acknowledgement of difference. Speaking on inclusivity with respect to pedagogy, Anindita Roy questioned the politics of and preference for exclusion. She emphasized the importance of linguistic diversity, showing how bi- and multilingualism can promote an inclusive pedagogic practice for children.

Gender and Sexuality

If the first session aimed to explore the measures taken for inclusivity, the second panel brought to the fore what often remains excluded in our rather clinical attempts to include. This panel was chaired by Professor Kavita Panjabi, JU-SYLFF mentor and faculty at the Department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University. One of our earliest SYLFF fellows and now an international expert and

activist on issues of intersexuality and sport, Payoshni Mitra spoke about the lack of awareness about the multiplicity of bodies that results in discrimination against female athletes with hyperandrogenism. She suggested that inclusivity may be comprehended in several ways. It is not enough to simply bring change in policies and regulations to include nonnormative bodies; the need of the hour is to critique and problematize the “norm” itself, as it is deeply rooted in structures of oppressive power. Mitra cites the example of how those female athletes with DSD should not be seen as having a “disorder” (as this implicitly entails a negative deviation from the norm) but a “difference” of sexual development. A reframing of the term can be a simple step toward inclusivity.

In her talk on the metamorphoses of LGBTQ+ policies in the postcolonial states, Natasha Upadhyay explained how inclusivity is a dynamic and ever-evolving phenomenon. Asserting that research in gender ought to be by principle inclusive, she shed light on some of the contemporary debates on inclusive policies at the intersection of postcolonial politics and Queer International Relations.

Rimple Mehta, who was a doctoral SYLFF fellow, discussed how she had to recalibrate her research questions in order to arrive at an inclusive, and thereby



Fellows and mentors discussing questions of inclusivity.

more nuanced, understanding of her subject. She illustrated the problems of being strictly rooted in and single-mindedly driven by one’s own research questions, to the extent that one ends up excluding that which needs the most attention. Mehta has worked extensively with Bangladeshi women prisoners on either side of the Indo-Bangladesh border. Although initially poised on the question of violence, her research gained more

ground when she realized what had been excluded: the prisoners’ stories of love and love as the truest form of resistance. Including these unheard narratives finally led her to posit these women as “resisters” of violence, not simply its victims. She thus urged researchers to be self reflexive at every point and strive for “epistemological inclusivity.”

Environment and Sustainability

This panel was chaired by Professor Joyashree Roy, founder-advisor at JU-SYLFF

and Bangabandhu Chair Professor at Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand. She prefaced the session by mentioning that the thrust of the panel was threefold: to inquire how, if at all, inclusivity is operational in one's field of work; to see who remains excluded; and to consider how one can be more inclusive with respect to environment and sustainability. The three panelists explored these concerns from their individual areas of research.

Duke Ghosh shared his concerns about the key human aspects, such as environmental health hazards, that are seemingly accounted for on paper but are excluded when infrastructural projects are eventually undertaken on the ground.

Shyamasree Dasgupta's discussion was hinged on the need for an inclusive evaluation of forest resources so as to serve the cause of all stakeholders involved. She insisted that it is only through an inclusive evaluation of what natural resources provide that one can ensure distributional fairness and ecological sustainability. Related to this notion of the value of the natural environment is how indigenous communities continue to situate themselves at the crossroads of nature and civilization.

Extending the notion of inclusivity beyond anthropocentrism, Sudeshna Dutta spoke of *adidharam*. This is the principle that directs indigenous peoples to hold relations not only with fellow human beings but also with their surroundings, including the flora, fauna, and their natural habitat. According to this, inclusivity becomes a way of life—a mode of perceiving the world without hierarchies of power. However, Dutta mentions that such an inclusive approach is difficult to adopt and is only possible when one acknowledges one's own epistemic limitations.

Historiography

The final panel of the day was chaired by Professor Abhijit Gupta, JU-SYLFF mentor and professor at the Department of English at Jadavpur University. The panel reflected on three broad areas of historiographical inquiry. Purbasha Auddy spoke about her work on nineteenth-century periodicals published in Bengal. Between 1818 and 1867 there was a profusion of newspapers and magazines, most of which were published by upper-class and upper-caste Bengalis who had access to the means of textual production. Reading between the lines of the existing bibliographical records, Auddy indicated three main lines of inquiry that her work has followed: What ideologies do they represent? What are the gender politics that are decipherable here? And out of what geographies and spaces do they emerge?

Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay's presentation was an attempt to understand the

“postcolonial passage” marked both as a temporal and paradigmatic shift in India’s history and the terrain of official recordkeeping. What, he asked, does this shift mean for the “historian’s craft”? Bandyopadhyay’s talk was peppered with personal anecdotes and recollections, which served to illustrate his point about the transition. One in particular referred to the arbitrary manner in which archival records from Bengal were divided up between West Bengal and Dhaka. He pointed out the importance and contested status of archives built and maintained by communities that engage in political or social resistance in the face of state oppression. Bandyopadhyay suggested that in the postcolonial period, when India’s archiving mechanism went into decline compared to the colonial period, these archives have made the field far richer and more diverse. This proliferation and diversification, he argued, is what makes it difficult for the historian trained in colonial historiography to engage with contemporary histories.

In her talk, Neha Chatterjee took up the question of “historical conspicuousness”—what makes a particular movement visible and why communities might opt for an idiom of protest that is integrationist. She looked at the case of the Paundra Dalits of south Bengal—dubbed by some as “not-yet-fully mature Dalits”—and argued that even though it was a member of the Paundra Dalit community who authored the first “cross-caste Dalit solidarity in Bengal,” their decision to remain outside of dominant Dalit movements is backed by an awareness of the need to assert difference. Chatterjee argued that the Paundra Dalit movement has not caught the limelight of historical narratives because of this desire to be recognized for their contributions to social causes that include participation in the Indian freedom movement and the Tebhaga movement.

The day ended with a screening of the film *In the Name of Pride* directed by Payoshni Mitra, who has worked extensively in the field of gender and sport in both India and the world.

Looking Ahead

Over the two days at the LANS meet on March 14 and 15, 2019, fellows at JUSYLYFF found the opportunity to forge new friendships and renew old bonds that can continue to help them in creating positive change and transformation in the world around us. The active participation of our fellows and mentors culminated in the creation of a set of constructive ideas that we aim to take forward. They may be summarized as follows:

- The creation of a blog: A virtual platform that will encourage fellows to contrib-

ute ideas and insights from their latest research and professional experiences and will make these available to a wider public readership.

- The possibility of collaborative research among fellows: A positive outcome that emerged from the structured discussions of day two was the realization of how the individual research of several fellows overlap in key areas and hold the potential of collaboration to make their respective work more inclusive and holistic. It gives us immense happiness to share that this potential is already being explored by our fellows and several discussions have begun.
- Outreach networks: Drawing on the suggestions of LANS 2018, which looked at the possibility of bringing together partners and subjects of individual research, options were explored in more detail. The possibility of creating outreach networks through grassroots conversations and multi-engagement of stakeholders are under consideration.
- Leadership meet: Building on the above recommendation, a larger leadership meet is being envisaged that may create an inclusive platform for future dialogue and engagement.

LANS 2019 ended on a note of constructive energy that has made clearer the pathway for JU-SYLFF as an inclusive platform for social change. The constant support and encouragement from the Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research has kept our endeavors brimming with sincerity and success. We share our heartfelt gratitude for all fellows, who, through the work that they carry on at their respective individual levels and by ceaseless participation at a collective level, helps JU-SYLFF grow as a family. This meet has benefited immensely from the presence and guidance of our mentors: our former project director and founder-advisor at JU-SYLFF, Professor Joyashree Roy, and current project director at JU-SYLFF, Professor Shibashis Chatterjee.

The JU-SYLFF family hopes to keep working with energy and dedication for our collective dream of living in a beautiful world that is just, inclusive, and equitable.

February 7, 2019

Program Report on the LANS Meeting

Luisa Alejandra Gonzalez Barajas

El Colegio de México

In November 2018, a Local Association Networking Support (LANS) event was held at El Colegio de México (Colmex) with 10 Sylff fellows from the institution. In addition, two Sylff fellows from Colmex who now live abroad participated in the discussions via video conference. Also held concurrently at Colmex was “SIMPOSIO INTERNACIONAL: MUJERES POR LA IGUALDAD, LA LIBERACIÓN Y EL EMPODERAMIENTO EN MÉXICO Y JAPÓN, 1888–2018 (International Symposium: Women for Equality, Liberation, and Empowerment in Mexico and Japan),” . Thus, there was a good incentive for graduated Sylff fellows to visit their alma mater. The discussions at the LANS meeting centered on reactivating the local Sylff chapter in Mexico and encouraging networking among Sylff fellows. From the Sylff Association Secretariat, Mari Suzuki and Aya Oyamada attended the event.

* * *

In the presence of officers of the Sylff Association Secretariat, Colmex authorities and Sylff fellows gathered on November 22, 2018, in an attempt to reactivate the Sylff chapter in Mexico. We had participants from both Mexico and abroad thanks to the support of the LANS program.

During the first part of the meeting, fellows briefly introduced themselves, and Aya Oyamada explained to them the different support programs that the Sylff Association offered, such as Sylff Research Abroad (SRA), Sylff Leadership Initiative (SLI), and Sylff Leaders Workshop, among others. The participants showed an interest in the programs, and some of them expressed their gratitude for the support they received.

