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Foreword

Local and global approaches concern most human activities. Even unrelated events after a deeper analysis may appear to have a common ground or source although the local circumstances may greatly influence it. Regarding Asian studies focus was laid on research on the impact of particular Asian cultures. How much do they influence certain activities and how different they are if seen in a global context? What is the contribution of Asian cultures to the world considering cultural, religious, social, political, and even economic aspects?

The majority of papers gathered in the present volume are the outcome of the *10th International Conference of Oriental Studies: Global and Local Perspectives* organised jointly by the Committee of Oriental Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Faculty of Oriental Studies of the University of Warsaw on November 15–16, 2021 at the University of Warsaw. Some papers were added later to the volume. Contributions by particular authors differ in length, approach, and scope due to the selected topic, the contributors' scholarly experience, within the scope of broadly understood Oriental studies, or their way of presenting the subject. They cover different disciplines ranging from literary and language studies, culture, religion, history, and the arts to politics and economy.

Several papers represent a discipline of literature which in the case of Oriental studies, similarly to studies in many other regions, can hardly be separated from linguistics thus representing research interests which may as well be called philology in its best and broadest meaning. One such paper is by Ivan Andrijačić who attempted to prove the authorship of the commentary *Adhyātmapaṭala* by the great Indian master Śaṅkara on the basis of the used terminology, vocabulary, and other features of the work.

Terminology is also the subject of the second paper by Joanna Bialek, narrowed to one term representing power, *čhab srid*, in Old Literary Tibetan. The research was done with the use of linguistic methods on the basis of 226 texts that are available in the Old Tibetan Documents Online database. It can be briefly concluded that the digitalization of the sources made it possible for researchers to speed up their work and see the object of their studies in a much broader context.

Global influence may appear to bring negative effects on local culture. This is shown by Andrzej Drozd on the example of the traditional religious culture of the Polish-Lithuanian Tatars threatened to become forgotten and deprived from their values by the Islamic fundamentalist movement. The relatively extensive paper shows the historical development of specific features of the Tatar culture in Poland and the ways in which it disappears.

Buddhism was the core of Tibetan culture. Paulina Koniuch describes how Buddhism influenced the artworks of contemporary exiled Tibetans on the example of two artists, Gonkar Gyatso and Palden Weinreb. They both use religious symbols, patterns, and connotations while referring to national/ethnic identity but blend them with elements and aesthetics of modern secular life to address the current audience.

How much of another art piece can be used as inspiration to create a work which would be regarded as innovative and not plagiarism? What are appreciation and appropriation? Jagoda Uryniuk discusses these questions on the example of world-famous woodblock prints by Utagawa Hiroshige, the Japanese master of *ukiyo-e* tradition, and works by the French artist Noël Nouët.

Michał Szafarski also refers to Japanese culture. He describes plays of Kōbō Abe within the frames of the Theatre of the Absurd and argues that even though the Theatre of the Absurd is regarded as a European phenomenon while Kōbō Abe is treated as the representative of a *shingeki* – a strict realistic theatre movement, his plays can be, as well, perceived as works of an Absurdist.

Aesthetic experience in literature is the subject of the 10th century Kuntaka's theory on Indian literature expressed in *Vakroktijīvitā* in which he elaborates on 'pre-eminence', *atīśaya*. Based on numerous examples taken from the treatise, Ariadna Matyszkiewicz shows how to understand this "aesthetic category built upon a sensation of 'marvellous beauty'".

Far from describing culture but closer to showing the influence of religion upon people's life is the next paper by Adam Rogoda. He elaborates on capitalism practiced in Iran from the time of the Islamic revolution (1979) which evolved into a unique economic system and investigates whether it should be characterised as a state-permeated market economy or a state-dominated economy, and what could be its further development due to the global situation.

Alevtina Solovyeva takes a reader to the reality created by a Mongolian legend. Supernatural elements such as demons and the extraordinary powers of a shaman are blended with historical events of turmoils on the border between Mongols in the western part of their current territory and robbers coming from Xinjiang. Solovyeva underlines and explains the motif of the awakening of the shaman and of the nature spirits and connects the representation of awakening with the religious revival taking place in Mongolia from the 1990s.

Another study on the Mongolian subject is presented by Vladimir Uspensky. Mastering detective skills he reveals dramatic historical events of 1723 which provoked the appearance of the unique testimony of dreams that were dreamt by relatives of a boy believed to be a Buddhist reincarnation. The global history of complicated Mongol-Manchu-Tibetan relations meets with the local ambitions of parents who want to prove the sanctity of their son.

The paper by Tenzin Tsenyi addresses the problem of negotiating supernatural powers. The author provides data on a Tibetan guidebook (*gnas yig*) from Kham. Besides codicological details on the manuscript, she presents the contents and more interestingly, points to different realities perceived in the sacred space by three different categories of pilgrims. Local worship can be, as well, taken afar by exiled Tibetans to their new homes.

Exiled people experience a more complex reality but they may find new possibilities as well. Freedom of expression observed by Western society enabled Western Islamic scholars to speak for coreligionists in the West and at distant homes alike. Marta Widy-Behiesse discusses different approaches of representatives of Western Muslim feminism and their varied methods to oppose discrimination which is not limited to local versus global conditions.

The many aspects of life, culture, religion, literary writing and artistic creativity of people in Asia can be approached from different perspectives: knowing local reality will certainly help to understand how it interacts with global influences. It is hoped that readers will gain expertise knowledge from the contributions contained within the present volume.

Agata Bareja-Starzyńska

On behalf of the editors, conference organizers,
and the Committee of Oriental Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences