

Companies in Asia: Law, History, Empire

3 & 4 October 2024

University of Hong Kong Faculty of Law



Trial of Four British Seamen at Canton, 1807, Scene Inside the Court. © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
FACULTY OF LAW
香港大學法律學院



澳門大學
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UNIVERSITY OF MACAU



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Companies in Asia: Law, History Empire Workshop

Companies have a long history in Asia. They are entangled with empires old and new, with multiple forms of government, rule and administration, with practices of territorialisation and deterritorialisation, waging war and making treaties, and the development and state-making projects. This workshop will include papers from several disciplines which engage with questions of companies and legalities in historical context with a focus on Asia.

Participation is by invitation. If you would like to enquire about attending, please write to Ms Candy Ip at ip0122@hku.hk.

The Workshop is supported by the Laureate Program in Global Corporations and International Law at the University of Melbourne Law School, the University of Hong Kong Faculty of Law, the HKU Jerome Chan Memorial Lecture, and the University of Macau Faculty of Law.

The Laureate Program in Global Corporations and International Law

In 2022, Professor Sundhya Pahuja launched the Laureate Program in Global Corporations and International Law, a collaborative research program at the University of Melbourne Law School designed to rethink how we understand the company-state-(international) law relation in historical context. For more information, please go to lpgcil.org.

THURSDAY 3 OCTOBER		
9:00 – 9:30	Welcome and Introduction – Sundhya Pahuja and Shane Chalmers	
9:30 – 11:00	<p>Panel</p> <p><i>Companies in Asia: Jurisdiction, Territory, Sovereignty</i></p> <p>Chair: Valeria Vázquez Guevara</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sau Kong Lee, “Who is a ‘Foreigner’? Foreign Business Vehicles as a Means to Access the Treaty System in Late Qing China” ▪ Alex P Dela Cruz, “Reviving Company Rule: The British North Borneo Company and Legal Authority in the Southern Philippines, 1881” ▪ Sabarish Suresh, “Trigonometrical Juridism in British India: Unificatory Images and Jurisdictional Rationality”
11:00 – 11:30	Break	
11:30 – 12:30	Book Talk with Philip Stern, author of <i>Empire, Incorporated</i> (2023) recorded for a podcast	
12:30 – 1:30	Lunch	
1:30 – 3:30	<p>Roundtable</p> <p><i>Reflections on the Corporation in Asia</i></p> <p>Chair: André Dao</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Caitlin Murphy, “Ways to Think about the Corporation and Supply Chains in International Law” ▪ Zhonghua Du, “State-owned Enterprise in Climate Transition: The Case of Daqing Oilfield Company Ltd” ▪ Scott Veitch, “The Poppy and the Cross: Reflections on Corporate Imperial Complicities” ▪ Yifeng Chen, “To Define and Defend Publicness: When International Organizations are like Corporations” ▪ Timothy D Peters, “A Theory of Corporate Office”
3:30 – 4:00	Break	
4:00 – 5:30	<p>Panel</p> <p><i>Corporate Diplomacy and International Law in Asia</i></p> <p>Chair: Yilin Wang</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Haris Jamil, “‘Legal Adviser to the President, Colonial Business a Speciality’: Elihu Root, Global Corporations and International Law” ▪ Jedidiah Kroncke, “Early American Proto-Corporate Empire in East Asia” ▪ Adil Hasan Khan, “From Diplomats to Political Agents: Discourses of Political Corruption and the Transformation of Offices of the Political Officers under the ‘Company State’ and the ‘British Raj’”
6:30	Dinner for participants at Ming Pavilion, Floor 14 of KK Leung Building, HKU	