Sylff Fellows’ Voices at Colmex

In the second part of the meeting, Ms. Alejandra González, a 2015 Sylff fellow who is currently head of the Academic Exchange Office and is involved in the manage-

ment of the Colmex Sylff program, shared some of the participants' thoughts and expectations for the meeting. Here are some of their opinions as to why a local association network is needed:

- “To maintain a consolidated group, to invite other people to participate in this program, and to strength our relationship with other fellows.”— Ms. Cecilia Castro, Centre for Demographic, Urban and Environmental Studies (CEDUA), 2017–2019 Sylff fellow
- “The Sylff local network stands for me as a promoter of personal academic expectations . . . a network that links common interests around the world to promote research.”— Mr. Diego Merino, Centre for Studies of Asia and Africa (CEAA), 2017–2019 Sylff fellow
- “To improve our academic and social work, especially in the current political and social context of Mexico . . . we need social and academic leaderships with a high human vision.”—Mr. Erick Serna, CEDUA, 2016–2017 Sylff fellow
- “To achieve a strong commitment among the fellows . . . and to socialize [our] research.”— Ms. Carmen Caballero, CEDUA, 2015–2016 Sylff fellow
- “To make a difference in the community [and to] strengthen the connections between former and present Sylff fellows [through] the consolidation of a safe environment to exchange academic ideas, work, and proposals.”— Ms. Jimena Forcada, CEAA, 2015–2016 Sylff fellow
- “To promote spaces that will enable the exchange of experiences about the research process, design, and implementation of public policies for addressing social problems. Additionally, the network may also be used for other purposes, such as encouraging alliances with other Sylff institutions, undertaking social action projects about topics that impact the region, and establishing an observatory of conjuncture about this.”— Ms. Laura Ballén, CEDUA, 2013–2015 Sylff fellow
- “The reactivation of the Colmex Sylff Association has to include current and graduate fellows. . . . We can now generate projects to benefit communities beyond Mexico.”— Ms. Marcela Méndez, CEDUA, 2007–2009 Sylff fellow



Ms. Alejandra González gives a presentation on fellows' voices.

Reactivation of the Sylff Chapter in Mexico: Academic Projects with Social Impact

During the discussion on future actions for the reactivation of the Sylff chapter in Mexico, participants shared several ideas regarding the purposes and possible projects of the local chapter. Given that all fellows were or are graduate students, we agreed that all projects should have an academic basis in each of the fields that we specialize in. However, we also stated that such projects should have a strong social outreach element, especially after the experience of some of the fellows in the aftermath of the earthquake in Mexico City on September 19, 2017. Ms. Marcela Méndez said, “[We need] common objectives and a strong will to bring a change in Mexico and abroad; but we should start with an initiative with impact in our community.” Ms. Laura Ballén noted that Sylff fellows must “choose topics that suit most of our research fields, such as migration and violence; in order to know



Group discussion.

our research interests, we should define a way to communicate and share information using technology,” while Ms. Mariana Iglesias supported the idea of “nurturing research from different perspectives so that we might start thinking about what to do with our ideas and set a possible calendar with follow-up meetings.” Mr. Saúl Espino suggested “combining perspectives and trying to achieve social impact,” and Mr. Erick Serna strongly

supported the idea. Mr. Amaury García, director of the Center for Asian and African Studies at Colmex and a guest at the meeting, stressed, “The local association needs fluent communication, support of the programs from Colmex authorities, and to find a way, a mechanism, for the association to work.” Ms. Alejandra González said, “The Academic Exchange Office might serve as a liaison between the Sylff Association Secretariat in Japan and the Sylff fellows, as well as a coordinator for future projects.”

In a brief presentation, Ms. Fernanda Herrera talked about Colmex’s response to the September 2017 Mexico Earthquake and how important the help of the Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research was during this crisis. After the presentation, Sylff fellows understood the importance of a strong local association and how things would have been different if they knew before the tragedy.

Sylff fellows agreed that before launching any project, they should get to know one another and establish a channel of communication. For this purpose, a Facebook group was created under the name “Sylff Mexico” with an eye to the next meeting. After taking this first step, fellows understood the potential of their interdisciplinary knowledge to push forward a project with direct social influence. This is a great opportunity to work with bright and excellent fellows with a human quality—leaders from different backgrounds with the same goal of constructing a better society. Ms. Oyamada suggested fellows to “apply for the Sylff Leadership Initiatives as a group of Sylff fellows if you aim for social impact.” Ms. Mari Suzuki also said, “The aim of Local Association Networking Support is to encourage networking among Sylff fellows from the same Sylff institution. The Secretariat hopes to hold a fellow meeting annually, inviting more fellows from distant cities with the support of LANS. By having face-to-face meetings regularly, ideas for collaborative research and social action will gradually prosper.”

Participating fellows also gave the following feedback:

- “My participation could be a link between Sylff Mexico (at Colmex) and Juarez City (Chihuahua) and thus invite more collaborators who are currently working outside Mexico City, including in foreign countries.”— Ms. Carmen Caballero
- “The way I could support the network is through a civil-society organization of which I am a part called the Institute of Philosophy and Culture.”— Mr. Diego Merino
- “I will volunteer to be a Colmex Sylff Association liaison representative in Japan.”— Ms. Marcela Mendez
- “I can participate in the construction of a work plan and write documents, like reviews and proposals. In addition, I can contact institutions in my country [Colombia] to establish alliances that allow the development of activities to exchange experiences.”— Ms. Laura Ballén

Conclusion: In order for the local association to work, there must be fluent communication among the fellows. After stable communication has been established, fellows should suggest possible projects to work in the community and strive to achieve their goal.

February 1, 2019

Sylff Fellows as Agents of Change

Socrates Kraido Majune
University of Nairobi

Two years after Sylff fellows from various countries gathered at the Sylff Leadership Initiatives (SLI) forum held in December 2016, another Sylff gathering was organized in late November 2018 by the great initiative of four SLI organizers—Jacinta Mwendu Maweu, Socrates Kraido Majune, Stephen Muthusi Katembu, and Alexina Nyaboke Marucha—and Awuor Ponge, who joined the organizing team. The event invited fifteen fellows from Nairobi, one fellow from Maseno, Kenya, and two fellows from the United States with the support of the Local Association Networking Support (LANS) program. The following is a report written by Socrates Majune on behalf of the organizers. It outlines discussions about the future of the University of Nairobi Chapter and sentiments of several fellows on how Sylff has impacted their lives over time.

* * *

Introduction

This article is about the proceedings of the LANS meeting held by the Sylff University of Nairobi Chapter on November 23, 2018. The basis of this meeting was the



Three organizers: (from left to right) Alexina Nyaboke Marucha, Awuor Ponge, and Socrates Kraido Majune.

Peace Forum held in 2016, whose main recommendation was to ensure that the chapter remains active. Taking advantage of the newly formed LANS support program by the Sylff Association, five fellows—Dr. Jacinta Mwendu, Socrates Majune, Alexina Marucha, Steve Muthusi, and Awuor Ponge—successfully organized a networking meeting at the University of Nairobi Towers. The theme of the meeting was “Sylff Fellows as Agents of Change.” In particular, the meeting

sought to enhance cohesion among fellows, showcase the experiences of fellows in their pursuit of changing the world, and to discuss the way forward for the chapter.

Twenty-two participants attended the meeting: eighteen current and past fellows, two representatives of the Graduate School of the University of Nairobi (Professor Lawrence Ikamari and Mr. Bernard Kiige), one representative of the Sylff Association Secretariat (Ms. Yue Zhang), and a visitor (Mr. Isaac Kariuki). Conspicuous in the meeting was the diversity in terms of period of fellowship, current country of residence, and expertise. The fellowship period spread from 1992–1994 to 2017–2019, and two fellows were from the diaspora (living in the United States), while the rest resided in Kenya. The areas of expertise ranged from academia to policy and think tanks to social action and advocacy.

The meeting began at 12:20 pm and ended at 4:17 pm. The following sections provide summaries of the presentations and deliberations of the meeting.

Presentations

After the official opening of the meeting by Professor Lawrence Ikamari, deputy director of the Graduate School, and a presentation by Ms. Yue Zhang, four fel-



Mr. Stephen Muthusi Katembu moderating the presentation section.

lows presented their experiences as agents of change. Mr. Awuor Ponge, an associate research fellow at the African Policy Centre and adjunct faculty at Kenyatta University, explained how Sylff's training and networking opportunities have influenced him. Mr. Ponge received the Fellowship between 2007 and 2009 to pursue an MA in Development Studies at the University of Nairobi.

He has so far benefited from three Sylff programs including LANS. The others are: a Sylff Research Abroad (SRA) Fellowship at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex; the Sylff Administrators Meeting at the Ritsumeikan

Asia Pacific University in Beppu, which also included a meeting with research fellows of the Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research and senior Japanese policymakers in Tokyo. These experiences have particularly brought Mr. Ponge to appreciate multiculturalism, honesty, humility, hospitality, discipline, philanthropy, and academic generosity, virtues that he aspires to in his academic work at Kenyatta University. Moreover, these experiences have enriched his networks and research skills, prompting him to launch the African Policy Centre.

Mrs. Sennane Riungu, a fellow from 2006 to 2008, explained the role of Sylff in her post-undergraduate life. After graduating with a BA in Education, she was



Mrs. Sennane Riungu shared her story in collaboration with Sylff.

unsure of how to proceed until a life-changing opportunity arose in the form of a Sylff fellowship. Through the fellowship, she earned an MA in International Development and Diplomacy, which is the basis of her current work at the Australian High Commission in Nairobi. In 2013, Mrs. Sennane successfully organized a leaders' forum titled "Leading the Leaders: A Forum for Local Youth Leaders in Maara Constituency." This was sponsored by the Sylff Association under the SLI support program. Through this initiative, Mrs. Riungu has managed to create a big forum in her constituency that pursues life-enhancing projects such as agri-business

opportunities through greenhouse farming.

Dr. Nicholas Githuku, another Sylff fellow, echoed the words of Mrs. Riungu in explaining the impact of the Sylff fellowship in his postgraduate life. He received a Sylff fellowship between 2002 and 2004 to pursue an MA in Armed Conflict and Peace Studies (History) at the University of Nairobi. Though this opportunity, he was able to network and organize a meeting of the Kenya Association of Sylff Fellows in 2005. Dr. Githuku is currently an assistant professor at York College in the United States. His main influence is in academia, especially through his 2015 book titled *Mau Mau Crucible of War: Statehood, National Identity, and Politics of Postcolonial Kenya*.



Dr. Nicholas Githuku introduced his latest achievements in academia.

Mrs. Agnes Kariuki, one of the earliest Sylff fellows at the University of Nairobi, also made a presentation. She was accompanied by her husband, Mr. Kariuki. She received the fellowship between 1992 and 1994 to study African history at the Department of History, University of Nairobi. She acknowledges the contribution of Sylff in establishing her life purpose of advocating for social action in society. In 1994, Mrs. Kariuki was among the five students selected to take up an internship opportunity in Japan under the support of the Tokyo Foundation and the Mainichi Shimbun. Though her experience with Japanese families, she not only wrote newspaper articles but was also

motivated to undertake an AIDS education project together with friends. This was funded by the Tokyo Foundation. Although she relocated to the United States in 1997, her passion for social advocacy remained on course. She established an after-school homework club in a church basement to keep kids off the street and away from crime and help them focus on their studies. This project was originally



Mr. and Mrs. Kariuki.

