

Discovering the Indian Ocean World **Gyres**
~Indian Ocean and beyond~

Date : January 21st (Sat), 22nd (Sun), 23rd (Mon), 2023

Venue : Conference Room 4, National Museum of Ethnology (2nd floor), Osaka, Japan
+Online via Zoom

If the symposium is to be held exclusively online due to the COVID-19 situation, we will notify it by January 20th via email to whom registered their participations, as well as through our project website.

Language : English (Simultaneous interpretation will be provided)

Registration deadline : January 11th, 2023

Attend on site at National Museum of Ethnology:
<https://forms.gle/LQBRFgQCshqzARns8>

Attend online via Zoom:
<https://forms.gle/n13zj1r0X72zzUM9>

Zoom URL will be sent before January 20th, 2023, to all who registered.
On site attendance is limited up to the first 40 registrant.

Organized by: MIH4 Indian Ocean World Studies Project
*Our project website will be available in late November.

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Discovering the Indian Ocean World Gyres: Indian Ocean and beyond

Abstracts

“Mocha Coffee” in Three Ways: Plant, Brand and Blend

Hideaki Suzuki

National Museum of Ethnology

This paper traces three paths taken by “Mocha coffee” across and beyond the Western Indian Ocean. The first path is taken when it is still a plant. Native to North East Africa, prior to the eighteenth century *coffea arabica* circulated largely from its origin in Yemen, but increasingly since the eighteenth century it has travelled all over the world. It has been transplanted from place to place and numerous varieties have been produced, and all these *coffea arabica* species together currently make up the most important forms of the *coffea* plant for beverage usage. The second way coffee circulates is as brands. Even though *coffea arabica* has been cultivated in numerous locations all over the world, varieties from elsewhere are distinguished from those exported from the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, which were always referred to as “Mocha coffee”, as if “Mocha coffee” had been established as a particular variety of coffee as diversification and the growing of coffee elsewhere gathered pace. Thus, the first and the second circulations are somewhat parallel phenomena. This paper will therefore examine how the special fame of “Mocha coffee” became established. The third path – or trajectory – of *coffea arabica* has been as blended coffee. A major aspect of the richness of coffee culture is the blending of it, as the combination of different varieties of coffee beans creates totally unique and variously attractive aromas and tastes, which of course people like. Interestingly, “Mocha” has been used in branding exercises, such as in “Mocha Java” which first appeared in New York in the 1920s. However, this supposed “Mocha coffee” blend was often controversial, since in not a few cases no genuine “Mocha coffee” beans were used to create it. In fact, it even on occasion fell foul of the so-called “misbranding law” in the United States. This paper traces those three paths taken by “Mocha coffee”, tracing them within and beyond the Western Indian Ocean. The paper therefore offers the potential to grasp the value of one particular material cultural aspect of the Indian Ocean World.

From the Edge of the Indian Ocean: Qat and the people who trade and consume it

Reiko Otsubo

Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

Qat, or *catba edulis*, is a plant of Ethiopian origin, the fresh leaves of which produce a stimulant effect when chewed. The plant has long been cultivated and consumed in Yemen and East Africa. Coffee is another plant of Ethiopian origin, the beans of which, exported originally from Mocha in Yemen to the world, are the ingredient of a beverage now consumed worldwide. The difference between them is that qat leaves must be consumed as fresh as possible, while coffee beans can be processed for much longer storage.

Qat consumption spread, however, as the means to transport it were developed. In Ethiopia, the railway built in 1902 brought qat to the coastal areas and in the 1940s it was brought by air to Aden, a city located on the opposite side of the Red Sea. In Yemen, motor transport arrived at some time in the 1970s, which made transport of qat to the cities easier, and qat consumption consequently increased there.

In the middle of the century qat was traded briskly in the Red Sea areas with Ethiopia and North Yemen exporting it to Aden, Somaliland, and Djibouti. Later, government policies changed and attempts were made to prohibit or at least to regulate the trade in qat and its consumption.

At the end of the century when the Somali Civil War raged and many Somali refugees spread around the world, qat became again an internationally traded commodity, exported mainly from Ethiopia and Kenya. However, it should be noted that qat has become an illegal drug in Western countries not because of its pharmacological effects but because of the social problems which refugee Somali people have caused in their host countries.

This presentation will discuss how development of a means of transport influenced the qat trade and qat consumption.