*** All events will take place in the Floor 11 Seminar Room, Cheng Yu Tung Building, HKU**

FRIDAY 4 OCTOBER		
10:30 – 12:30	<p>Roundtable</p> <p><i>The British EIC: Influence, History, Transformation, and Demise</i></p> <p>Chair: Adil Hasan Khan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yillin Wang, “The Influence of British EIC on the Chinese Conception of Corporation” ▪ Tanvee Nandan, “The Iron Horse: Modernity, Progress, and Railway Companies in Colonial India” ▪ Devika Shankar, “Troubling Transitions: Ports and Sovereignty in South Asia” ▪ Christopher M Roberts, “Protection, Compulsion or Committee for Managing the Affairs of the Bourgeois: The British Empire and Labor During the Age of High Imperialism” ▪ Alastair McClure, “History Wars and the Death of the East India Company”
12:30 – 1:30	Lunch	
1:30 – 2:30	Book Talk with Joshua Ehrlich, author of <i>The East India Company and the Politics of Knowledge</i> (2023) – recorded for podcast	
2:30 – 3:00	Break	
3:00 – 4:30	<p>Panel</p> <p><i>Companies in Asia: Contestation, Resistance and Renewal</i></p> <p>Chair: Michael Bader</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Michelle M Ong, “Contesting Imperial Merchant Shipping at the International Labour Organisation’s Maritime Labour Conferences” ▪ André Dao, “‘The Company Itself is My Property’: Racial Imaginaries and the Corporation in Pramoedya’s <i>This Earth of Mankind</i>” ▪ Tikumporn Rodkhunmuang, “The Dutch East Indian Company and the Originality of Asianisation in International Legal Order”
4:30 – 5:00	Roundtable Discussion	
5:00 – 5:30	Break	
5:30 – 7:00	Public Roundtable on <i>Researching Companies in Asia: Law, History, Empire</i> with Joshua Ehrlich, Jason Jackson (TBC), Michael Ng, Sundhya Pahuja and Philip Stern	
7:30	Dinner (self-funded) at Victoria Harbour Restaurant, 2/F The Westwood, Belcher’s St	

* All events will take place in the Floor 11 Seminar Room, Cheng Yu Tung Building, HKU

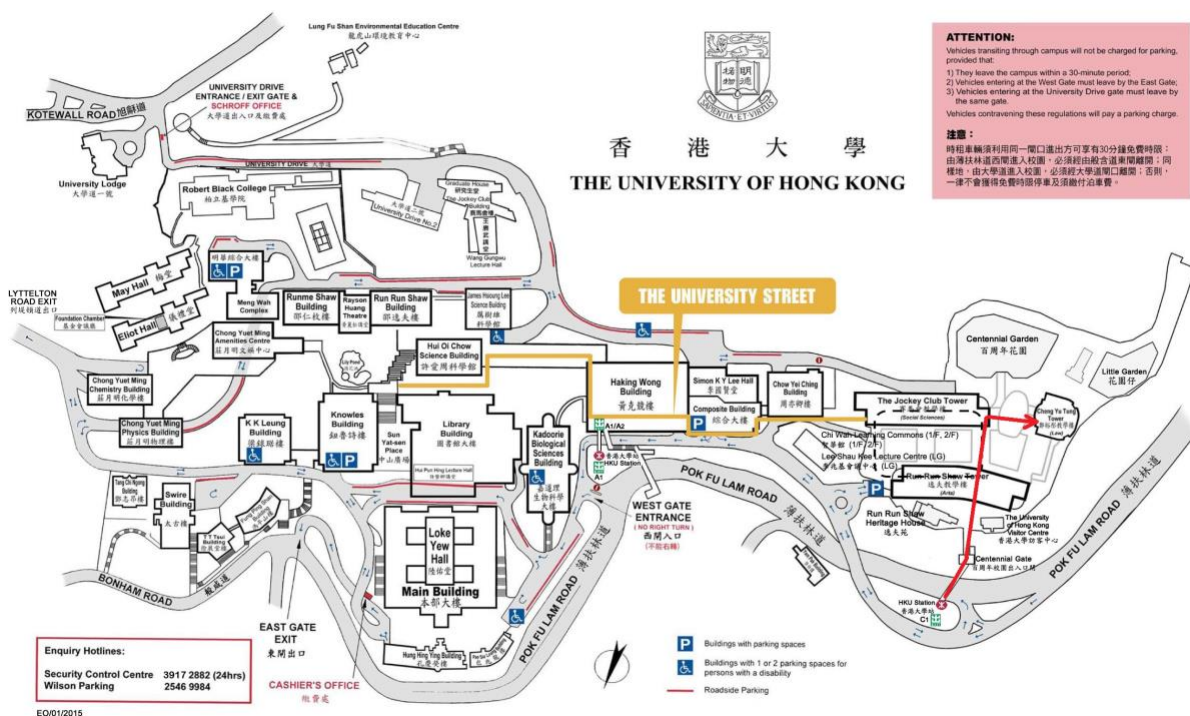
Getting to the venue

Location: Floor 11 of the Cheng Yu Tung Tower, HKU Centennial Campus.

