

# SILK ROAD

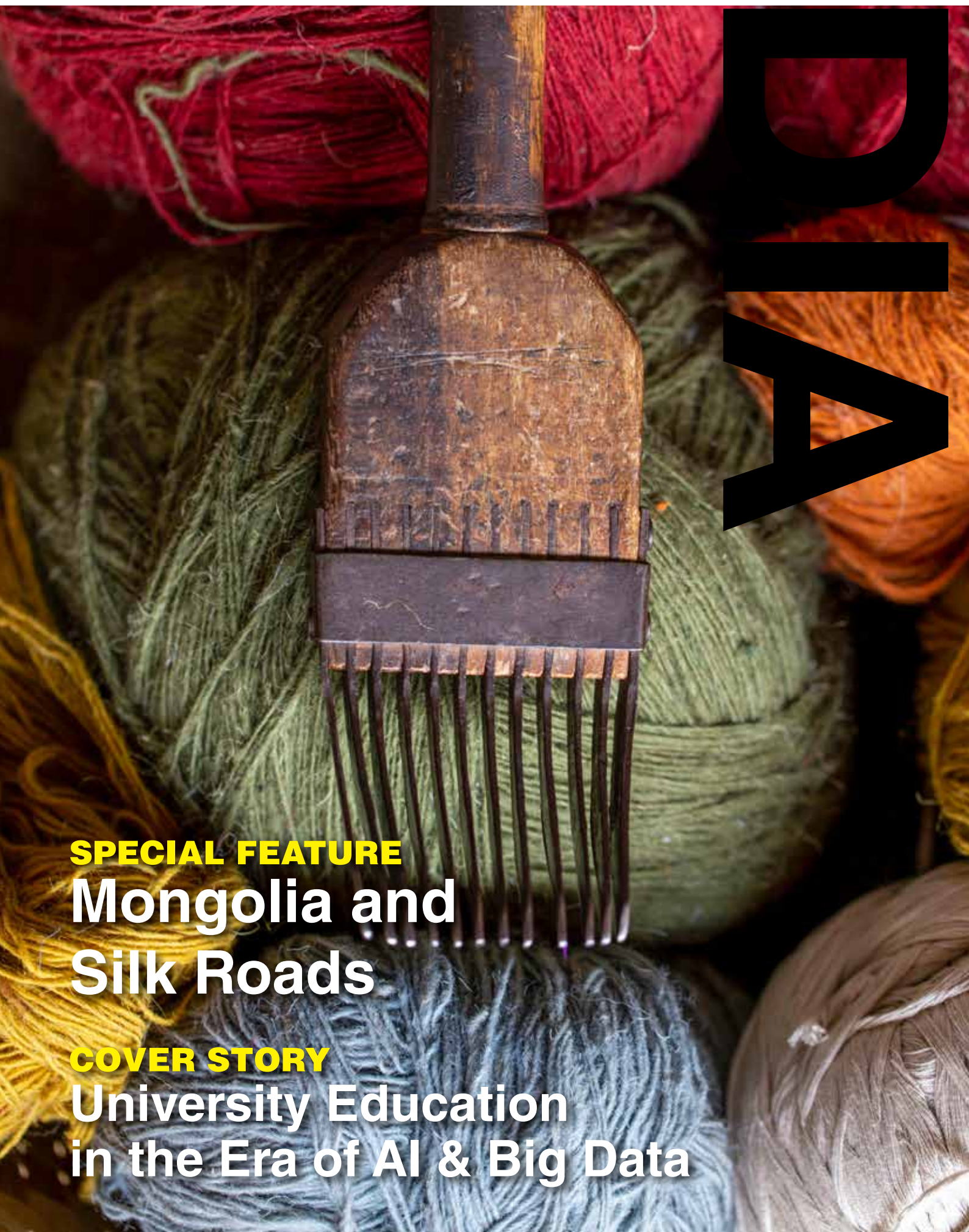
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**SILK-ROAD  
UNIVERSITIES  
NETWORK**



**SPECIAL FEATURE**  
**Mongolia and  
Silk Roads**

**COVER STORY**  
**University Education  
in the Era of AI & Big Data**

## **SILKROADIA**

Biannual webzine of the Silk-Road Universities Network (SUN) -  
a non-governmental, non-profit international organization

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Shi-yong Chon

## **SUN positioned to undertake many worthwhile projects**

*Key agenda includes promotion of joint academic programs*

**I**t seems that we are seeing the light at the end of the tunnel of the COVID-19 pandemic, thanks largely to the fast development of vaccines. Countries with high vaccination rates began lifting restrictions, allowing people to do away with masks, get together and make overseas travels.