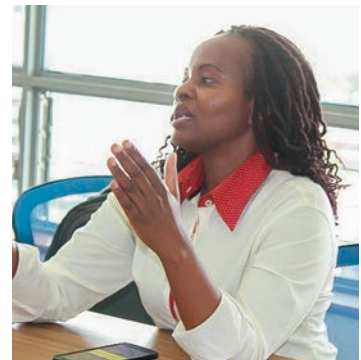
funded as a social action grant by the Tokyo Foundation but later also attracted funding from such organizations as the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington and IMPACT Silver Spring. As a result of her initiative, Mrs. Kariuki received the prestigious Linowes Leadership Award in 2001 and continues with her initiative with consistent funding from the YMCA. Above all, she teaches at Montgomery County Public Schools and, together with her husband, runs Diasporamessenger, a

website that connects Kenyans living in the United States and those intending to visit the country.

Roundtable Meeting and Way Forward

After the aforementioned presentations by fellows, the next section was dedicated to a plenary session among the fellows. The main objective was to propose recommendations to guide the chapter in 2019 and beyond. The major resolutions of the plenary session were as follows:

- a) To deepen and strengthen ties among fellows, another LANS meeting will be held in Nairobi in November 2019.
- b) The 2019 LANS meeting will be in two parts, a section for academic presentations and a social action program. These would ensure that fellows not only influence one another academically but also impact society. An appropriate theme for the 2019 meeting will be communicated early in 2019. In addition, a mini-meeting will be held earlier in 2019.
- c) A database of all fellows will be compiled to en-



Dr. Jacinta Mwendu Maweu moderating the roundtable meeting section.

sure that all fellows are involved in the activities of the chapter. This will be accompanied by formal registration of the chapter under the Graduate School of the University of Nairobi.

Conclusion

Looking ahead to the 2019 meeting, it is evident that there is a need to fulfill Sylff's true mission of tapping leadership skills that make the world a better place. The transmission mechanism was well captured by Mrs. Agnes Kariuki:

The truth is that none of us got to where we are without a helping hand. It is the same helping hand that Sylff has encouraged us to extend to others by becoming agents of change in our communities. It is possible to impact this change through our daily activities so long as we remain focused on making a difference.



Group photo of the LANS participants.

Acknowledgments

The organizers of the LANS 2018 meeting would like to immensely thank the Sylff Association for their financial support with the transportation of long-distance fellows. Gratitude also goes to the Graduate School of the University of Nairobi for providing a venue at the University. Lastly, the organizers appreciate the sacrifice of the fellows who attended the four-hour meeting.

December 17, 2018

The 2018 Inaugural Sylff Fellows Networking Event in Auckland, New Zealand

Tess Bartlett
Massey University

Sylff's second Local Association Networking Support (LANS) event was held at the Auckland Campus of Massey University in September 2018. In New Zealand, Sylff fellowships are provided to students studying at one of the eight public universities in the country, and Massey University is responsible for program administration. The universities are scattered across the main two islands of the country, and there is rarely an opportunity for Sylff fellows to have face-to-face conversations with one another. The networking event was realized with the efforts of five organizing Sylff fellows. A number of research presentations were given to introduce fellows' activities during the event. The participating fellows enjoyed networking beyond the bounds of institutions and fellowship years. The LANS award supported two international travels and five long-distance travels within the country of participating fellows. The secretariat hopes that this initiative will be continued as an annual event.

The following article is a report of the event by Tess Bartlett, one of the organizers.

* * *

On September 3, 2018, New Zealand Sylff fellows came together for the inaugural Sylff Fellows Networking Event. This article provides a summary of the event and of the workshops and presentations outlining the exciting work that a number of New Zealand Sylff fellows are doing.

The formal introduction was given by Ms. Yue Zhang from the Sylff Association Secretariat, a program officer for leadership development at the Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research. Ms. Zhang outlined some of the opportunities for Sylff fellows afforded by the recently established Sylff Association (founded in 2017) as a way to continue supporting current and former Sylff fellows through a range of programs in the areas of research, social action, and networking.

We learned from Ms. Zhang that there are now 69 Sylff institutions (with 16,000 fellows and 44 countries represented). The participants at the New Zealand

inaugural Sylff event were among those selected as Sylff fellows across the years because of their outstanding academic success and because they were considered future leaders in various fields.

The event concluded with a discussion, in which we reflected on the successes of the day (e.g., making connections, realizing the value of interdisciplinary research and networking, and celebrating current and past research). The attendees also expressed unanimous support for regular networking events of a similar nature. An event next year may be held via an online conference system and may include a focus on some of the following: social science, interdisciplinary research, research in New Zealand, and how we can be leaders specifically in New Zealand. One of the fellows present raised the possibility of New Zealand (and perhaps Pacific) Sylff fellows collaborating on a Sylff Project Grant application, the goal of which would be to empower Pacific Island youth to be change-makers, leaders, and advocates and to take active roles in responding to specific challenges facing their communities.

Summary of Workshops and Presentations

Workshop: How to Take the Big Leap and Step into Your Power, Ms. Tess Bartlett

The first workshop was run by Tess Bartlett, the founder and director of This Simple Space, where she is a Creative Mastery Coaching and Research Consultant. This workshop explored some of the blocks that we might have holding us back from taking the big leap, such as fears and self-doubt. It also explored how to deal with procrastination, how to recognize fear and self-doubt, and how to set simple goals. After learning these tools, we had simple actions for moving forward so that we can thrive.

Low-Intensity CBT for Community-Dwelling Older Adults Experiencing Low Mood, Dr. James Martyn

James presented on his research based on cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and how early experiences have an influence on yourself, others, and the future. CBT can be extremely helpful for everyone, and the skills can be kept for a lifetime.

There are a number of barriers that prevent people from getting treatment for depression, such as low motivation, stigma, going to a general practitioner, lack of funding or resources, exclusion based on minimum symptom severity, social stigma associated with mental disorders, lack of specialist-trained health-care providers to

conduct treatment, inaccurate diagnosis (particularly with older adults), and cost of private treatment. Many people therefore do not access treatment.

Low-Intensity CBT (LI-CBT) Self Help provides evidence-based CBT treatment content via nonconventional means, such as books, audio, and the Internet. Provision of guidance in LI-CBT self-help significantly improves treatment outcomes. In this sense the individual becomes their own treatment option, which means that there might be greater access or speed to treatment, service flexibility, responsiveness, capacity, and patient choice, and may overcome barriers around delivery.

There is a dearth of guided CBT self-help options for depression in New Zealand. James' study looked at a group version of self-help, which is a cost-effective and time-effective low intensity treatment. The self-help material is based on CBT principles and is an eight-week course that aims to look at ratings of depression, anxiety, and quality of life and to investigate whether there was engagement with the LI-CBT self-help among individuals between the ages of 60 and 75. Evidence supports that Living Life to the Full (LLTFF) is a viable and effective LI-CBT option for improving symptoms of depression and anxiety and quality of life among older adults aged 60–75 years dwelling in the New Zealand community.



Dr. James Martyn explained the treatment barriers.

Creative Solutions for the Global Plastics Crisis, Dr. Trisia Farrelly

For six years Trisia has been on a social experiment to learn about toxic plastics and consumer behaviors. Despite her environmental ethics, Trisia found it very difficult to avoid plastic and so wondered what this would be like for people who are not as aware or do not have the money to avoid plastics.

There is nowhere on earth that has not been touched by plastic: bees are using it to create hives, it has been found in beer, it is in our air, and it is in the water ecology. Most of it comes from land sources. Macroplastics break down into microplastics, which can be consumed by fish and can then be broken down into (nano) plastics that can pass through cell walls and cell membranes. One major concern now is microfibers found on clothes; because of their shape they get stuck inside fish.

Even if we were to recycle twice as much as we are currently recycling (which

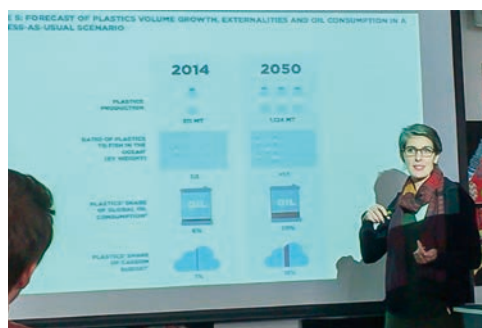
would only be 30%), the oil used would negate any of the recycling that we do. Instead, we need to aim to replace the use of, and prevent the unnecessary production of, any single-use plastics. Trisia informed us that 91% of plastics are not recycled and that we need to work on another level. The focus is often on recycling plastic rather than on preventing it from being created in the first place; this focus needs to change. Supply of plastics has increased 20-fold in the last 60 years, and the forecast of plastics volume growth suggests that there will be more plastics than fish in the ocean by weight in 2050.

Plastics don't go away, you just find them in a different form somewhere else.

The outlook is looking good in terms of going plastic-bag free: New Zealand, for example, is going plastic-bag free in 2019. There is a lot of research into the effect of plastic on the environment and on our health. China has recently shut down its gates for post-consumer recyclables and plastics. But there is still more

work to be done. Preproduction design and reduction and prevention include things like nonedible wastes (e.g., corn husks and coconut shells), but these measures will not be sufficient to meet the level of the current crisis.

Instead, it comes down to prevention, such as individual consumer responsibility. And yet this individualizes the problem rather than looking at the companies creating the plastics. Individual and community roles also play a part in cleaning



Dr. Trisia Farrelly gave comments on the gravity of plastic pollution.

up beaches. The aim is to work toward reducing the amount of materials that enter the “circular economy.” It also is about acting powerfully in response to the plastics crisis, such as making manufacturers responsible for what they produce and develop policies that are precautionary. There need to be loud voices pushing for this from the ground up. One way of doing this is to lead by example. This involves a new plastic pollution strategy that involves plastic-free-campuses, organizations, shops, cities. Another final solution is to have an international legally binding plastic pollution treaty based on the Montreal Protocol.