Map: see below for directions from the MTR (subway system). Exit C1 of HKU Station is closest to the venue. From the exit of C1 you cross the road via a footbridge and then take a series of escalators up (or a lift) to the Ground floor of Centennial Campus.

Accessing the campus: Ms Candy Ip will provide an Invitation Letter. You will need to carry it with you to access the campus (either hard copy or digital).

Contact: Shane +852 53479656 or Valeria +852 67610694 (both work with WhatsApp).



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“The Company Itself is My Property’: Racial Imaginaries and the Corporation in Pramoedya’s *This Earth of Mankind*

André Dao

Set in Java in 1898, Pramoedya Anata Toer’s *This Earth of Mankind* depicts the racially stratified world of the Netherlands Indies, where everyday life was dominated by three racial categories: Native, Mixed-Blood and Pure. The novel’s narrator is Minke, a privileged Native boy taught in the best school in Surabaya to admire the modernity brought to Java by the Dutch colonialists. As a bildungsroman, the novel charts Minke’s coming to anti-colonial consciousness. His ‘teacher’ in resistance is Nyai Ontosoroh, a Native concubine who has, extraordinarily, come to run – and own – her Dutch master’s large agricultural company. In this paper, I explore the role the corporate form plays in Nyai’s anti-colonial resistance – first, as the mask that allows her to obtain a freedom otherwise denied to her racial (and gender) status, and second, as the mechanism through which the fruits of that freedom will be stripped from her by novel’s end. I set this analysis against the background of the colonial Dutch Indies’ race-based plural corporate law, and subsequent transition to an ostensibly universalist corporate law after Indonesian independence, to understand corporate personhood as a vector of postcolonial tragedy.

Reviving Company Rule: The British North Borneo Company and Legal Authority in the Southern Philippines, 1881

Alex P Dela Cruz

When, in 1881, the British government chartered the North Borneo Company to exercise the ‘absolute power of life and death over the inhabitants of the country’ and ‘absolute rights of property’ over its soil, a significant part of North Borneo had been part of the Sultanate of Sulu for more than 150 years. While nominally under Spanish sovereignty from the perspective of European imperial sovereigns, the Sultanate of Sulu had been an ancient socio-political entity that fiercely resisted Spanish rule from the northern Philippines for centuries. In the late 1800s, Sulu struggled to maintain its territorial integrity and independence, not only from Spain, but also from German, American, and British commercial interests in the region. The sultans asserted their authority through a range of strategies, including entering into agreements with chartered companies.

In this exploratory paper, I describe the chartering of the British North Borneo Company as a managerial response of the British state to the expansion of rival legal claims, including those of the Sultans of Sulu, to the (speculative) resources of North Borneo in the late nineteenth century. Founded two decades after the fall of the British East India Company, the North Borneo Company represents a revival of the chartered company as a vehicle of British colonialism in the region between Borneo and the southern Philippines. The Company’s charter, I suggest, was an instrument integral to dislodging the legal character of Sulu’s claims to North Borneo, particularly territorial claims based on historical arguments and evidence.

State-owned Enterprise in Climate Transition: The Case of Daqing Oilfield Company Limited

Zhonghua Du

Discovered in the late 1950s and established in the early 1960s, Daqing oilfield, located in Northeastern China in Heilongjiang Province with its rich oil deposit, buttressed China's modern industrialization process and changed the country's developmental path.¹ After six decades, Daqing Oilfield Company Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of China National Petroleum Corporation ('CNPC'), continues to be the largest oil producer in China.²

On the level of corporate governance, CNPC has established a comprehensive climate change policy, including the 'three-step approach', i.e. 'clean alternatives, strategic replacement and green development' and 'four measures for low carbon development', i.e. 'carbon reduction, utilization, offsetting, and sequestration'.³ Daqing oilfield, upon CNPC's initiative, would be the precursor of CNPC's carbon neutrality programme.⁴ However, in their daily operations and work, both officers of corporate policy and legal department and workers in the oilfield at Daqing oilfield, remain conspicuously unfamiliar with the company's climate policy, or even, the existence of the Paris Agreement at all.⁵ In other words, climate law and policy remains a foreign language for most people in Daqing in their lived experiences of working 'for' the oilfield company.