A World made from Scrap: Scrap Circulation in and beyond Ahmedabad, India

Ayako Iwatani
Kyoto University

The scrap metal business is a significant industry in India today, with India the second largest importer of scrap iron in the world in 2020. Domestically, too, many tons of scrap are collected daily for recycling. This presentation focuses on the scrap metal/waste recycling business which has developed over the last fifty or sixty years in Gujarat, the rise of which came after India opened its market and new types of waste increased. Such new forms of waste offered excellent business opportunities to the urban poor who had been working in informal sectors. Waste circulates through local community networks, as scrap is collected and sent to warehouses called “godowns”, and then to mills or pellet factories where the scrap material is recycled. The product is then exported to Bangladesh, Nepal, and Africa. Electrical waste is of particularly high value: some of it is exported to Japan where, as rare metals, it is in great demand. Scrap has brought with it various by-products as well such as the “scrap palaces” of waste pickers. By following the flow of scrap material within and beyond Ahmedabad city, this presentation illuminates the world that had grown up from the entanglement of human beings and non-human materials such as scrap, or what is precious and what is waste.

A blank canvas for fashion: *merikani* cotton cloth in the 19th century

Sarah Fee

Royal Ontario Museum and University of Toronto

Taking as a point of departure this workshop's theme of dynamic flows of goods and people, how certain goods flow and counterflow in multiple directions, this paper explores unbleached cotton sheeting, aka 'merkiani', as a fashion phenomenon in the western Indian Ocean from ca. 1840-1940, particularly in eastern Africa. The many studies by economic historians on *merikani* cloth – which was industrially manufactured in American and European mills – focus nearly exclusively on its first (sometime) life as currency, thus overlooking its afterlives, what happened after the bolts of cloth left ports and market towns and the hands of middlemen to be avidly consumed and modified for clothing. It may be difficult for us today to see unbleached cotton cloth as fashion, but in places where bast, bark or leaf fibres or animal skins had predominated, *merikani* offered supple cloth that could be wrapped, transformed and embellished in numerous ways, to local tastes. Through their *merikani* consumption (and, to a lesser extent, indigo dyed *kaniki*), eastern Africans actively participated in the second Global Cotton Revolution (Riello 2011), with as Prestholdt (2004, 2014) has observed “global consequences”.

Creolising swirls, transoceanic gyres: Creolisation theory and transcultural phenomena in the Indian Ocean world

Ananya Jahanara Kabir
King's College, London

My paper offers an updated model of creolisation as a heuristic tool to explicate transcultural processes in the Indian Ocean world. It will depart from a commonly-held binaristic understanding of creolisation as the product of opposed cultural entities. Instead, I will argue for swirled and layered vectors that explicate better the relationship of colonial and pre-colonial temporalities, as well as the involvement of multiple players (merchants; missionaries; colonisers; the enslaved and the indentured; adventurers) within the Indian Ocean creolising matrix. Not only will these elements help us complicate theories of creolisation generally reliant on the 'master-slave' complex arising from Plantation society, it will also reveal how consideration of cultural phenomena in the Indian Ocean world cannot delink it from a transoceanic perspective, and how the flows privileged by transcultural theories cannot make sense without taking into account the sites where those flows converged and diverged.

**Indians in Swahili Literature:
Comparing Vuta N'kuvute and Propaganda Literature**

Fuko Onoda
Osaka University

With the implementation in Tanzania of socialist policies post-independence, Arabs and Indians who had previously been the country's political and economic ruling classes were now seen as exploiters of local Africans, as were Europeans. Their position was used to legitimise socialist policy through a discourse that socialism would eliminate their power and bring with it equality to Tanzanian society. The stereotypical portrayal of Arabs and Indians was also repeated in propaganda literature promoting socialist policies that emerged at the same time. Indians in particular, who formed a closed community through endogamy, were repeatedly ridiculed as shopkeepers who spoke a strange version of the Swahili language and despised the locals. However, Shafi Adam Shafi's *Vuta N'kuvute* (Tug of War), an excellent Swahili realist novel, depicts an ultimately tragic love story between an Indian woman and an African man who joins the revolution in Zanzibar. By comparing the representation of Indians in *Vuta N'kuvute* with propaganda literature, this presentation will examine the social positioning of Indians in East Africa and the representation of Indians in Swahili literature.

**Spatial Organization of Port Cities in the Indian Ocean World:
From the Perspective of the Distribution of Communities**

Shu Yamane
Kwansei Gakuin University

TBA

**Two Currents in Ramayana:
Ramayana Productions from Singapore and its Gyre to the Global Indian World**

Yoshiaki Takemura
National Institutes for the Humanities

The COVID-19 pandemic measures compelled many people to stay at home yet, in a clear indication of the influence of the ancient epic of the Ramayana on contemporary Indian society, during the “lock down” the re-broadcast live-action version of the Ramayana was India’s most viewed television program. The Ramayana has in fact deeply penetrated the lives and customs of the people in Southeast Asia and has contributed significantly to the formation of the local culture, where many countries underwent the process of Indianization between the 5th and 14th centuries CE. The Ramayana is not only appreciated as an epic poem but has also been integrated into performing arts such as song, dance, theatre, and shadow puppetry, as well as painting, sculpture, and architecture. In short, it has developed in its own unique way while fusing with local culture. On the other hand, while the Ramayana has conventionally been accepted mainly within the Indian community in Singapore, where many Indian immigrants have traditionally resided, in recent years it has also come to be discussed within a national framework. This study will therefore focus on two Ramayana productions performed by Indian dance troupes in Singapore, and examine the importance of the Ramayana in linking multiculturalism at the national level as well as the perception of Indianness across the globe. It will also argue for the Indian diaspora's valorization of the Ramayana and its gyre to the global Indian world through the Ramayana production.