Overlooked and Unsupported: A Study of Imprisoned Primary Carer Fathers in Victoria, Australia, Ms. Tess Bartlett

Tess spoke about primary carer fathers in prison in Victoria. It is well established

that the vast majority of prisoners are men and that around 50% of these men are parents. Yet very little attention is paid to the parenting status of this group. As such, there remains a gap in research, theory, and practice with regard to primary carer fathers in prison. Tess provided an overview of her PhD thesis examining the experiences of imprisoned primary carer fathers in Victoria, Australia, at the point of arrest and imprisonment. The views of 39 primary carer fathers incarcerated in Victoria were analyzed and reported on. Tess presented findings from her research, clearly highlighting how fathers are overlooked and unsupported with regard to their children at the key points of arrest and imprisonment, serving as a barrier to maintaining father-child relationships. She also offered pragmatic solutions as to how to best facilitate the connection between incarcerated fathers and their children.

In 2017 Tess received a Sylff Research Abroad grant, which allowed her to travel to the United States to speak with experts in research and program design directly related to prisoners and their families. She is currently the only person conducting research that examines fathers who were direct carers of their children prior to imprisonment; traveling to the United States provided an international context to her dissertation. Tess drew on her experience utilizing Sylff alumni awards to offer advice to Sylff recipients about career advancement and leadership.



Tess Bartlett giving advice on applying for an SRA grant.

Olive Trees and Heroines: Talking Peace—Young Women’s Agency and Peacemaking in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, Ms. Sophie Goulter

Sophie spent time in Bosnia while traveling in 2012. She learned that at Moster High School students were taught different versions of their city’s history depending on their ethnicity.

Youth engaging in collaborative peacemaking face increasing obstacles to demonstrate their agency. Through critical feminist and phenomenological analyses Sophie examined the agency of youth in Creativity for Peace (CfP) by investigating their capacity to act for peace.

Sophie described a camp in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where Palestinian and Is-

raeli teenage girls live in a camp house. The aim is to cooperate and to live harmoniously together, sharing resources. Over the first several days they talk about their needs and use “deep listening” and “compassionate listening” as a way to develop empathy and build a peaceful relationship with one another. Authentic effective speaking is also used to produce quality and cooperation between participants.



Ms. Sophie Goulter shared her experience at Moster High School in Bosnia.

Agency was a key component. This is the consciousness of one’s potential to take action, a willingness to engage in collective action in the interest of the group, and the knowledge and willingness to challenge existing structures. Thus, agency is having the knowledge, power, and ability to activate resources (White and Why, 1998). The ability for youth to have agency is important in activism and conflict.

Some of the dominant challenges to participation in peacemaking are structural: the societal stigma toward peacemaking, the internal conflict that the young women experience, and the emotional commitment required to sustain their engagement. The means by which the girls navigate these challenges come back to practicing the nonviolent communication that they learned with CfP, as well as creating and sustaining supportive networks.

Sophie provided insight into how to navigate and demonstrate agency. The first was communication: “talking with a sweet heart” and allowing people to share in an authentic way, as well as telling personal stories and using “like terms” or comparisons. Personal relationships and support were also important: community, friends, and networks, and CfP as a coping mechanism. There was an added complexity as to how they thought of themselves. For example, they wanted to see themselves simply as teenagers, separate from the conflict.

Lastly, Sophie talked about some reflections on the research process and discussed how life-changing it was to undertake her Masters and be involved in day-to-day interviewing, becoming quite involved in the conflict in the process.

The Meri Shall Inherit the Earth: Women’s Leadership in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, Ms. Kayt Bronnimann

Kayt spent close to a year volunteering in Bougainville and has been questioning

“development” and what this is. Bougainville has fallen under Papua New Guinean rule and follows a matrilineal system. One woman said, “Basically, we were cut off from the rest of the world” (Josephine Sirivi).

In 1996 the Community Government Act was passed, under which a man and a woman must be selected to represent each ward. While this does open up the doors for women, there is still a predominantly male-led leadership. Kayt’s research examines the gendered impacts of the new Community Government Act on political participation and social transformation.

A referendum will take place in 2019. Kayt worked with the Bureau of Public Affairs, which will work to spread the word about the referendum in the community.

Kayt found that people are very hungry for information and that a lot of people are in the dark. Many villages are not connected by electricity and many do not have television or access to news. The conflict has touched all people living in Bougainville. Women interviewed by Kayt were involved in the fight for peace and emerged as leaders. One woman had to deal with the death of her daughter but knew she had to move forward in order to serve her people. Strength through diversity and strength through faith were a common story for women interviewed.

Another woman in a high-status position helped many women whose husbands had abandoned or beaten them, while hiding the fact that she was also a victim of violence at the hands of her husband.

The women found themselves at the intersection of culture. They were in remote communities, with few resources, and in traditional gender roles where they are often tied to motherhood. When women stand for political office, this often means that they have to do it without their husband’s approval or support.

As an alternative to the increasingly controversial “voluntourism,” Kayt suggested “Volunteer Services Abroad”— a volunteer program that gives people the opportunity to go to another country and develop skills. Yet this is not often available to people in those communities in the same way. She posed the question, “Why do we need to leave in order to discover our own privilege?”



Ms. Kayt Bronnimann’s presentation focused on her interview project in Bougainville.

“Years of research have frequently failed to improve the conditions of the people who are researched.” —Tuhiwai Smith (2012)

Human Design for Humans, Mr. Scott Brebner

Scott spoke about how he makes technologies that help improve people’s lives. As a designer he is interested in storytelling. At the age of seven he became fascinated with games, writing his own Dungeons and Dragons missions. As a teenager he knew he wanted to go to university and become a game designer. At university he learned about Human Designs for Humans and ethical game design. At one



Mr. Scott Brebner gave his presentation using self-made illustrations.

memorable lecture the professor spoke of the Dream Ball Project—about designing a Medikit that turned into a soccer ball. These projects flicked a switch about ethical consciousness, and he decided to make games that help people with rehabilitation. Scott made TodTec, a game used to help children with a drop foot or recovering from ankle injuries to get the exercise that they need for rehabilitation.

There are ways of supporting games and the positive use of games in people’s lives. Scott spoke about presenting his ideas to the Sylff Association and argued that all people can use games. He designed Double 12, a domino game that would translate skills to game play using physical therapy exercises for people who have suffered a stroke, by moving players backwards and forwards on a board. Scott designed the digital aspect, and his team took the project out to volunteers (survivors of a stroke), who gave feedback on how it might help them in the community. Since then, Scott has spoken at several conferences about design sustainability and human ethics.

Scott now works at Exsurgo, designing games for people who have had strokes. He is actively trying to take big machinery and make it affordable and make recovery more transparent for users. By building rehabilitation games he hopes to make the experience more fulfilling. Medical device production is tricky (safety protocols, for example), but Exsurgo aims to meet that challenge head-on to keep the devices relevant.



A group photo after the meeting: (front row, left to right) Ms. Yue Zhang, Ms. Amy Liang, Ms. Meg Stairmand, (back row, left to right) Ms. Naomi Collins, Ms. Tess Bartlett, Ms. Kayt Bronnimann, Mr. Scott Brebner, Mr. Robert Haua, Mr. Richard Wanden, Ms. Giulia Lowe, and Dr. Trisia Farrelly.

Acknowledgments

On behalf of the Organizing Committee: The organizers of the inaugural New Zealand Sylff Fellows Networking Event would like to thank the Sylff Association for making this day possible and the Sylff New Zealand Steering Committee for covering the catering costs.

Across the Community

Articles submitted by Sylff Association members about their research or social engagement activities.

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August 26, 2019

Potters' Locality: The Socioeconomics of Bankura's Terracotta

Soumya Bhowmick
Jadavpur University

This report is based on the master's research by Soumya Bhowmick, a Sylff fellow at Jadavpur University, India, in 2014–15. It originally appeared in FIRSTPOST, a web-based leading media in India. Bhowmick, currently research assistant at Observer Research Foundation's Kolkata Chapter, continues writing on the changing socioeconomics of the potters' community known for the terracotta Bankura Horse, which is historically valued in Indian society, especially West Bengal.

* * *

The norwesters in the potters' village of Panchmura is magnificent in ways more than one. The extremely dry atmosphere during the summer months of April–May make one compare the place to a hot desert with red dust smeared all over your clothes. This period is marked by the holy time of Baisakh, when the potter's wheel is stopped as it is believed that during this time Lord Shiva appears from the wheel. Many justify it with a scientific reason: that the terrible heat easily exhausts the artisans and causes cracks to develop in the pottery items. After a heavy rainfall, the sweet petrichor is one of the strongest in this part of the town owing to the large amounts of terracotta clay all over the place. The potters are relatively free during these months and are very eager to have a chat with you over tea in their workshops.

Mahadeb Kumbhakar, 56, proudly proclaims, "The trademark Bankura Horse [uniquely styled terracotta horse made in Bankura] came into existence because people would offer them as a mark of devotion to different deities and even on the tombs of Muslim saints. It is used as the official crest motif of the All India



An artisan uses the potter's wheel in Panchmura village.

Handicrafts Board.” He woefully adds that a large number of youngsters in the area, including his own son, have moved to Kolkata not only because of the money but also because of their inability to commit to the labor required for this kind of artistry. Mahadeb justifies that there is no harm in working in an office while at the same time being a marginal potter. That way, the skill is never wiped out from the family.

Panchmura village near Bishnupur, Bankura District, is one of the main hubs of terracotta in West Bengal. Historically, the politically stable Malla Kingdom indulged in a lot of cultural activity and invited high caste Brahmins, expert craftsmen, and masons to Bishnupur, and through the amalgamation of religion and culture, these people contributed largely to the trade and commerce of the region. The Bankura artisans gradually scattered to different parts of the country, but today only the few remaining in Panchmura are still striving to keep this art form alive.

The origin of terracotta in India can be traced back to the Indus Valley Civilization. Terracotta came into existence in Bengal due to the unavailability of stones and large endowments of alluvial soil left by the main rivers in the Bankura District: Damodar, Dwarakeshwar, and the Kangsabati. The soil thus gets a perfect blend and density for it to be crafted intricately and fired in order to produce the required terracotta products. A Panchmura artisan says that a Durga idol made in Bankura is at least three times as heavy as an idol of the same size made in Kolkata because the soil found in Bankura is much more dense and mineral rich, making the crafting process extremely laborious.

The cultural transformation in the community is well captured through the terracotta craft embossed on the walls of various temples, towers, and smaller objects in the region. Many scholars have interpreted this as a translation of the primitive Sanskrit literature into mainstream Bengali narratives that allowed the emergence of such popular cults in Hinduism as Durga, Krishna, and Kali. The terracotta temples in Bankura are mostly Radha-Krishna temples, which drew inspiration from Vaishnavism.