This project aims to provide a historically informed description of Daqing's intertwinment with the Chinese developmental state,⁶ to understand the striking contrast between CNPC and China's proclaimed carbon technological and policy leadership⁷ and Daqing oilfield workers' disconnection with the corporations' carbon projects and climate law. Drawing on interdisciplinary research of law and development, energy history, and critical urban theory, this project seeks to understand what it means, for the deeply entangled Daqing city, oilfield company, and people, to experience a climate transition, and the pride, anxiety, and fear within that process.

From Diplomats to Political Agents: Discourses of Political Corruption and the Transformation of Offices of the Political Officers under the "Company State" and the "British Raj"

Adil Hasan Khan

This paper examines the effects of discourses calling for accountability of corporate officials for political corruption on diplomacy and diplomatic relations between British India and Mughal successor polities in the late 18th and 19th century. It approaches this task by describing the

¹ L. Hou, *Building for oil: Daqing and the formation of the Chinese socialist state* (Published by the Harvard University Asia Center, 2018), at p. 27.

² 'Daqing Oil Province', in China National Petroleum Corporation; 'Daqing, China', in World Energy Cities Partnership.

³ 'Environment and Society', CNPC 2022 Annual Report, pp. 18-19.

⁴ In 2020, thousands of trees were planted in Ma'anshan, Daqing as part of CNPC's carbon neutrality forest programme. 'Climate Change', in China National Petroleum Corporation.

⁵ Interviews on file with the author.

⁶ L. Eslava, 'The Developmental State: Independence, Dependency, and the History of the South', in J. Von Bernstorff & P. Dann (eds.), *Battle Int. Law*, 1st ed., (Oxford University Press/Oxford, 2019), pp. 71-100.

⁷ K. Hurri, 'The roles they play: change in China's climate leadership role during the post-Paris era' (2023) 20(7) *Globalizations*, pp. 1065-82.

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transformation of the offices, ethos and training of the so-called political officers – a group of officers who went from performing the role of diplomats and brokers crafting diplomatic relations between the EIC and various Mughal successor polities, to essentially being agents of the Crown tasked with managing ‘insurgencies’, with any reciprocity in relations between ‘Princely States’ and political officers being deemed to evidence corruption on the officers part.

“Legal Adviser to the President, Colonial Business a Speciality”: Elihu Root, Global Corporations and International Law

Haris Jamil

This presentation is drawn from research I conducted for a thesis chapter on the work of corporate lawyer-statesman Elihu Root. Root was an influential figure in US domestic and foreign policy from 1898 to 1930 and played a crucial role in developing the projects of international adjudication and codification of international law. He held various offices during these years, including serving as the Secretary of War following the 1898 Spanish-American War. I investigate President McKinley’s choice of Root – a corporate lawyer – to lead the war department during a period when the US was stepping into new legal territory and what that reveals about the nature of US imperialism. Root also served as the secretary of state, was the first president of the American Society of International Law and the first president and chairperson of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. I examine the connections between his work in different offices by studying state papers, speeches, reports, articles and letters by Root. Placing Root’s work in the context of interimperial and intraimperial relations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, I show the ways in which he crafted and employed international legal justifications to facilitate the movement of US companies, particularly to Asia and Latin America.

Early American Proto-Corporate Empire in East Asia

Jedidiah Kroncke

When American traders first arrived in the South China Sea in the late 18th century, they found themselves largely competing with the East India Company. Prior to the American Revolution, the EIC effectively controlled overseas British colonies’ commercial relations with Asia and the ability to interpedently engage with the China trade was a rallying call of the Revolutionary-era. The resulting rapid initial postcolonial success of American traders puzzled Britain and other European powers which carried out their long-distance trade through state-backed commercial entities like the EIC. Moreover, the U.S. commercial presence in China would remain largely private in orientation through the coming 19th century. This presentation will explore how the relationship between overseas private American commercial agents and their relatively weak postcolonial national government laid the groundwork for modern forms of American corporate empire using informal and policy-based coordination rather than direct state sponsorship. The later expansion of American corporate power was intimately tied to concurrent military expansion, but drew on institutional strategies and ideological framings developed in this era that denied the practice of American empire as such.