Ecological factors behind the circulation of Indian traders in the Indian Ocean

Claude Markovits

Le Centre national de la recherche scientifique

The paper attempts to link the circulation of Indian traders in the Indian Ocean with ecological factors. Starting from the fact that most of these traders originated from « dry areas » of Northwestern India such as Gujarat, Sindh, Rajasthan and the Punjab rather than from areas of permanent moisture such as the Konkan and Malabar coasts, it develops an argument about the specific conditions in those dry areas that helped nurture successful trading communities and networks that expanded across the entire Indian Ocean, from medieval to modern times. These had to do with the particular ecology of these areas, where zones of semi-nomadic pastoralism alternated with oases of sedentary cultivation, stimulating exchange between the ghee and wool of the former and the grain of the latter. Thus active markets dotted the area, and traders, faced with particular climatic uncertainties developed at an earlier date advanced financial instruments such as hundis (native bills of exchange) and futures trading (fatka) that set them at advantage vis-à-vis other trading groups in India and allowed them at an early date to expand all the way to Muscat and Aden in the western Indian Ocean and to Malacca and beyond in the eastern seas.

**Intersecting land and maritime trade networks in Southwest Asia:
the Afghan arms trade in cooperation with various trade networks at the turn of the
19th and 20th centuries**

Ichiro Ozawa
Ritsumeikan University

In this presentation I consider the intersecting land and maritime trade networks of various ethnic groups in Southwest Asia, through the analysis of the trade activities of Afghan traders in the early 20th century. During a brief period from the end of the 19th century until the mid-1910s the Afghans, who had engaged in Eurasian land trade since ancient times, rapidly expanded their trade in arms. In doing so they not only conducted caravan trade in the area spanning India's Northwest Frontier, Afghanistan, and Baluchistan, but also set about seafaring in the Gulf of Oman with the intention of purchasing arms at Muscat. I shall try to show that those trade activities of the Afghans were realized through the intersection of their trade networks with those of various ethnic groups from Southwest Asia, including such indigenous groups as Baluchs, Persians, Indians, and even French merchants active in the region. My analysis presents concrete examples of Afghan cooperation with other groups, not only in various trade processes such as financing, seafaring, transaction, and transport, but also in their evasion of the efforts of the British to suppress arms trading by the locals.

**Indian Social Networks and the Role of Intermediaries
in Indian Ocean Labour Migration in the Colonial Era.**

Crispin Bates
Sunway University

It has long been assumed that labour migration in the colonial era India was controlled by the demands of plantation owners and the coercive operations of colonial recruiting agents, supported by the Government of India. This paper will argue that migration was on the contrary largely under the control of Indian recruiting agents, many of them themselves former labourers, and that Indian social networks rather more than colonial policies, were central to the development of migration streams.

**Different Migration Patterns of the Hadrami sada from a Comparison of
the al-‘Aydarus and the al-Habshi families**

Kazuhiro Arai
Keio University

It is generally understood that kinship influenced the migration patterns of the people of the Hadramawt region in South Arabia, and the Hadrami sada, who trace their descent from the Prophet, are no exception to that. It is true that members of each family can be found in any of the major regions around the Indian Ocean, namely East Africa, India, and Southeast Asia, but particular families tend to prefer a particular region as their migration destination. How and why did that preference arise? By utilizing biographical compilation produced from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries and drawing up genealogical charts, the present study attempts to explore the differences in the migration patterns of individual families. The particular objects of this analysis are the al-Habshi and the al-‘Aydarus families, two highly renowned kinship groups in present-day Hadramawt and regions across the Indian Ocean. The two focal points are first, the times when those families began to expand within Hadramawt and attained positions of great influence in the ‘Alawi Tariqa, which was a Sufi order of the Hadrami sada; and secondly their relationship with migration to the Indian Ocean maritime world. In the end, the presenter makes the case for a migration pattern of Hadrami sada families both in and outside Hadramawt.