The Munshiganj District in Bangladesh, which is close to the confluence of the Padma and Brahmaputra rivers, is a storehouse of terracotta work on the other side of Bengal. Almost all the temples are dedicated to Shiva, and the temple roofs are



Unfinished Bankura Horses at Panchmura village.

distinctly different from the ones found in Bankura, as the ones in Munshiganj are more longitudinally conical.

Narratives on terracotta were sources of both information and entertainment



The exquisite Rash Mancha in Bishnupur.

for the people, depicting stories from the mythological texts of Ramayana, Mahabharata, Hitopodesha, Jataka, and Panchatantra. There has been emphasis on scenes indicating rural life, farming techniques, male and female dancers, musicians, and village gardens. Bengal architecture is uniquely different from the architecture that coincided with the Muslim rule in India, and by the end of the sixteenth century a new Bengali

style of temple art became prominent and established itself as an artistic Hindu expression.

Unlike most of the other art forms that emerged with the purpose of aesthetic value in creativity, terracotta was made to serve practical purposes, such as food and water storage, weapons, and utensils. From being necessary commodities of daily use, these artifacts evolved into something more creative imbued with a high level of craft, making terracotta a cultural commodity with great marketing potential.

The Bankura District is known for its popular handicrafts in the form of terracotta, the Dokra handicrafts of Bigna, the stone craft of Susunia, and the Baluchari silk of Bishnupur. The global interest in Indian terracotta can also be found in a letter by Swami Vivekananda regarding the time when Okakura Kakuzo, the famous Japanese scholar, visited India in 1901–1902. Okakura was extremely impressed by the craftsmanship of a common terracotta vessel used by the servants and, owing to the fragility of these handicrafts, he requested Swami Vivekananda to replicate the piece in brass for him to carry it back to Japan.

Terracotta is still of high interest in the global market, and Panchmura, Surul, Chaltaberia, and Shetpur-Palpara are the major villages in West



The exquisite Rash Mancha in Bishnupur.

Bengal that export terracotta to international markets. However, the artisans face a number of key problems that are crippling the market for this kind of artwork, including the issues of equipment, transportation, and other logistical problems; the lack of interaction between the artisans and the urban consumers in Kolkata; and the high dependence of terracotta artisans on local patronage. Moreover, the inadequate capital, sluggish marketing, and falling demand are causing these marginalized artisans to become extinct, and the lack of interest from the new generation along with insufficient government schemes further add to the woes.

Toton Kumbhakar, 30, says, “We get some idea of consumer preferences in the handicrafts fair in Kolkata every year, where people mostly demand the Bankura Horse, since it has a certain traditional value as a regular showpiece in the Kolkata households.” The potters admit that they charge much more for the handicrafts in Kolkata and are also financially dependent on the various regional festivals, for which they make large idols for relatively hefty prices.

The terracotta temples in Bishnupur show a much better quality and precision than the artifacts being produced today. For example, the details on the terracotta tiles used in the temples are much more intricate and portray a more complex network of lines, curves, and dots. How is this possible despite improvements in technology and instruments? The extinction of skill-specific labor is the answer to this. According to the locals, the process of terracotta production in Bankura previously included three major classes of workers: the clay collectors and sievers, who would give a fine texture to the clay; the artisans, who would add the intricate details; and finally the market traders. There is no specific class of labor anymore for each of these three roles.

“Bankura is my native place, and so terracotta has a special place in the lives of my family members,” says an urban consumer in Kolkata. “Apart from items to decorate the house, we use terracotta items for daily use. For example, in summer we do not drink cold water from the refrigerator but instead use an earthen terracotta vessel. My mother makes it a point to do a certain fish preparation in spite of it being time consuming, so that she can use the particular terracotta utensil.”

In the urban milieu, the demand for terracotta goods in Kolkata households has reached a saturation point. As the central government actively pushes for the promotion of various handicrafts from different states, art forms of other regions, particularly Madhubani paintings and Rajasthani handicrafts, are certainly very popular. Bankura’s terracotta seems to be lagging behind in this regard.

Bankura’s terracotta is a classic case of a dying cultural heritage. Sustaining the art is a social responsibility. Unlike the rest of West Bengal, the parliamentary constituency of Bankura has voted against incumbent leaders and political parties

twice in the last decade, which is a major indication of people's awareness and urgency of development in the region.

Culture is a matter of recognition, and aesthetics is more about perception than materiality. Very recently, the West Bengal state government has reportedly nominated Bishnupur's terracotta temples for the UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This should be considered as a massive step toward drawing attention to this part of Bengal's history and culture. However, only time will tell how efficiently such measures could facilitate the socioeconomics advancement of the potters' community in Bankura.

(Note: All the pictures used in this article were taken by the author in Bankura District, India, and Munshiganj District in Bangladesh during the surveys.)

Reprinted, with editing, from FIRSTPOST, <https://www.firstpost.com/living/bankuras-terracotta-can-timely-measures-facilitate-socio-economic-revival-of-potters-community-7001001.html>.

April 23, 2019

Toward an International Academic Career

Mihoko Sakurai
Keio University

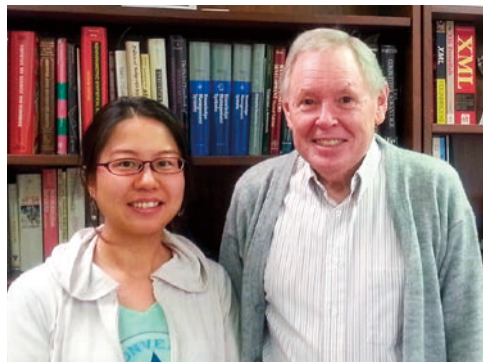
Mihoko Sakurai, Sylff fellow at Keio University's Shonan Fujisawa Campus in 2013, is currently a senior research fellow and associate professor at the Center for Global Communications (GLOCOM) of the International University of Japan. She is dedicated to helping build a more sustainable society through her research on resilient information systems. While receiving a Sylff fellowship at Keio University, she applied for and received an SRA award to study abroad at the University of Georgia in the United States. This experience strengthened her desire to pursue a research career from an international perspective. This is the story about her international academic career started from the SRA award.

* * *

My Journey from the United States to Norway

Several months after living in Athens, Georgia (United States), for around six months in total, during which my living expenses were partially covered by the Sylff Research Abroad (SRA) program, I finished writing my doctoral dissertation. I received a PhD in 2015 from the Graduate School of Media and Governance, Keio University.

My experience in the United States eventually took me on a wonderful journey. In summer 2014, I was at the University of Georgia (UGA) having a chat with my supervisor, Professor Richard T. Watson (Rick), on the way back to the office from his lecture. In the morning of the same day, he told me about a job opening at the University of Agder (UiA) in Norway. The university was offering a postdoctoral research fellow position in the area



Mihoko, left, and Rick.

of information systems and disaster management. The description of the position fit well with my background, and Rick knew people well in that university.

The journey to the United States had already been something big to me, since it was my first time staying abroad for an extended period. I had not thought about working abroad after my stay at UGA. At the same time, however, my eyes had gradually opened during those months. I found that a university is a very interna-



City of Kristiansand, Norway.

tional place, something that I did not feel much when I was at Keio. My curiosity was expanding. I started dreaming of having more international experiences at the beginning of my academic career. I decided to apply for the position.

One year later, in summer 2015, I flew to Kristiansand, a beautiful town in southern Norway. I was given a two-year position at UiA, where I ultimately worked for three years. It

was indeed a wonderful and exceptional journey.

There are only a few so-called universities in Norway. On the other hand, there are many institutions called university colleges. The merger of university colleges was advanced as a national policy over the past decade plus, and UiA was founded by merging several regional university colleges in 2007. UiA has about 10,000 students and about 1,000 people working as academic and administrative staff. There are six faculties, and I belonged to the Department of Information Systems of the Faculty of Social Sciences. The department employed around 20 people, including PhD students; a PhD student is a paid job in Norway, which is an extremely good environment compared to the Japanese context.

The Research Environment in Norway

Universities in Norway are differentiated from university colleges in that they have PhD courses and focus on international-level research. The Research Council of Norway releases annual rankings of academic conferences and journals. Each publication is scored in these rankings, and each department reports the points earned by its academic staff to the university every year. These results indirectly affect budget allocations within the university. Individual research funding can be obtained according to the points. I was surprised to learn that Norwegian universities

organize research activities in such a systematic way. Each department has research groups and collaborates not only with internal researchers but also quite actively with external researchers.

In my case, my research activities were based on a large-scale research project funded by the European Commission, a multinational version of Japan's Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (KAKENHI). The project was called Smart Mature Resilience, or SMR for short. It received a total of 4.6 million euros in funding over three years. The participants comprised four universities, seven local governments, and two nonprofit organizations from eight countries in the European Union. The competition was intense, as only 10 percent of proposals were accepted. I was fortunate to join the project.

The project was very ambitious, having as its main aim the creation of universal knowledge by people from different countries based on research activities. Collaboration with practitioners was strongly encouraged. Even within Europe, there are diverse historical and cultural backgrounds, and different customs mean different languages. I found that it was not easy to have a common awareness. While meetings were regularly held by web conference, there were opportunities for project members to gather once every few months in consortium member countries: Spain, Norway, Britain, Sweden, Germany, Latvia, Italy, and Denmark. The budget for travel expenses was huge, which I understand is one of the project's uniqueness, enhancing collaboration between people of different backgrounds. From an efficiency point of view, it may be better to focus only on domestic projects, as this



Members of the EU project and staff of the Kristiansand city office.

would make it easier to create a common understanding of the subject. But international projects have special benefits not found in domestic projects, and all things were priceless experiences for me.

There is another collaboration network called the European Research Center for Information Systems (ERCIS). Twenty-two countries from all continents, including Australia and the United States, participate in the inter-university network on information systems research. Only one university can participate from each country, and UiA represents Norway. A workshop is held once a year, and this network provides a platform to generate proposals for research funding including EU projects.