It was laudable that scientists succeeded in developing vaccines in such a short period of time and that governments moved fast to provide them to the populace. The vaccines, however, generated disputes and

controversies as well, especially regarding their safety, efficacy and equity in distribution.

In order to get authoritative answers to the questions arising from COVID-19 vaccines, ***SILKROADIA*** sought the wisdom of Dr. Jerome Kim, Managing Director of the International Vaccine Institute. It was a good coincidence that both the SUN Secretariat and the IVI are located in Seoul, the South Korean capital.

Dr. Jerome Kim, a physician and famed expert in virus and vaccines, shared his scientific, medial knowledge about the COVID-19 vaccines, and suggested taking vaccines as soon as possible. He did not forget, in the meantime, to warn about the possibility of another pandemic hitting the mankind in the future. While criticizing the lack of global leadership in responding to COVID-19, especially the G-7 and G-20, he emphasized multilateral effort to fight pandemics.

While the vaccines have raised our hope to get back to normal life in the near future, it was still too early for SUN to engage in normal activities, including organization of the annual General Assembly.

Following last year's GA hosted by An-

kara University of Turkey, this year's GA to be hosted by the National University of Mongolia will also be held online. As was the case last year, going online hardly diminishes the significance of the most important annual event of SUN.

The Seventh GA, scheduled for September 29-30, will have the theme of "Next Steps of SUN as Intellectual Forces: Toward Peaceful Co-existence and Economic Co-prosperity in the Second Phase of SUN." In a written interview with ***SILKROADIA***, NUM President Dr. B. Ochirkhuyag outlined what would be the highlight of the forthcoming GA.

He aptly pointed out that the Seventh GA will be a call for the member universities to "find the best way to stay connected in any possible way." He also shared his insight on the future of SUN, emphasizing the importance of providing joint academic programs for students and promoting interdisciplinary research projects among the researchers and faculty members. His point is in perfect tune with the commitment of SUN Secretary-General Sungdon Hwang to launching joint classes of SUN member universities and eventually creating the Silk Roads Network University.

Another highlight on the agenda of this issue of ***SILKROADIA*** is AI and big data, the key elements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution that has been impacting education as well. ***SILKROADIA*** chose the topic in a prelude to the Sixth IASS Conference which will deal with AI and big data. The IASS Conference is scheduled to be held November 27 and 29 under the auspices of NUM.

Two faculty members from our member universities – Professor Karim Chelli, President and Vice-Chancellor of the Canadian University Dubai and Professor Ron Steiner of Chapman University in U.S. who serves as the English Editor of ***SILKROADIA*** – contributed excellent articles on how the university education should cope with the era of AI and big data. The two professors' articles were especially interesting and informative in that they included the cases of their own universities.

Lastly, the SUN News Section includes the plan to celebrate the 1,600th anniversary of the City of Venice in Italy, the home of Marco Polo. SUN will be participating in the celebration in February 2022 in conjunction with Ca' Foscari University and the City of Venice. SUN will be co-organiz-



ing several events, including video and mask festivals. This is yet another piece of evidence proving that SUN is well positioned to do a lot of worthwhile things. We may well move forward step by step to fulfill our potential and mission.



**SPECIAL FEATURE**

# MONGOLIA AND THE SILK ROADS

# The Mongols and the Silk Roads



Enerelt Enkhbold

Trade is critical to any nation's prosperity and development. Currently, export and import each account for over one-third of global gross domestic product (GDP). Modern economic achievements are the product of human learning through long periods of trial and error. Old empires and states played a particularly pivotal role in intercontinental connection and trade. In the 1220s, western Crusaders noticed that the Mongol conquests followed the ancient Silk Road. And they were right. Virtually the whole network of Eurasian trade routes, known as the Silk Road, had come under the control



of the Mongols by the end of the 13th century. The Silk Road was not created by the Mongols, but it thrived under their leadership on an unprecedented scale, with intensified cultural and commercial contact throughout the Afro-Eurasian landmass.

