

Centre for Documentation & Area-Transcultural Studies
International Conference

**"Creating an Archive Today:
Decisions, Uses, Documentation"**

Abstracts

Date: 18th (Thu.)-19th (Fri.) December 2003
Venue: Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Room #115

Abstract

18th (Thursday)

10:00-10:30

Amalgam and anomaly: the India Office Records

Graham Shaw

In this paper I will consider the India Office Records (IOR) as a case-study in archival creation, management, and accessibility i.e. to show that the life-cycle of such a large historical archive is rarely if ever one of simple linear development, or of unfailingly responsible stewardship, or of consistent public access. What we nowadays refer to in shorthand as the 'India Office Records' is in fact the amalgam of several different archives - the East India Company archives, the Board of Control archives, and the post-1858 'India Office Records proper'. Throughout its life IOR has been subject to adjustments/distortions in scope as political events/policies intervened/changed - above all the transition from East India Company 'business archives' to India Office 'government records' in the 1860s.

I will also show that the successive mergings of these 'archival identities' has led to blurring and obfuscation of the historical record. The way the archive was first 'professionally' classified in the 1950s inevitably reflected the India Office Records in its final incarnation as India and Pakistan gained independence, and has served as a viable framework for access. But that classification has serious drawbacks in terms of overall intelligibility of the archival structure (fonds, sub-fonds, and main series). We may not be able to correct this physically 'on the shelf' but can do so virtually as we automate our listings.

The notion of the whole of 'IOR' as a usable historical archive really only dates from post-1947. Although prior to that date the pre-1858 East India Company and Board of Control archives were generally publicly accessible, access to the post-1858 files was closely controlled and granted only on special application to the Secretary of State for India.

Among the archives of UK departments of state, IOR has always been an anomaly. It was not subject to the normal internal departmental review procedures and was not handed over to the Public Record Office of the day - it remained departmental property. Access to the whole of IOR was only regularised once the Public Records Act of 1958 introduced the 50 year rule.

Having ironically ended up as part of the collection of the UK's national library rather than its national archives, I will show ways in which closer links with the archival sector proper are being developed, so that IOR can be seen and exploited to better advantage in relation to other government archives.

From destruction of records to recovery of memory: Creating archives in Asia ANDO, Masahito

In order to critically engage with the so-called revisionist historiography regarding Japanese colonial occupation and wars, it is essential to share archival (and other) materials, the basis of all historical understanding, with other Asian peoples. Sharing records means digging up and acquiring the remaining records, organizing them, and creating an archival system to which members of the public have an easy access. At the same time, as a step towards these goals, it is important to trace how archival materials were destroyed in the process of colonial occupation and wars, that is, to recover the history of records destruction. This is also related to the contemporary need of protecting records from the threat of present and future wars.

The paper begins with a consideration of how and why the **sharing of historical understanding between nations** should start with the **sharing of archival materials**. I then go on to examine the **destruction of records** in the Asian wars of the twentieth century with specific reference to the cases of China and Malaya during the Pacific War. Finally, I present my own proposals for **recovering memory** and creating modern archives suited to the needs of twenty-first century Asia. I do so by posing the question, "How can we best compensate lost records and recover memory by digging up remaining materials?" It goes without saying that in giving practical shape to my suggestions regarding this issue, international co-operation will be crucially significant.

Education & Memory - Heritage Galleries in Singapore

G. Uma Devi

The possibilities of Oral History in the educational curriculum are considerable. The focus of my paper is to discuss the opportunities and explore ways in which Oral History can be used strategically for maximum effect. Use of Oral History in schools can be beneficial in various ways :

- it can act as a source of content
- it can be a way of developing skills across and beyond the institutional framework
- it can be a vehicle for analytical and research skills
- it sharpens interpretative skills
- imbues good communication and listening skills.

I will go on to explain in the paper to provide an overview of oral history centre in Singapore, the projects undertaken, educational packages produced and the training given to schools. I will also go on to explore how we've used Oral History methodology and collection in setting-up Heritage Galleries in schools - a growing area in the school curriculum and its purpose and benefits to both students and the community at large. Today's contemporary society faced with the onslaught of the mass media and dependence on technology has created in our young a different value system and lifestyle. Students today struggle (at least in Singapore) to make sense of the past and its relevance to their lives.

Our history and heritage, if interpreted and reconstructed according to the present context, can help students cope with changing times and identities. Heritage is the process of learning who we are and it is when students begin to investigate deeper into the past, ask questions that concern them, that they can make sense of who they are and their place in this changing society.

In this respect, the use of oral history and memory can aid students tremendously in defining historical issues and design the necessary framework for interpretation in the context of a Heritage Gallery. Questions such as what aspect of history, whose history, determining the timeframe of when and how decisions were made all come into play and are represented in such a project. The paper will look at the types of projects undertaken as part of the gallery set-up, issues, challenges and final products.

Shared Patrimony: An Archival *Double Entendre*

James Nye

Area studies scholars often immerse themselves in the object of their studies with a commitment tantamount to adoption of the culture. In important ways, the target region 's cultural patrimony is internalized and **shared by** the researcher.

One of the best ways to support deep engagement by scholars is by sharing archived physical artifacts and surrogates - that is, cultural patrimony - across international boundaries. Frequently intellectual artifacts are treated as local property exclusively for local consumption or, if taken out of country, as booty. An alternative and more desirable approach would treat dispersed holdings as accessible without respect to a scholar's location. Under such an open approach the patrimony would be **shared for** use by researchers.