Resilience Research in Europe

After moving to Norway, I continued writing papers with Rick. Our aim is to elaborate the notion of resilience under the context of disaster and information systems. We used the concept of capital, which Rick has been studying for many years, as an analysis lens in revealing how information systems and their surroundings (including people) recovered after the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 2011. For my dissertation, I proposed a framework for “Frugal Information Systems” as a means of achieving a resilient society. In the capital paper, we submitted practical insights on how to make information systems more frugal and resilient. We used different types of capital in this context: economic, human, social, organizational, and symbolic. Our initial idea was presented in the International Hawaii Conference on System Sciences (HICSS) in 2016 and awarded as the best paper under the digital government research track. The paper reports three cases from the field survey on the earthquake and shows how each capital interacted with the others and formed a recovery process after the devastating earthquake and tsunami. We are currently elaborating this paper and trying to submit it to the top-tier journal in the information systems research domain.

While working on the earthquake, I had been involved in a large-scale EU research project called SMR, as discussed above. The overall purpose was to develop, test, and demonstrate a pilot version of the European Resilience¹ Management Guideline. The guideline comprises five tools to promote city resilience: the Resil-

¹ The ability of a system, community, or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to, and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions. (2009 UNISDR Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction)

ience Maturity Model, Risk Systemicity Questionnaire, Resilience Building Policies, City Resilience Dynamics Model, and Resilience Information Portal. Each tool can guide cities to achieve high-level resilience maturity in different ways. I was mainly involved in the development of the Resilience Information Portal. The portal aims to create a collaborative environment among key partners (first responders and citizens) in resilience building activities. We developed the prototype of the portal and a standardization document that can be used by non-project members in creating such a portal. After a three-year project period, three series of standardization documents were developed. Five tools are available online.

Looking Back on My Output in the Past Three Years

During my three years in Norway, I produced two journal publications and eleven conference papers. It was indeed a very productive period. I may have worked too much. I also had the opportunity to co-teach three courses and offer several guest lectures to Norwegian students, which gave me great teaching experiences. I met wonderful people from all over the world through international conferences, the SMR project, and a researchers' network centered around UiA. I am grateful for the environment and know this is not something that is available to everyone who wants it.

I hope that my story about this journey that began in the United States can give insights to those who aspire to develop an international career. I felt strong anxiety in my first year in Norway, but a colleague of mine encouraged me by saying, "Take it easy, have fun!" I always remember this comment when I feel any fear.

As a concluding remark, I would like to thank the Sylff Association for supporting me in my journey toward a wonderful academic career.

March 14, 2019

Dr. Yohei Sasakawa: An Inspiration to All

Joyashree Roy¹

Jadavpur University

At a ceremony in February 2019, Sylff Association Chairman Yohei Sasakawa was awarded the 2018 Gandhi Peace Prize by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Joyashree Roy, founder and advisor of the Jadavpur University Sylff Program, offers a congratulatory message on being conferred this extraordinary honor and expresses her wish for even greater recognition.

* * *

Congratulations to Dr. Yohei Sasakawa for being awarded the 2018 Gandhi Peace Prize by Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India!

It would be quite an understatement to say that we at the Jadavpur University Sylff program (JU-Sylff) and myself now as the Founder Advisor to the JU-Sylff program are extremely happy at this recognition. Dr. Sasakawa is one of the most revered personalities among students, faculties, and staff at the university. Any award that is conferred on him is an honor for which we feel equally proud.

This reverence comes not only from the fact that his foundation's generous endowment to our university has changed the lives of many young researchers at Jadavpur University since 2003 and will continue to do so. It was in 2005, if I recall correctly, that Dr. Sasakawa was awarded an honorary doctorate from the university at a special convocation, when a packed auditorium heard him speak and watched a documentary on his resolve and dedication in eradicating leprosy from

¹ (Currently) Bangabandhu Chair Professor, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand; Founder and Advisor: Jadavpur University Sylff Program; (on lien) Professor of Economics, Jadavpur University, India. Author's comment: "Mr. Sasakawa is the chairman of the Nippon Foundation, Asia's largest grant-making foundation, and the WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Leprosy Elimination. I have met Mr. Sasakawa many times while I was JU-Sylff director during his visits to the Jadavpur University campus and to the city of Kolkata on his mission for "Leprosy and Human Rights." Each time, he welcomed me with his warm, smiling face, as if we were dear, longtime friends. Such an outpouring of congeniality is quite rare."



Yohei Sasakawa, left, with India's President Ram Nath Kovind, right, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, center, during the Gandhi Peace prize ceremony in New Delhi on Feb. 26, 2019.

the city of Kolkata and around the world.

The audience was moved to the core of their hearts. Our then vice-chancellor made a public commitment then and there that Jadavpur University will make sincere efforts to support Dr. Sasakawa's crusade for human emancipation. The JU-Sylff association since then has never missed a year in donating part of its earnings and at least one full day of its members' time to bring hope, smiles, and a higher quality of life to leprosy patients in one of the hospitals in the city.

Dr. Sasakawa's unique commitment to bring peace on earth through the inclusion of all those who may otherwise be excluded from mainstream society has not gone unheeded at Jadavpur University, and now I can say proudly that India, too, has given him his due by awarding him the Gandhi Peace Prize.

Dr. Sasakawa's message is that leprosy is not only a medical problem but a social one, requiring us to get over our stigma so that our society can become truly inclusive. To advocate an inclusive society is one thing; practicing it by embracing leprosy patients and giving them opportunities for regular employment so they can lead a life of dignity is another. This is what we learned through Dr. Sasakawa's work.

Philanthropy, I learned from seeing his initiatives, is not a new business idea but the expression of a true humanitarian spirit. His vision and mission regarding a borderless society, where mutual understanding and trust will break down all artificial barriers for the progress of humankind, are the essential qualities of a more peaceful world.

It is not the top-down calls for peace that bring peace; rather it is grassroots dedication and service, as shown by his example, that can change the world so that no one will be left behind during the development process. Dr. Sasakawa has demonstrated that this cannot be accomplished simply with lip service or through international negotiations but requires tireless effort to find solutions and to reach out to all. I feel there is much the world today can learn from the goal-oriented

work of Dr. Sasakawa, not only seeking solutions for the world's problems but in building peace by including everybody into the mainstream of social development.

We have done the best we can within our means to communicate and promote his ideals, ideas, and possible solutions, but I am extremely happy that the Government of India has now recognized Dr. Sasakawa's immeasurable contributions to humanity's progress by honoring him with the Gandhi Prize. "Mr. Sasakawa, you are the inspiration for India," said then Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh in 2007 with heartfelt, genuine sincerity when he met Dr. Sasakawa and his leprosy mission. A decade later, our current prime minister has formally recognized his work with the national-level peace award.

It is not just a sense of mission but a commitment to achieving positive results, guided by a clear vision emanating from the core of one's heart, that can inspire us to reach out to those who have been forgotten by human society and bring them into the limelight, enabling them to breathe the same air and to put on the same smiles as everyone else.



The author with Mr. Sasakawa, 2005.

The number of leprosy patients in the world, including India, has gone down dramatically since the late 1980s thanks to the free provision of an effective drug called MDT (multi-drug therapy). This was the direct result of a personal decision by Dr. Sasakawa to provide MDT free of charge worldwide for five years from 1995 to 1999. To help people affected by leprosy living in stigmatized leprosy colonies, Dr. Sasakawa established a private foundation in India, the Sasakawa-India Leprosy Foundation, in 2006. He personally visits people affected by leprosy and, through the foundation, provides microfinance to improve their

quality of life and educational opportunities to young children.

I wish that Dr. Sasakawa will in the near future gain the highest global recognition from the Nobel Peace Prize Committee for inspiring the world to eradicate a social problem that still afflicts around 200,000 people. Such recognition would set an example for the citizens of the world on how we may move forward toward peace and prosperity for humanity at large.



Syfff's tenth anniversary ceremony at Jadavpur University in 2013.

Some might argue that recognition is not necessary if all of us individually fulfill what needs to be done. My position is that recognition is important because it inspires, allowing all to see what must be done and what should be avoided in a society where various forms of exploitation, hatred, and exclusion toward the powerless still persist. Gandhiji believed that man was a lofty being, and that the higher should protect the lower. This is the philosophy that has been demonstrated by Dr. Sasakawa through his mission of leprosy eradication. His generous endowments under the Syfff program to educational institutions worldwide similarly encourage bright, young leaders to think deeply about local issues and to find solutions in the context of a broader canvas.

Dr. Sasakawa, I know you will not stop and rejoice just because you have been recognized but will tirelessly continue with your work to reverse social exclusion. We who admire you, though, would like to celebrate with tears of genuine happiness when you are conferred with the world's highest award for peace. I am eagerly waiting for that day.

Sylff's Silver Jubilee in China

- 118 Milestone Administrators Meeting in Beijing
Yue Zhang (Sylff Association Secretariat)

- 120 25th Anniversary Ceremony and Commemorative Symposium
Yue Zhang (Sylff Association Secretariat)

- 123 Four Universities Celebrate 25th Anniversary
Yue Zhang (Sylff Association Secretariat)

- 125 Four Universities Celebrate 25th Anniversary in 2019
Yue Zhang (Sylff Association Secretariat)

August 31, 2018

Milestone Administrators Meeting in Beijing

Yue Zhang

Sylff Association Secretariat

Sylff administrators from all 10 Sylff institutions in China (Peking University, Fudan University, Lanzhou University, Jilin University, Nanjing University, Chongqing University, Inner Mongolia University, Xinjiang University, Yunnan University, and Sun Yat-sen University) gathered at the Beijing Friendship Hotel on June 29, 2018, for a meeting that marked an important milestone for the program in China.

The meeting resulted in the signing of a historic agreement among the 10 schools on the criteria to be used in selecting Sylff fellows. The 10 institutions also agreed to hold an annual joint award ceremony for new fellows, to be hosted by a different university each year, and to schedule an administrators meeting on the sidelines of the ceremony.

The agreement was reached following presentations by the vice-presidents of the 10 universities on the kind of leader Sylff should support in the light of the Sylff mission and the ideals of each institution. The re-identification of the qualities



sought in China's fellows had been a priority in the light of the country's rapid economic growth and changing social needs.

It has been a topic of ongoing discussions between the Sylff Association secretariat and the 10 institutions since 2016. Another key issue has been the concentration of Sylff funds on a more selective group of fellows.

The past quarter century has been a very fruitful period for Sylff in China, as the country has produced more than half of all fellows worldwide. The achievements of the administrators meeting in Beijing represent a major step forward that will help steer Sylff's next 25 years in China.



The Sylff Association secretariat's Sanae Oda, executive director of the Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research, addresses the meeting Sylff administrators in Beijing.