The safety of merchants was at the center of Mongol imperialism. When greedy and suspicious elites of the powerful Islamic empires of Iran and Central Asia massacred Mongol merchants, this violent act prompted Chinggis Khan, the founder of the Mongolian empire, to declare war. However, Mongol imperialism was not only about warfare, but also highly organized administration and resource allocation. Chinggis Khan and his descendants assigned patrols along trade routes and compensated the losses of merchants whose merchandise was either stolen or simply lost. Trade routes in the Mongolian empire were ‘perfectly safe,’ wrote the Florentine businessman Francesco di Balduccio. As such, the Mongols brought stability, a Pax Mongolica which merchants and travelers had been longing for.

Some critics are extremely dubious

about the stability the Mongols brought across Asia. It is true that various branches of Chinggis Khan's descendants engaged in violent internecine wars in Central Asia and Transcaucasia. But civil wars and temporary dissolution of empires have been frequently observed in human history. Overall, the Mongolian empire remained remarkably integrated and Chinggisid dynasties were deeply connected to one other. Despite threats from Central Asia and frequent military confrontations after the 1270s, the great khan Khubilai, the grandson of Chinggis, nominated the khans of the Golden Horde, and approved the Ilkhans in Greater Iran, who would remain loyal to him and his successors until the empire's decline. Even Muslim Mamluks and Catholic Roman popes, who were highly suspicious of Mongol motives, knew that the Great Khan in the east outranked other Mongolian rulers in western parts of the empire.

Strong diplomatic and economic ties between Mongol khans enhanced commerce between East and West by linking overland routes in Eurasia with maritime



routes in the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean. As demonstrated by empirical evidence, when the Mongolian empire was at its maximum geographical extent in the late 13th century, the supply of silver surged in Asia and Europe, driving down its exchange rate against gold. With the fall of the Mongol superpower in the 14th century, silver became extremely scarce across Afro-Eurasia.

Immense booty and riches fell into the hands of the Mongols during their conquests in Asia, Europe, and the Middle



**Chinese intellectuals presenting historical books to the Mongolian khan, Hafizi Abru (d. 1430)**

Collection of the British Museum

East. The Mongols invested enormous amounts of their riches in infrastructure, cities, science, agriculture, and commerce. As pastoral nomads, the Mongols did not dwell in cities, however, they well understood that strong urban economies were essential for the prosperity of trade and craftwork, and ultimately for the empire's survival. The Mongols sponsored the construction of new cities and re-developed old grand cities and entrepôts. As a result, some Mongol capitols generated more wealth than the combined outputs of the entire kingdoms of England and France, the leading western economies in the Middle Ages. Likewise, the steppe zone was not ignored. For instance, in the 13th century the Mongols built Kharakhorum and Shangdu, which housed several thousands of people, the largest cities in Mongolia proper until the founding of modern Ulaanbaatar. As part of their efforts to feed cities, prominent Mongolian rulers established government institutions to promote agriculture and improved food transport by building great water canals and opening new overland routes. The Mongols es-



Mongol silk  
(Tartar cloth)  
used for the  
burial robe of  
the Hapsburg  
prince Rudolf IV  
(14th century)

Collection of the Dom and  
Diocesan Museum, Austria

established colonies of Chinese and other eastern Asians in Iran and Central Asia, and resettled Muslim and European agriculturalists and artisans in Mongolia and China to restore agriculture and local economies.

The Mongols established a vast network of postal stations from Korea and across Central Asia to Eastern Europe to connect their imperial administration and cities, and maintained inns along trade routes. A range of sources indicate that postal stations were used for commercial transport in the Mongolian empire. In most cases, Mongol elites permitted their merchant partners to use postal stations without paying.

Many areas outside the empire such as South Asia and Europe also benefitted from trade with the Mongols. Under the patronage of the Mongols, the Silk Roads allowed the Garter knights in distant Britain and slave warriors in Delhi to wear ‘tartar’ clothes made in the Mongolian empire. The Mongol’s favorable climate for long distance trade certainly eased intercontinental exchange. For instance, taxes and tolls on international trade passing through the Mongolian territory were lower and more competitive than that of other great economies of Afro-Eurasia.

A willingness to adopt new ideas and practices was an important factor in enabling the Mongols to set up institutions that promoted intercontinental trade and facilitated East-West economic integration. Modern historians tend to focus primarily on military techniques employed or adopted by the Mongols. However, the Mongols’ immense interests in productive assets and value-added activities should not be ignored. The Mongols were very tolerant towards different religions, including Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, sha-

manism, and diverse ethnic groups, and were eager to adapt new knowledge and technology from foreigners. Indeed, patterns observed in the Mongolian empire bear a resemblance to the mechanisms of modern globalization.