This paper takes a decidedly practical approach to the question of shared archives. It begins with descriptions of several South Asia library programs in which the University of Chicago has been engaged over the past decade. Assumptions motivating those programs, descriptions of their establishment and maintenance, intended audiences, and projections of future directions are provided. The specific programs and projects include: the Microfilming of Indian Publications Project, the Raja Muthiah Research Library, the Official Publications of India, the Urdu Research Library Consortium, the Digital South Asia Library, the Center for South Asia Libraries, and the South Asia Union Catalogue. All of these programs are focused on ink prints as opposed to manuscripts. The rationale for this focus is described. The predominant modes of preservation and delivery have been largely non-digital, with the exception of reference resources, images, and finding aids. The reasons for those more traditional approaches are discussed. The challenges of collaboration with overseas partners are considered. Finally, the paper addresses the potential for replication of archival approaches based on sharing, with special reference to the Centre for Documentation and Area-Trans-cultural Studies initiative to create an " historical materials hub " in Japan.

10:00-10:30

**Another history, another view:
Nineteenth-century Javanese Islamic didactic texts**

Yumi Sugahara

This paper examines the structure and content of mid-nineteenth century manuscripts of Javanese Islamic leaders, written as didactic texts, for preaching constructs of the 'ideal Muslim life' to Javanese villagers. Deliberately designed for ordinary, 'ignorant' rural folk, not just for pupils of religious schools, these manuscripts began to be published by the end of century. This century had seen a fresh wave of Islamization in Java, marked as it was by a considerable increase both in the number of pilgrims to Mecca and Islamic schools in the local villages. Yet, this history has been largely ignored so far, for Indonesian Islam is usually seen to exercise a cultural influence in the modern period only after the nationalist movements of the early twentieth century. Quite erroneously, it is viewed as something separate from Indonesia's 'national history', something that was grafted to the 'pure', 'original' essentialized Javanese culture only after 1912 or so as a result of the Islamic reformation.

The chief reason for this flaw stems from a dominant trend in Indonesian historiography. Most historians of the Dutch colonial period in Indonesia, including Indonesians themselves, have based their work on Dutch historical documents. Manuscripts written in indigenous languages, such as Javanese and Malay, have seldom been used by historians although philologists have examined them for purpose of the study of 'literature'.

The origins of Javanese philology can be traced back to the beginning of the nineteenth century when the Dutch began the occupation of Java. Dutch scholars collected and studied the voluminous manuscripts of medieval Java's court literatures with the assistance of contemporary court poets who possessed the requisite knowledge. This academic activity produced what came to be called 'Javanology', a discipline developed in nineteenth-century Netherlands.

Dutch Javanologists were enthusiastic about locating the 'original', 'pure' Javanese culture, 'unpolluted' yet by Islam. For them, Islam was simply a superficial gloss on Javanese civilization. They compiled, in this manner, histories that viewed the origins of the 'essential Java' in the great Majapahit empire of the fourteenth century. Twentieth century Indonesian nationalists, usually western-educated, often used this 'national history' therefore, is still being written on the basis of histories produced by colonial Dutch scholars, something in serious need of revision.

'Courts, ship-rolls and letters: reflections of the Indian labour diaspora'

Crispin Bates

There are two main areas at the heart of my research interests. The first is marginality - specifically the lives of tribals (*adivasis*) and peasants as they are affected by environmental, political and economic change in colonial central India. The second is diasporas - the understudied phenomena of labour migration within and beyond the shores of India. To a large extent the two are related: migration being transforming in its effects on community and identity or otherwise a means of escape from the very same. Relocation raises further questions about the conceptualisation of identities, which are often far from 'local' in the first instance. Subaltern networks were of considerable importance in the mobilisation of Indian labour (particularly migration overseas) but have been comparatively neglected by historians. Whilst they functioned ostensibly as a vehicle for the subordination of labour, they were often over time, and with varying degrees of success, appropriated by the subordinated, becoming both a means of socio-cultural reassertion and an economic strategy. Peeling away the labels which defined and continue to essentialise the histories of Indian workers in the British Empire, this paper will examine the sources available for the study of how the coolie, convict or slave made his or her own world and the means they found for surviving within the interstices of the colonial system.

After the Archive: Reflections of an Indian Historian

Shahid Amin

The paper seeks to do three things. It begins by chronicling a personal journey into the archives of colonial India, largely in the smaller towns of Uttar Pradesh, to touch upon the conditions of access and denials under which scholars have to work even today. It then presents an overview of the phenomenal amount of documents that still lies stacked in the District Vernacular and English Records Rooms in the Gangetic Plains, alluding in the process to the substantial institutional hurdles that need to be overcome to make these records available as regular, scholar-seeking archives. Finally, I try and develop the idea of 'Historical Fieldwork', imbricating the time of record (the archive) and the time of recall (fieldwork), in ways which enable a dialogue between the historian and inheritors of events at the present site of past actions. Such a to-and-fro movement, the paper suggests, is a requirement for the writing of alternative histories -- histories of 'recalcitrant lives' and 'recalcitrant events'. I use the shorthand 'recalcitrant lives/events' to refer to those submerged stories that can be spun as tellable tales only by arrogating to themselves the criteria of the 'historic', in ways which alter materially the terms on which the Big Story (e.g. Gandhian Nationalism) is told.