August 31, 2018

25th Anniversary Ceremony and Commemorative Symposium

Yue Zhang

Sylff Association Secretariat

The twenty-fifth anniversary of Sylff in China was celebrated on June 30, 2018, at Qiulin Report Hall, School of International Studies, Peking University, attended by some 200 current and graduated fellows and Sylff administrators from all 10 Sylff institutions in the country. Gracing the commemorative event were government and education officials who played key roles in launching the Sylff program in China a quarter century ago.

Endowments were initially established in 1992 at Peking University, Fudan University, Lanzhou University, Jilin University, and Nanjing University. Five more schools received Sylff funds in 1994: Chongqing University, Inner Mongolia University, Xinjiang University, Yunnan University, and Sun Yat-sen University. The 10 universities have since produced over 8,000 fellows—more than half of all fellows worldwide.

At the commemorative ceremony, congratulatory remarks were delivered by





Sylff fellows.



Sylff fellows.

Peking University President Lin Jianhua and Secretary General Zhao Lingshan of the China Education Association for International Exchange, who recounted the history of the Sylff program in China and shared their thoughts on program administration and leadership development in the years ahead.

This year also marks the fortieth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between Japan and the People’s Republic of China. “There have been periods of stagnation in the relationship between China and Japan,” noted Sylff Association Chairman Yohei Sasakawa, “but there are few examples in human history of neighboring countries maintaining ties for 2,000 years.” Emphasizing the importance of bilateral exchange in the nongovernmental sector, he continued, “I hope that Sylff can make a positive contribution to a peaceful future in Asia and the rest of the world.”

At the commemorative symposium, approximately 200 fellows from the 10 Sylff institutes discussed the path taken by Sylff over the past 25 years and exchanged opinions on the kind of leader needed today in China, which has achieved rapid economic growth.

The Sylff anniversary event in Beijing received wide coverage in the Chinese news media. Articles posted on the websites of media organizations include the following:

1. *Zhongguo Jiaoyu Bao* (China Education Daily)
http://www.jyb.cn/zgjyb/201807/t20180720_1159245.html (in Chinese)
2. Xinhua News Agency
<http://www.cankaoxiaoxi.com/china/20180706/2288971.shtml> (in Chinese)



A presentation of the discussions conducted by a group representative.



A group photo of participants in the ceremony to commemorate Syllff's twenty-fifth anniversary in China, taken outside the School of International Studies, Peking University.

3. *Renmin Ribao (People's Daily)*
<http://world.people.com.cn/n1/2018/0701/c1002-30097820.html> (in Chinese)
<http://j.people.com.cn/n3/2018/0702/c94473-9476836.html> (in Japanese)
<http://j.people.com.cn/n3/2018/0723/c94473-9483825.html> (exclusive interview in Japanese)
4. *Zhongguo Qingnian Bao (China Youth Daily)*
http://m.cyol.com/yuanchuang/2018-07/01/content_17342007.htm (in Chinese)
5. *People's China*
<https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/qL0hYEKIfVDJQSsoUiWjYA> (in Chinese)
http://www.peoplechina.com.cn/zrjl/201808/t20180821_800138749.html (in Japanese and Chinese)
http://www.peoplechina.com.cn/zrjl/201808/t20180821_800138750.html (exclusive interview in Japanese with Chinese subtitles)
6. China Radio International
http://japanese.cri.cn/app/20180701/197e47bf-48ec-21a9-6d90-58195a29ff8e.html?japaneseType=app&menuId=app_ja_09_11_101&from=groupmessage (in Japanese)
7. Dunjiaodu.com
<http://www.dunjiaodu.com/top/2018-07-02/3092.html> (in Chinese)
8. *Renmin Huabao (China Pictorial)*
http://www.rmhb.com.cn/wh/201807/t20180702_800134188.html (in Chinese)
9. *China Daily*
<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201807/04/WS5b3c64b2a3103349141e0a42.html> (in English)

August 31, 2018

Four Universities Celebrate 25th Anniversary

Yue Zhang

Sylff Association Secretariat

Following the ceremony to commemorate Sylff's twenty-fifth anniversary at Peking University on June 30, 2018, anniversary events were also held at four more universities—Lanzhou University, Jilin University, Nanjing University, and Fudan University—on July 2–5.

Sylff programs at these four prestigious schools, like Peking University, were established in 1992 based on the recommendations of China's Ministry of Education. Sylff became a major source of financial assistance for graduate students at the time, when scholarships were not yet widely available, thus laying the foundations for the development of China's higher education. The four universities administered their Sylff programs in distinctive ways, reflecting their respective regional and academic strengths, and developed many community and intellectual leaders over the past quarter century.

The commemorative ceremonies were attended by both current and graduated fellows, who enjoyed the opportunity to reminisce about Sylff's early years and to discuss their intentions to participate in Sylff's support programs, proposals for new programs, and approaches to energize the Sylff community in China.





Lanzhou fellows for 2018 receive certificates during the award ceremony.



Jilin University President Li Yuanyuan places a badge on Chairman Sasakawa's lapel in conferring the title of advisory professor.



A fellow, accompanied by her son, writes her name on a signboard during the Syllf twenty-fifth anniversary ceremony at Nanjing University.



Party Committee Secretary of Fudan University Jiao Yang, left, receives a certificate for the donation of the Ryoichi Sasakawa Memorial Library from Chairman Sasakawa.

During the anniversary event on July 2 at Lanzhou University, an award ceremony was held for fellows who were newly selected in fiscal 2018. Certificates were presented to the four fellows by Lanzhou University President Yan Chunhua and Syllf Association Chairman Yohei Sasakawa.

On July 3, during the ceremony at Jilin University, Chairman Sasakawa was conferred the title of advisory professor in honor of the long-term achievements and contributions that Syllf and other programs administered by the Nippon Foundation Group have made to leadership development at Jilin University.

The July 4 ceremony at Nanjing University was held at the International Conference Center of the university's new Xianlin Campus. The building epitomizes the university's efforts to fuse tradition and innovation over its nearly 120-year history and symbolizes China's rapid economic growth in recent years. An award ceremony was held for the four fellows who were selected in 2018, and Hong Xiu, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Philosophy, made an acceptance speech on behalf of the other fellows.

The anniversary event at Fudan University on July 5 also featured a donation ceremony for the Ryoichi Sasakawa Memorial Library. There will be an initial donation of 2,085 books to the Fudan University library this year.

November 28, 2019

Four Universities Celebrate 25th Anniversary in 2019

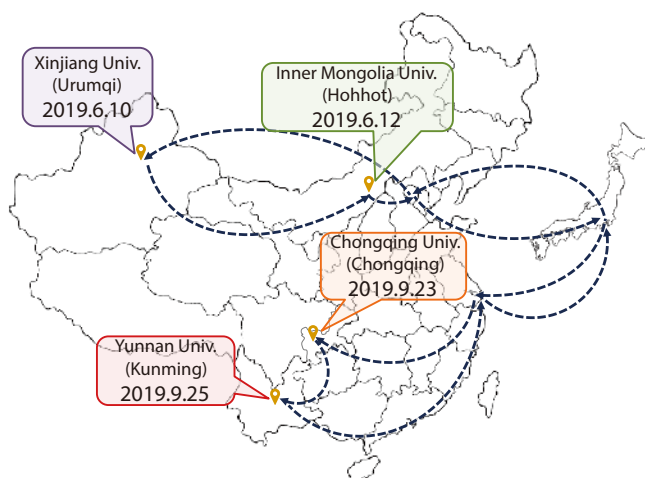
Yue Zhang

Sylff Association Secretariat

Sylff was first established in China in 1992, and five Chinese universities celebrated the program's twenty-fifth anniversary in 2018. In 2019, four more universities—Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, Chongqing, and Yunnan—which joined Sylff in 1994, also held their twenty-fifth anniversary ceremonies. These four universities were selected as Sylff institutions with the aim of selecting not only the best-known universities in the country but also those promoting ethnic diversity.

The celebrations began in June in northern China at Xinjiang University and Inner Mongolia University. The delegation from Japan visiting the two schools was led by Nippon Foundation and Sylff Association Chairman Yohei Sasakawa and included members of the Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research (Sylff Association secretariat) and the China Education Association for International Exchange.

Xinjiang University holds the largest number of Uyghur students in China and is committed to serving the needs of the regional community, respecting ethnic diversity, and advancing a dynamic international strategy. This year also marks the ninety-fifth anniversary of the university's founding.





Sylff Association Chairman Yohei Sasakawa speaks with Xinjiang fellows during a luncheon reception.



Mr. Sasakawa is interviewed by local reporters.

The anniversary event at Inner Mongolia University on June 12 featured a donation ceremony for the Ryoichi Sasakawa Memorial Library, to which over 6,000 books have been donated since its establishment in 2010. After the ceremony, Mr. Sasakawa held a group interview with members of the local media. One of the journalists, it turned out, was a Sylff fellowship recipient when she was studying for a master’s degree at Inner Mongolia University.

Events in southwestern China, meanwhile, were held in September, starting with a meeting of Chinese Sylff administrators on September 22 at Chongqing University. Administrators from all 10 Sylff universities in China (Fudan, Jilin, Lanzhou, Nanjing, Peking, Chongqing, Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Yunnan, and Sun Yat-sen) gathered to discuss concrete plans to focus Sylff funds on a smaller number of select fellows. Ten fellows who were selected in 2019 from the 10 universities were invited to speak about their research activities and gave inspiring presentations to meeting participants.

Chongqing University is also marking its ninetieth anniversary this year. “It’s a great honor to celebrate Sylff’s twenty-fifth anniversary at Chongqing in this very special year,” as Mr. Sasakawa noted at the ceremony on September 23. “Seeing how successfully the program has unfolded at the university, I feel very proud that we asked Chongqing University to join our Sylff community two decades ago. I hope that everyone here will work toward a brighter future for all, no matter what difficulties you may encounter along the way.”

The September 25 anniversary celebration at Yunnan University was attended



One of the journalists, who was a Sylff fellow at Inner Mongolia University, poses in traditional Mongol dress for a commemorative photo with Mr. Sasakawa.



Participants of the Sylff administrators' meeting at Chongqing University.

by over 200 participants. Yunnan fellow Liu Guoqian, who received a fellowship in 2007 and whose wife was also a fellowship recipient, made a speech during the ceremony, inviting laughter when he jokingly noted, “Thanks to Sylff, I was able to find not only my career path but also my life partner!”