The Mongols and their trade partners gained from exchange and specialization. The Mongols sent thousands of Muslim experts and weavers from Islamic lands to Central Asia and China to produce high-value, luxury goods and build local



**Blue-and-white porcelain model of a Mongolian ger (14th century)**

Source: McCausland, Shane (2014). The Mongol Century



production capacity. The appropriation of people and the high demand for desirable objects led directly to greater economies of scale and product variety. For example, as strong demand for Chinese blue-and-white porcelain persisted over long periods, manufacturing centers imported cobalt from the Middle East and Eastern Europe to achieve product features preferred by western consumers. So popular was western consumer preference towards oriental goods that Iran under the Mongols developed a new cottage industry, imitating Chinese style and design.

Credit and commercial techniques existed in Asia long before the Mongolian empire was established. But as adapted and revised by the Mongols, commercial partnerships and contracts ushered in a new degree of wealth creation. For instance, paper currency is clearly not an innovation of the Mongols, however, these nomads were the only people to acknowledge and circulate it widely across their large territories before modern economies began to do so with fiat money. Furthermore, the Mongols heavily invested in commerce

through their agents (“ortoq”) as do investors today in various modern assets such as real estate, cryptocurrencies, and securities. The source of the Mongols’ investments was the abundant supply of tribute and taxation, including gold, silver, cash, pearls, silk, textiles, livestock, and valuable natural resources exacted from their subjects. To reduce transaction costs, the Mongolian leadership unified weights and measures, adopted silver as a unit of accounting, and reformed coinage and money (despite local variations). Moreover, Chinggis Khan’s successors used tax farming as means of sovereign lending.

These achievements of the Mongols in the 13th and 14th centuries broadly preceded modern networks and economic integration initiatives present on the Eurasian continent, whether it be the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program (CAREC), the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), or the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Developed and developing countries of Asia and Europe have excellent prospects and untapped resources to unleash global

prosperity for the good of humanity, environmental protection, and the reduction of inequality. As demonstrated by Chinggis Khan and his descendants, only greater regional stability and efficient coordination between countries can help us achieve this great objective.

**Source:** Enerelt Enkhbold (2019). "The role of the ortoq in the Mongol Empire in forming business partnerships," *Central Asian Survey*, 38:4, 531-547, DOI: 10.1080/02634937.2019.1652799

**Enerelt Enkhbold** is a Ph.D. student at History Department of National University of Mongolia, Mongolia.



Dr. B. Ochirkhuyag, President of the National University of Mongolia, co-host of the Seventh General Assembly of SUN

# **NUM president calls for joint study programs and interdisciplinary research projects for SUN member universities**

By Amali Ranavi Thantrige

**A**s a co-host, the National University of Mongolia (NUM) is preparing for the Seventh General Assembly of SUN to be held online in September. It will be the second time that SUN has held the annual meeting virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is truly regrettable that the SUN family misses the opportunity to visit Ulaanbaatar, a key city of the ancient Silk Roads. Nevertheless, Dr. B. Ochirkhuyag, President of the National University of Mongolia, is committed to working for the success of the upcoming GA and continuing development of SUN.

In a written interview with ***SILKROAD-IA***, Dr. B. Ochirkhuyag outlined what would be the highlight of the Seventh GA. He also suggested the future direction of SUN, of which the NUM has been a key member and strong supporter. He said that the forthcoming GA will be a call for the member universities to find the best way to stay connected in any possible way.

For SUN, the president mentioned the importance of providing joint study programs for students and promote interdisciplinary research projects among the re-



searchers and professors. His point comes in perfect tune with the commitment of SUN Secretary-General Sungdon Hwang's to creating the Silk Roads Network University.

Dr. B. Ochirkhuyag also gave a brief introduction to the significance of the Mongol Empire in the formation of the ancient Silk Roads. He also talked about his career as a chemistry scientist and some of his personal life. The following are excerpts from the interview with him:

*Q: Established in 1942, the National University of Mongolia is the oldest institution of higher education in Mongolia. Could you please introduce NUM, especially its strengths, to our readers?*

A: On behalf of my academic colleagues of the National University of Mongolia, let me extend a greeting to the member universities and readers of **SILKROADIA**.

Yes, you are right, the National University of Mongolia is the oldest and the most comprehensive university in the country and was established in 1942. Serving as an important research-based training insti-

tution in Mongolia throughout its almost eight-decade history, the University has now grown into the best research center in the country. In the 21st century, NUM remains a prestigious university offering a quality education and conducting international-level research in the fields of natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, engineering, law, and business through the best teaching and research faculties. Also, our researchers work in policy research at the local level of government.

*Q: How do you assess the impact of COVID-19 on NUM and other universities in Mongolia and these institutions' responses to the pandemic?*

A: I am trying to see the impact of COVID-19 on the Mongolian universities in positive ways in terms of exploring new opportunities for learning and growing with new technologies. Both students and professors are trying to develop their digital soft skills, although this is quite challenging for them. Mongolian universities, including the National University of Mongolia, have adjusted their programs in a

short time in response to the spread of the coronavirus. Globally, higher education institutions are experiencing a digital transformation that is critical to learner and institutional success.

With the ongoing pandemic, we are continuing to be flexible with our events; our primary concern is the well-being of our domestic and foreign partners. Thus, online research and collaboration and networking increased since that has been a more effective way to gather more audiences, as well as lowering travel time and costs.

The one thing that we have understood during the pandemic is that universities have a duty to work together on global challenges.

*Q: The NUM plans to host the 7th General Assembly of SUN in September this year. It is unfortunate that the GA is being held online due to the pandemic, but it nonetheless is meaningful for the NUM to play host to the event. What would be the focus of the upcoming GA?*



A: We are so glad to host the 7th General Assembly of SUN this year. The focus for this GA will be to call on the members to stay together, whether it is virtually or physically, to share the new knowledge and technological advancement gained during the challenges of the pandemic, and to develop new partnerships in areas such as virtual learning and spreading digital culture.

*Q: NUM has been a key member and strong supporter of the SUN, which marks its sixth anniversary this year. What do you think of its achievements so far and what do you think should be its major goal in the coming years?*

A: The National University of Mongolia has been a member university of SUN from the very time of its founding. I would say SUN is a very unique and interesting assembly of universities, symbolizing the long history of cultural exchange along the Silk Road. I am so proud that professors and students of our university work together with colleagues of SUN, disseminating the culture of Silk Roads regionally and globally. Let me express our deepest appreciation to the General Secretary of SUN for organizing amazing events for the students, dedicated to the sharing of different cultures and making friends and becoming global citizen. Knowing history is very important for the young generation so they understand the world in which we live and become well-informed citizens.

The major goal in the coming years should be to contribute to the development of joint study programs for the students and promote interdisciplinary research projects among the researchers and professors of SUN, including in areas such as anthropology, environmental studies, climate change, history, and culture, in or-



der to contribute to global affairs.

*Q: Mongolia is one of the key locations on the Silk Roads. Would you please tell us the historical significance of Mongolia on the ancient Silk Roads and its potential to help revive the spirit of the Silk Roads?*

A: Thank you very much for the wonderful question. As a citizen of Mongolia, I am very proud of the history of the Mongol empire and the significant role and great influence it had in the history of Silk Roads, especially in terms of developing safe and active trade between the East and West. These roads became roads of international collaborative development followed to place of peaceful coexistence among different nations regardless of their religions, a recognition of multiculturalism and diplomacy thanks to the highly organized administration and allocation of resources by the Mongol empire.

It is amazing that after hundreds of years we as academic representatives of Silk Roads country universities are speaking in one language of education for peace

and prosperity.

*Q: Could you please share with us your academic life? Why did you choose to study chemistry and become a professor? What would you like to achieve as the rector of your alma mater?*

A: I loved chemistry ever since I studied in secondary school. My teacher was a great person and taught this subject in a very interesting way. At that time, I understood that chemistry is a very important field that would influence the development of the country.

As the Rector of the National University of Mongolia, I would like my alma mater to be recognized in the region and throughout the world as a leading university. For that we need to promote our external collaboration and strengthen academic ties with partner universities. SUN will play a great role in helping us achieve this goal.

*Q: Please tell us a little about your personal life and family. Most of all, how do you spend time with family? What do you do in your free time, and do you have any*

*special hobby?*

A: I have three children. My spouse works in the Department of Chemistry of the National University of Mongolia. I feel guilty to say that I have not enough time for my family. In my free time I like to listen to relaxing music of all genres.