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Who is a “Foreigner”? Foreign Business Vehicles as a Means to Access the Treaty System in Late Qing China

Sau Kong Lee

Narrative of the “unequal treaty system” in 19th Century China invokes the image of foreigners from powerful States (the West and Japan) enjoying enormous privileges and immunities in China which were denied to the local Chinese population (Qing subjects). Central to the treaty system was the application of different legal treatment based on nationality - the distinction between “Chinese” and “treaty foreigners”. My presentation discusses the use of foreign business vehicles by Chinese subjects as an opportunity equalisation and enhancement tool to access the benefits of the treaty system. It argues that the problem of “foreigners” in the treaty port era was as much an internal problem involving Qing subjects as it was an external one concerning foreign expatriates in China.

History Wars and the Death of the East India Company

Alastair McClure

The dissolution of the Company and the transfer of power to the Crown revolutionized the basis of law and sovereignty in India. In an age of rising liberal sentiment and political reform at home, this new iteration of imperial rule was to be organized through a renewed defense of political despotism alongside a promise to deliver equal justice to all subjects in India. As the legal scholar Nasser Hussain argued, this represented a new conception of sovereignty, one born in modern empire. This transformative moment was the product of multiple overlapping developments. These included a shifting political culture in Britain, growing criticism of company governance, newly dominant colonial ideas about the political character to the Indian people, and most importantly, the Rebellion of 1857. In this paper I discuss the constitutional debates that surrounded the death of the East India Company in Britain. In particular, I focus on parliamentary contestations relating to the Company’s history which took place between critics demanding abolition, and supporters seeking to protect the Company’s place in empire.

Ways to Think about the Corporation and Supply Chains in International Law

Caitlin Murphy

Critical mineral supply chains are gaining attention through the contemporary green energy transition. Much of the sociological analysis of global commodity chains or global value chains is organised around the firm and its strategies in governance or value ‘upgrading’ through varied activities of production. The diverse field has roots in world systems theory and development studies’ attention to state and business practice in postwar East Asia and Latin America. Given growing work on the role of law in value chains, we could ask how might this field of commodity chain studies interact with the LPGCIL project’s attention to the role of the corporation in international law? Based in thought for the methods section of my thesis on the lithium supply chain, this presentation seeks to open a collective conversation about ways we could think about the corporation and supply or value chains in international law.

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The Iron Horse: Modernity, Progress, and Railway Companies in Colonial India

Tanvee Nandan

“[T]he usually imperturbable and lethargic Eastern has been aroused out of sleep, has learned to move with alacrity, and even to acquire the virtue of punctuality, under the uncompromising and imperious tuition of the locomotive whistle”.⁸

The promise of the railways, as evident from this excerpt from MacGeorge’s 1894 ‘Ways and Works in India’ appears manifold: the destruction of caste prejudice⁹ and the activation of a productive energy in the ‘lethargic Eastern’. Both during the colonial subjugation of India and in the postcolonial era, development of the railways (and other public utilities) has been seen as ‘transformational’ to the economic and social progress of India.¹⁰ Mukhopadhyay, in her work on the social history of the Indian railways, described the ‘instrumental’ possibilities of the railways as having a ‘dual function’: “...at one level, the iron horse was to transform Indian economy and society. At another level, railways were to usher modernity in India; thus offering India and Indians the advantages of civilisational progress”¹¹.

I argue that the ‘origin story’ of the railways in India serves as a microcosm of the larger story of colonisation, specifically with regard to the role of companies within the progress and modernity narrative of colonisation as the ‘overlying’ narrative underneath which the extractive project was being carried out. By reading closely a report from 1845 written by a British civil engineer and an early and prominent proponent of the railways, RM Stephenson¹², I aim to describe the narrative of the railways espoused by stakeholders at the time: colonial administrators, entrepreneurs, trade associations and prominent Indian thinkers. I argue that the narrative of the railways as a civilising and modernising force was the overlying narrative under which commercial and military interests were garbed. Further, I argue that this narrative of ‘progress with a for-profit corporation at the helm’ for the railways reflects the larger story of India’s colonisation by a company (the East India Company) which also performed sovereign functions over the colonised Indian territories.