The Haddadian paradigm in the Indian Ocean. Tracing movements retold

Anne K. Bang
University of Bergen

This paper aims to explore two processes: The spread of the so-called “Haddadian paradigm” of Islamic practice in the Indian Ocean – and the ways in which this spread has been narrated in hagiographic literature from within the tradition. The “Haddadian paradigm” is a phrase coined in 2021 by Ismail Farjie Alatas,¹ and refers to new forms of religious authority emerging in Indonesia in the 19th and 20th centuries. The term refers to the Hadrami Alawi scholar Abd Allah b. Alawi al-Haddad (d. 1720), whose texts expressing Islamic devotion became widespread in the Indian Ocean, from East Africa to Indonesia.

Several studies have taken note of how new authority structures were formed on the basis of the “Haddadian paradigm” and how these came to express a new, internalized Islamic morality. This paper asks whether this is in fact one paradigmatic model or several gyres in a wider ocean. It aims to answer this question by 1) outlining the spread of the Haddadian practices in East Africa and Indonesia, and 2) analyzing how these narratives were framed in the 19th and 20th centuries. Rather than focusing on how authority structures were formed, this paper highlights the stories that formed around the people who spread the “Haddadian paradigm” and their connections with the communities in which they lived.

¹ I. F. Alatas, *What is Religious Authority? Cultivating Islamic Communities in Indonesia*, Princeton University Press, 2021.

Introspection of Religious Identity across the Indian Ocean:

Reading ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Mundhirī’s Works

Yohei Kondo

Fukuoka Women’s University

Like the Sunnīs and the Shī‘īs, the Ibāḍīs were an Islamic denomination, and they based themselves on the Arabian Peninsula and in both North and East Africa. Some Ibāḍīs crossed the Indian Ocean to settle in Oman and lived there in island towns like Kilwa and Zanzibar. The extant sources indicate that while on the one hand it is true that within the religious diversity of the region many Ibāḍīs kept in touch with each other and tried to keep their religious unity, on the other hand it is conceivable that Ibāḍī scholars on the Swahili coast modified their religious teaching and practice or made minor doctrinal changes among themselves in order to reduce tensions and more easily co-exist with other local Muslims.

The present study will read the works of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Mundhirī (1866–1925), who was Ibāḍī qāḍī of Zanzibar from 1902 to his death. The author will focus mainly on his *Bayān al-Ḥaqq li-Ahl al-Ṣidq*, extant presently as a manuscript. By analysing the works we shall discover what he and the other Ibāḍīs in Zanzibar recognised as important points to defend in their teachings, and what they considered less significant. We shall see too that they wished to retain their religious identity with the heartland of Ibāḍism in Oman, across the Indian Ocean.

**A new aspect of Hinduism in the diaspora and its significance:
Tamil ritual worship at a Hindu temple in Jakarta, Indonesia**

Hiroshi Yamashita
Tohoku University

The diasporic environment imposes many restrictions on all ethnic religions brought with them by immigrants, and that is especially true of Hinduism. After all, Hinduism remains a minority religion everywhere other than in its homeland of India. Religious practice naturally entails great difficulty under the conditions experienced in the Indian diaspora, where Hindus are far from home and never anything other than an absolute minority. However, it cannot be denied on the other hand that there are also positive aspects prompted by the inevitable restrictions and transformations in a foreign environment. We can therefore find elements in Hindu ritual practised in the diaspora reminiscent of the mechanism of historical evolution, as well as various offshoots that potentially promote the development of the religion. In that sense, the existence of such unavoidable restrictions and difficulties means that diasporic Hinduism can even be regarded as having potential for future development. In this paper, based mainly on concrete examples taken from a Shiva temple located in the Jakarta Metropolitan area but with reference to other cases in the Indian diaspora, we will explore new horizons of ritual Hinduism found in the diaspora as the forefront of the development of Hindu practice.

Shirdi Sai Baba's Oceanic Transmigrations

Smriti Srinivas

University of California, Davis

This paper focuses on the seminal and enigmatic South Asian saint, Shirdi Sai Baba (d. 1918), whose healing energies and teachings presented manifold spiritual possibilities to the many castes, communities, and classes who sought his presence and intervention in Shirdi, India, from the late nineteenth century onward. Global transmigrations of Baba's life lessons and blessings, especially after the 1960s, have occurred through several repertoires and mobilities as well as via refabulations of spaces around the world. Present today in two-dimensional images and figural sculptures in innumerable home altars, roadside shrines, temples, films, and digital media, the saint remains untrammelled by religious and communal boundaries not only in South Asia but also globally. In this paper, I focus on his oceanic urban transmigrations based on my long term engagement with Sai Baba (e.g. Srinivas 2008; Srinivas, Jeychandran, Roberts 2021). I ask: through the medium of the saint, can we think about the Ocean as a space for conceptual possibilities and humanistic/ethnographic methods that take us beyond traditional approaches to Indian Ocean studies that privilege geographical boundaries and area-based studies?