*Q: What do you think students of today should bear in mind when studying at university and thinking about their future, especially in this world of a “new normal”?*

A: In my thinking, a student needs to study for his or her goal in life. That means studying should be very meaningful.

**Amali Ranavi Thanthrige** is majoring International Studies at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Republic of Korea.

# Ulaanbaatar, capital city of Mongolia



Sh. Mendbayar



D. Munkhtamir

**W**elcome to Ulaanbaatar - the capital city of Mongolia, established in 1639.

Today the city's population is over 1.3 million and makes up about 45 percent of Mongolia's total population. Surprisingly, Mongolia is still one third fully nomadic and, as such, around 800,000 people live in "ger" (yurt) districts on the edge of town.

Mongolia has four seasons. Summer is a very special time in Ulaanbaatar; we enjoy warm weather after long winter and spring seasons. The Naadam festival is held on July 11-13, and majority of us



move to summer residences outside the city. The summer also brings lots of foreign tourists walking on the streets, visiting souvenir shops and cashmere houses. If you visit Ulaanbaatar in summer, you will benefit from big discounts on the best cashmere products in the world.

We have visited some foreign countries and found out that the people in other countries don't know much about the city of Ulaanbaatar. They wonder if we still ride horses, what we eat, if we go to the cinema, and whether we live in a traditional tent (ger), etc.

When you visit Ulaanbaatar, you will see a huge number of cars on the roads. Street food is not popular in Ulaanbaatar,

but the city has incredible restaurants offering cuisine from different nations such as Korean, Japanese, Italian, Russian, Indian, Mexican, and even Peruvian, all at affordable price. The restaurants advertising “Mongolian” or “Modern nomad” foods would be the best choice for those who want to try typical traditional and modernized nomadic cuisine.

If you don’t want to travel too far away but want to see the beautiful natural scenery of Mongolia, you should visit Terelj National Park, which is considered one of the most amazing places worth visiting for travelers who want to rest and relax in a landscape with magnificent scenery. You will see “turtle rock,” visit the Ariyabal Meditation Temple, and enjoy hiking and riding horses and camels in the national park. There are many ger camps where you can sleep, try Mongolian horse milk, see how the herdsmen care for their livestock, and experience the daily life of nomads.

During summer travelers also can experience different parties on the riverside beaches and at festivals in the city, especially in Sukhbaatar square just in front of



Government house.

If you prefer just to stay in Ulaanbaatar you won't get bored. You can enjoy watching cultural shows as the Tumen Ekh Song and Dance Ensemble show, most popular among tourists, featuring traditional singers, dancers, and contortionists. Also, we would highly recommend going to the Mongolian State Academic Theater of Opera and Ballet to enjoy world-famous ballets such as "Swan lake" and "Giselle," and world classical opera such as "Eugene Onegin", "Madame Butterfly" with Cio-cio San, "Faust," etc. Another amazing and beautiful show you must watch is the Torgo summer fashion show in the city, featuring top Mongolian designers' incredible creations, held during the Naadam festival.

The capital city of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar is a unique, heterogeneous city with about 400 years of history. You can see typical east Asian styles, western based modern patterns, and Mongolian specific architecture. As Mongolia had been under the control of the Soviet Union until 1990, you can see many old buildings in Russian



style, including university buildings, residential apartments, and various theatres.

Historically, Ulaanbaatar has been the religious center of country for many years. Thus, many historical Buddhist monasteries are now an important part of city. These include the Gandan Monastery, Choijin Lama Temple, Dambadarjaa Monastery, The Temple of the Princess. etc. Many monasteries are continuously working for peaceful and spiritual purposes, and add a decorous style to the city.

The Gandan Monastery is a Mongolian Buddhist central monastery and was built by order of the Mongolian Buddhist Religious leader 5th Bogd in 1809. The Monastery was honored when the 13th Dalai

lama briefly resided there in 1904. The Monastery was reconstructed and reopened in 1990, during the social transition to democratization. The main divinity of the temple is 27-meter-high statue of Avalokiteśvara (an embodiment of the Buddha) made of gemstones, gold, and copper collected from all over Mongolia. This deity was first built by the last Mongolian emperor, the 8th Bogd Khaan, as a symbol of the spiritual unity of the Mongols. In 1996, it was rebuilt from donations from the Mongolian people.