Contesting Imperial Merchant Shipping at the International Labour Organisation’s Maritime Labour Conferences

Michelle M Ong

In the 1920s and 1930s, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) held its initial maritime conferences, marking early attempts to regulate maritime labor – a profession notorious for its abusive labor practices – on an international level. Although the maritime conferences seemed

⁸ G.W. MacGeorge, *Ways and Works in India: being an account of the public works in that country from the earliest times up to the present day* (London, Archibald Constable and Company, 1894) Part II: ‘Railway in India’, Chapter 1, p. 221.

⁹ Ibid: “The strong barriers of one of the most rigid and exclusive caste systems in the world have been penetrated on every side by the power of steam. In India for many years past, caste prejudices have been practically extinguished within the fences of a line of railway, and the most sacred Brahmin will now contentedly ignore them rather than forego the luxury and economy of a journey by rail...”

¹⁰ Aparajita Mukhopadhyay, *Imperial Technology and ‘native’ Agency: A Social History of Railways in Colonial India, 1850-1920* (Routledge 2018), 1.

¹¹ Ibid 2.

¹² RM Stephenson, “Report upon the practicability and advantages of the introduction of railways into British India with the official correspondence with the Bengal Government and full statistical data respecting the existing trade upon the line connecting Calcutta with Mirzapore, Benaras, Allahabad and the North-West Frontier” (1845)
<<https://archive.org/details/reportuponpract00stepgoog/mode/2up?view=theater>>

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promising, they resulted in scant reforms as shipping companies and their imperial allies pushed back against demands from seafarers for greater rights.

This paper argues that while the conference outcomes were underwhelming, the conferences were still an important forum for the Indian and Chinese delegates, the few colonized voices represented at the conference, and other seamen's delegates to resist corporate-imperial subjugation. Empires and colonial shipping companies existed in symbiosis. Shipping companies provided infrastructure for the expansion and operation of the colonial apparatus and thus profited from colonial endeavors. Maximizing profits, however, depended on minimizing costs, which was at the expense of seafarers, especially colonial seafarers whose racialization and further subjugation under empire was used to justify meagre wages and worse treatment. They thus often took the same positions at the conferences. In opposition were seafarers, Indian and Chinese shipping companies, and the Chinese government. Due to their shared experiences of oppression and the interconnected labor market, seafarers, both colonized and not, united to demand better and equal treatment. Engaging in shipping nationalism, Indian and Chinese shipping companies challenged imperial shipping hegemony while supporting their respective nations' seafarers. Finally, the Chinese government had an interest in both protecting Chinese seafarers and its nations' sovereignty and thus, acted in favor of seafarers' rights.

Protection, Compulsion or Committee for Managing the Affairs of the Bourgeois: The British Empire and Labor During the Age of High Imperialism

Christopher Roberts

This article considers labor governance in the British Empire between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It gives particular attention to commissions of inquiry undertaken in the period, including multiple inquiries into conditions in Mauritius, the Straits Settlements and Malaya, and Assam, as well as investigations into conditions in the Pacific, the West Indies and South Africa, and an early twentieth century pan-imperial investigation into Indian indentured labor. These inquiries, and related reforms in the period, served multifarious purposes, demonstrating some degree of concern with improved conditions of work alongside attention to ensuring stable labor supplies, improved legitimacy and secure government. Overarchingly, this article argues the British colonial government in this period was reactive rather than proactive in relation to commercial interests, and that while at times it lent its weight in support of genuine improvements in conditions of work, it typically did so only in bigger-picture and longer-term support of commercial gain.

The Dutch East Indian Company and the Originality of Asianisation in International Legal Order

Tikumporn Rodkhunmuang

Since the seventeenth century, the birth of the classical international legal order has variously been critically studied. At the same time, in the events of the periodization of the colonization, the proliferation of the traditionally global corporation in terms of forms, patterns, essences, and also legal relations with the foreign merchants and traders had been formulated

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successfully the classical introduction of international commercial law in the name of the Dutch East Indian Company. This crucial company had also been spreading the foreign relations with the Eurocentric rules-based approaches. This research project is focusing on the global argumentation that is Asian particularly Southeast Asian Nations in the ancient terms so-called "Suvarnabhumi" was the firstly geographical location on the creation of the globally legal trading systems and also crucially effecting the modern forms of global governance.