The ceremony hall was filled with over 200 participants.

APPENDIX SUPPORT PROGRAM AWARDEES IN 2018-19

Name, Sylff institution & fellowship year

Sylff Project Grant		
Yutaka Tokushima	Keio University	2016
Louis Benjamin	University of the Western Cape	2001

Sylff Leaders Workshop		
Susan Rachel Banki	Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University	1999-2002
Stefan Buchholz	Ruhr University Bochum	2005
Ayo Chan	Peking University	2011
Nomingere Davaadorj	National Academy of Governance	2009
Iker Imanol De Urrutia	University of Deusto	2007
Maria Adelasia Divona	Institute of Political Education “Pedro Arrupe”	2004
Jennifer Dysart	York University	2007
Trisia Angela Farrelly	Massey University	2004-06
Ronya Foy Connor	Howard University	2013
Michaela Guldanova	Comenius University in Bratislava	2012
Evgeniy Gerchev Kandilarov	Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”	2003
Eleni Thomas Konstantinou	National and Kapodistrian University of Athens	2001
Rosangela Malachias	University of São Paulo	2001
Nuruddeen Mohammed Suleiman	University of Malaya	2013
Kabira Namit	Princeton University	2014-16
Anna Plater-Zyberk	Jagiellonian University	2014
Andrew Prosser	Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies	2004
Dejan Soskic	University of Belgrade	1991
Beverley Martha Thaver	University of the Western Cape	1996
Nermeen Varawalla	INSEAD	1999

Sylff Leadership Initiatives		
2018		
Tayseer Abu Odeh	University of Jordan	2007
Jennifer S. Moore	Massey University	2000
2019		
Shangrila Joshi Wynn	University of Oregon	2008
Mulatu Alemayehu Moges	University of Oslo	2013
Bruno Pegorari	University of São Paulo	2017
Sennane Gatakaa Riungu	University of Nairobi	2006-07

Sylff Research Abroad		
2018, 1R		
Frank Afari	Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies	2017
Anete Butkevica	University of Latvia	2017
Eunsung Cho	Columbia University	2017
Inga Hajdarowicz	Jagiellonian University	2017
Corinna Land	Ruhr University Bochum	2017-18
Yan Liu	Chongqing University	2013
Rumi Naito	Columbia University	2009
Nick Turman-Bryant	Portland State University	2016
Pieter De Vlieger	University of Michigan	2013
Marcin Wrobel	Jagiellonian University	2018
Anna Bozena Wroblewska	Jagiellonian University	2018
Irene Zamora	Waseda University	2017
2018, 2R		
Pablo Cortes Ferrandez	University of Deusto	2018
Tugce Kelleci	Ankara University	2018
Katerina Klinkova	Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”	2017
Briana Meier	University of Oregon	2018
Eitan Paul	The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy	2015
Neni T. Susilawati	University of Indonesia	2011
Shalon Webber-Heffernan	York University	2017-19
Anna Zadrozna	University of Oslo	2017
Kyla Zaret	Portland State University	2018
2019, 1R		
Yance Arizona	University of Indonesia	2011
Benedikt Behlert	Ruhr University Bochum	2018
Wanxiang Cai	Chongqing University	2016

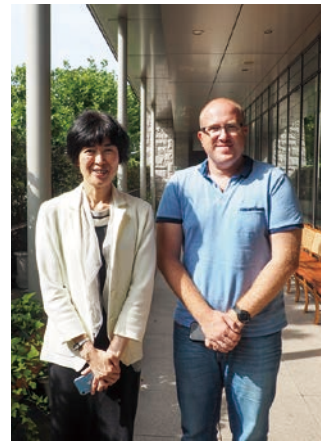
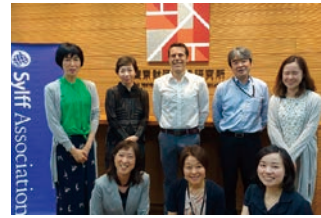
Matías Ariel Chiappe Ippolito	El Colegio de México	2013-15
Olivia de Quintana Figueiredo Pasqualetto	University of São Paulo	2019
Ferretti Fernandez Flavia Pierina	University of Chile	2012
Robert Haua	University of Auckland	2017-19
Milutin Jesic	University of Belgrade	2018
Cynthia Kwakyewah	York University	2016-17
Xiao Li	Chongqing University	2015
Milos Markovic	University of Belgrade	2017
UK Mong Marma	Ruhr University Bochum	2018
Fadzayi Marcia Maruza	University of the Western Cape	2018
Tomas Michalek	Comenius University in Bratislava	2018
Avia Moore	York University	2016-18
Anna Nakamura	Keio University	2017
Lurian Pires Klein	University of Coimbra	2017
Shounak Set	Jadavpur University	2013
Erin Upton	Portland State University	2018
Xinming Xia	Peking University	2019
2019, 2R		
Tesfaye Desalegne Abebe	Howard University	2018-19
Gautam Anand	Oregon State University	2019
Sérgio Barbosa	University of Coimbra	2019
Ergina Bonori	National and Kapodistrian University of Athens	2016
Fernando Caixeta Lisboa	University of Coimbra	2018
Christian Criado-Perez	UNSW Business School	2018-20
Mohamed Duale	York University	2016-18
Andrejs Gusacenko	University of Latvia	2019
Johana Klusek	Charles University	2018
Tembile Kulati	University of the Western Cape	2018
Herve Roland Memiaghe	University of Oregon	2019
Enrico Nano	Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies	2018
Abhijit Sadhukhan	Jadavpur University	2016
Sara Swetzoff	Howard University	2018-20
Michael Thier	University of Oregon	2015
Daniel Robert Thomas	Columbia University	2018
Jinjin Wu	Columbia University	2017
Sally Chengji Xing	Columbia University	2017-19

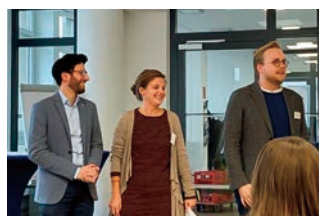
Local Association Networking Support		
2018		
Jadavpur University (India)		
Sritama Chatterjee		2017
Payoshni Mitra		2005-07
Sujaan Mukherjee		2016-18
Auddy Purbasha		2014-17
Bandyopadhyay Ritajyoti		2006-08
Massey University (New Zealand)		
Tess Bartlett	Massey University	2008
Trisia Farrelly	Massey University	2004-06
Amy (Chih-Hsin) Liang	The University of Auckland	2014-15
Giulia Lowe	University of Auckland	2016
Meg Stairmand	University of Waikato	2017
El Colegio de México (Mexico)		
Saul Espino Armendariz		2016-17
Angelica Maria Ospina Escobar		2014-15
Alejandra González		2015-16
Erick Serna Luna		2016
Marcela Mendez Vazquez		2007-09
University of Nairobi (Kenya)		
Stephen Muthusi Katembu		2014-16
Socrates Kraidon Majune		2013-15
Alexina Nyaboke Marucha		2014-16
Jacinta Mwendu Maweu		2004-05
Awuor Ponge		2007-08
2019		
Jadavpur University (India)		
Sreerupa Bhattacharya		2018
Sawon Chakraborty		2016-18
Sudeshna Dutta		2014-17
Amrita Mukherjee		2018
Sujaan Mukherjee		2016-18
Moitrayee Sengupta		2018
University of Nairobi (Kenya)		
Stephen Muthusi Katembu		2014-16
Socrates Kraidon Majune		2013-15
Alexina Nyaboke Marucha		2014-16
Jacinta Mwendu Maweu		2004-05
Awuor Ponge		2007-08



Leaders with a Mission

Meetings with Sylff fellows 2018-19





The Sylff Association was launched to support fellows' development as leaders and to encourage closer interaction among all Association members. The secretariat learned about the activities of fellows embodying the Sylff Mission not only through their "Voices" articles but also by meeting them in person and hearing about their aspirations for the betterment of society. These photos are of meetings with Association members worldwide in 2018 and 2019. Also, congratulations go to nine universities in China on their twenty-fifth Sylff anniversary, particularly Peking University and Chongqing University, which hosted meetings of Sylff administrators and separate meetings of select fellows in China in 2018 and 2019, respectively.



SYLFF SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Research

Sylff Research Abroad (SRA) For Current and Future Doctoral Students



SRA supports academic research related to a doctoral dissertation, conducted at a higher education institution, research institute, think tank, non-governmental organization, private firm, etc. in a foreign country. Applicants are limited to past or current fellowship recipients who are PhD candidates. Up to US\$5,000 is awarded per successful applicant.

Social Action

Sylff Leadership Initiatives (SLI) For Past and Current Fellowship Recipients



SLI supports Sylff fellows wishing to undertake a social action project or to organize a forum, conference, seminar, or workshop addressing social issues. Projects involving one or more Sylff fellows are eligible for an SLI award of up to US\$10,000. The organizing team may include non-fellows in a subordinate or supporting capacity.

Sylff Project Grant (SPG) For Past and Current Fellowship Recipients



The Sylff Project Grant is intended to support fellows who, for a significant portion of their careers, have been actively and deeply committed to helping resolve issues confronting contemporary society. This grant supports innovative, pioneering social action projects led by Sylff fellows with an award of up to US\$100,000. SPG assumes larger-scale projects than SLI that can be sustained, enhanced, and expanded over time.

Networking

Sylff Leaders Workshop For Past Fellowship Recipients



The Sylff Leaders Workshop provides graduated fellows from diverse backgrounds a forum for engaging in dialogue on current social issues. In addition to learning new facts and perspectives, participants discuss philosophical, ethical, moral, and value-oriented questions. During two, weeklong sessions in Japan, fellows also deepen their ties with one another and gain new insights into the host country.

Local Association Networking Support (LANS) For Past and Current Fellowship Recipients



LANS facilitates the organization of gatherings and other activities by groups of Sylff alumni, including local Sylff associations. Groups of five or more fellows and/or alumni from the same institution can apply for a maximum of US\$5,000 per gathering to cover the long-distance transportation costs of participating fellows.

Sylff Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF) For Past and Current Fellowship Recipients



SDRF supports relief activities led by Sylff fellows in the wake of large-scale natural disasters occurring in the vicinity of Sylff institutions. The Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research donates US\$50,000 per incident and pools donations from other Sylff Association members.