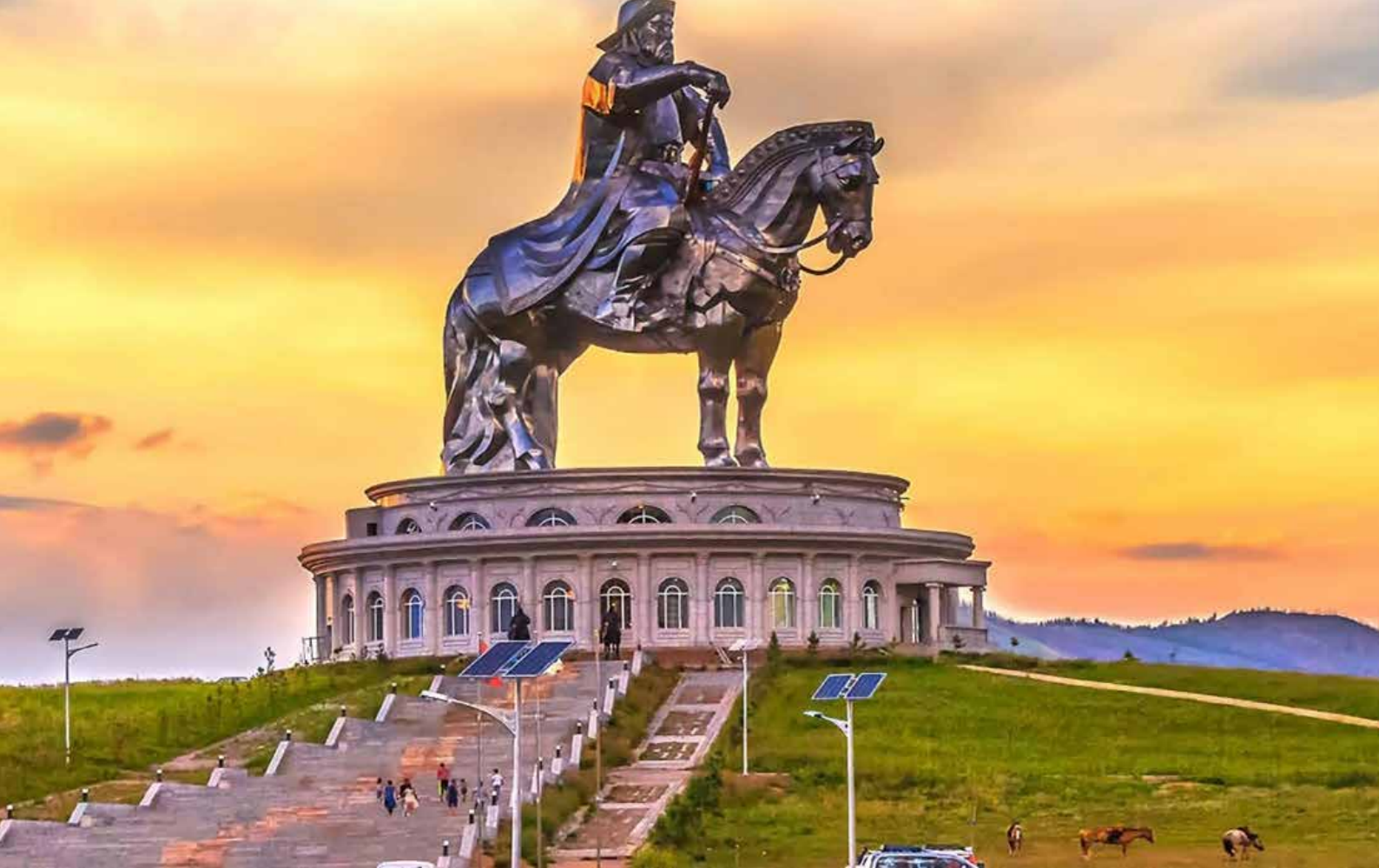
The main temple has hundreds of Buddhist deities and sculptures collected from all over Mongolia. The Monastery now houses numerous religious datsans (academies), a religious university, a Buddhist art institute, library, a traditional medicine school, a religious high school, and service halls for people. Around the monastery, people live in Mongolian traditional residence ger districts. The Monastery is protected by law as a Mongolian historical and cultural heritage site.