The aims of this research project are first to prove that the importance of the Asian values in the creating and making international legal order has also can be trace back to the Dutch East Indian Company. Second, the unification of the narrative story of the dominated international legal system by European-Americanization is academically driven since the establishment of modern international legal order. By constructing international legal historiographers, in contrast, the importance of the historical studies in international law is crucial issue in encountering and equalizing modern international legal regime. Third, the law of global governance is essentially advancing the multi-level governance of international development strategies by the global corporations. Last but not least, the historical studies of international legal regime of global economic culture will be affecting and shaping the contemporary forms of the international law of governance as well.

Methodologically speaking, alternatively, international legal ethnography and historiography has obviously been employed mainly in this research project. Interestingly, the mixed methods research including quantitative and qualitative research are well-suited strategies in terms of textual and contextual analysis of the Dutch East India Company and its global legal relations such as international investment law and the law of global governance. The classical works, contemporary international investment legal systems, the analytical cases have also reinterpreted from the critical perspectives from the Global South. Particularly, the Asian values and legal impact on the critical development of contemporary international law has also crucial vivid to the realization of the equalization of the implementation of international legal terrain. Additionally, Third World Approaches in International Law is the main angle to employ in this research project vice versa.

As a result, the backlash and encountering international legal regime has also been building up by this research project. For example, the crucial elements of international legal subjects have also transformed from the localizing to internationalizing actor including the global corporations. Significantly, the global corporation since the creation of the events of international legal regime has clearly left the profoundly foundation of the legally global economic tradition. Alternatively, the Asian values has also been increasing exponentially in these findings and allowing the precolonial and colonial context in this critical analysis. Additionally, its is exploring the Asian scent in international investment system and also how Asian value be shaping the misery international investment law. So, this research will be giving a small contribution to the global legal studies as well as the history of international legal regime. It can be systematically implication for the international law on investment and the international law of global governance.

Troubling Transitions: Ports and Sovereignty in South Asia

Devika Shankar

The port of Cochin became the first port in South Asia to be occupied by a European power following the construction of a Portuguese fort in 1502. It was subsequently occupied by the

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Dutch VOC more than a century later before being ultimately colonized by the English East India Company in 1795. What specific issues did this form of colonial transition, from one European company to the other, generate in South Asia? And how has this longer history of European colonialism shaped the exercise of sovereignty around Cochin and other port cities? Through an examination of how the past history of European colonization became essential for exercise of British rights over the Cochin at the beginning and end of British rule, I aim to highlight the afterlives of these histories and the way in which they illuminate the especially contested status of the region's ports.

Trigonometrical Juridism in British India: Unificatory Images and Jurisdictional Rationality

Sabarish Suresh

This paper engages with two aspects of how cartography enabled law and jurisdictional ordering in a specific historical context. First, by interrogating the ways in which the great trigonometrical surveys of the British colonial enterprise and the Atlas of India entrenched 'India' as a distinct, coherent, continuous, and contiguous geographical entity, this paper will demonstrate how an epistemology rooted in scientific rigour and a civilising impulse produced the perception of India as a thoroughly refined British legal territory. Second, by engaging with the maps and records of colonial cadastral and revenue surveys, this paper will show how maps played a critical role in the visualisation of British Indian territory in terms of police-networks, and how such a visualisation paved the way for the rationalisation and systematisation of horizontal jurisdictions, with vertically aligned hierarchies, across the territory. Taken together, this paper engages with how British colonial cartography, with an apparent scientific force, visually produced Indian territory as a unified legal entity, constituted by juridical institutions with neatly organised jurisdictional rationalities, which were laid down based on an antecedent imagination of such a framework through cartographic picturing.

The Poppy and the Cross: Reflections on Corporate Imperial Complicities

Scott Veitch

The burial memorial of Sir James Matheson (1796-1878) sits in a small cemetery outside the village of Lairg in the Scottish Highlands. Matheson, who grew up nearby, made his fortune in India and Hong Kong before returning to Britain a respected citizen and Member of Parliament. He established with William Jardine, another Scotsman, the Hong Kong trading company that bore their names. Among other commercial ventures, they pushed opium into China on an industrial scale, supported by the firepower of the British Navy. The company flourishes still.

At the base of Matheson's memorial is an inscription taken from St Matthew's gospel: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant ... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord". At the memorial's centre is a white marble cross elegantly wreathed with sculpted flowers. The symbol of the cross is familiar enough. What is less apparent to the casual observer is the kind of flower draped around it: opium poppies. This talk considers the symbolism of Matheson's memorial as a legacy of corporate empire.