The Bogd Khaan Palace Museum was the winter palace of the last Mongolian



until 1924. The palace was built by Mongolian, Chinese and Russian architectures in 1893 for Mongolian religious leader the 8th Bogd, who became the leader of the Mongol independence movement, and in 1911 was proclaimed Emperor of Mongolia. The palace has been used as a museum since 1924 and has about 20 buildings and 9000 exhibits. In museum collections are artifacts which were used by the Emperor, the Emperor's own rare zoological collection, special gifts from foreign kings, and religious collections. The Bogd Khaan Palace Museum is a memorial symbol of the independent spirit of Mongols, and of honor to the 8th Bogd as a religious leader and the last emperor.





In Ulaanbaatar, there are many buildings with European architecture based on Greece-Roman styles, built in Soviet era. You can see this in the Opera and Ballet Theatre, the National Academic Drama Theatre, the National University of Mongolia, the Stock exchange building, the State Library, and many others.

Of course, Mongolia is the country of the great emperor, Chingis Khaan. You can see statues and monuments of Chinggis Khaan all over Mongolia, but you can only see the biggest statue of Chingis Khaan in Ulaanbaatar.

Ulaanbaatar is the Mongolian cultural, religious, and political capital, and now





rapidly growing as one of the business and trading centers of Asia. Ulaanbaatar is open to transnational, pop, and urban cultures, and kindly welcomes you to visit and experience it all.

**Sh. Mendbayar** is Head of the Department of Cooperation at the National University of Mongolia and **D. Munkhtamir** is a staff member of the Department of Cooperation at the National University of Mongolia.

# Naadam Festival & Mongolian Culture

By D.Otgontuya & O. Tsenguun

One of the most anticipated celebrations in Mongolia happens in the summer – the Naadam Festival (the Festival of the “Three Manly Sports”). Every year Mongolians enjoy watching how our strongest wrestlers, most meticulous archers, and swiftest horse riders compete for the pinnacle of achievement.

The Naadam festival has deep historic roots in the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE, when the Xiongnu or Hunnu empire was on the rise. At that time, horsemanship, wrestling, and archery were considered the three pillars of government. The rea-



son was simple: these were needed to protect the empire. The horse was the means of movement, be it for war or just for transport. If we compare it to the modern world, horses then were similar to cars today: without them, you couldn't move very far from where you were born. With archery, you could fight your enemies from far away, before they could get close. Most Mongols of that time mastered it to such a degree that they could shoot their enemies while they were riding on their horses. During melee battles, if you lost your saber or sword, wrestling came in handy. These things made the Xiongnu warriors mighty and unbeatable in war. Mounted on their horses, they were swift and could

shoot while riding, making them deadly, and when they were off their horse, they excelled at melee combat. During the summer, they organized competitions, where they could discover their flaws and hone their skills while enjoying a fierce but friendly competition.

The first officially recorded Naadam festival happened in 1639 under the name “Danshig Naadam.” In modern times, the victory day of the People’s Revolution has been celebrated on July 11th of each year since 1921, coinciding with this festival. Even in countryside villages there are small festivals of horse racing, wrestling, and archery, when the mountain and its cairn worship rituals are performed, as well as celebration of rituals for a new “ger” (the Mongolian traditional dwelling sometimes called a “yurt”), for birthdays, and so on. Naadam begins with an elaborate introduction ceremony featuring dancers, athletes, horse riders, and musicians.

## **Wrestling**

Wrestling is an essential part of the na-



tional festival of Mongolia. Every year on 11-12th of July, in the main stadium, a contingent of 512 wrestlers compete with each other. On some special occasions, the number is expanded to 1024. Mongolian wrestling has no classes based on weight or age, and the basic rule is that if a wrestler's body part (elbow, knee, head, or other part) touches the ground, it is considered a defeat. On the first day of Naadam, two rounds out of nine are done, while the rest are done on the second day. In every round, two wrestlers wrestle and one of



them is eliminated. For the last bout, only two wrestlers are left from the original 512 (or 1024). And then the champion is crowned. The champion receives a rank, and the President of Mongolia gives out the rewards.

Wrestlers earn a rank, and higher ranks have certain benefits. During the competition, higher ranked wrestlers can decide whom their opponents would be. The labels for Mongolian wrestling ranks are actually the names of animals, corresponding to the strength of the animal. The lowest rank is 'falcon;' after that comes 'hawk', 'elephant', 'garuda' and 'lion'. The highest rank; however, is the 'champion'. After a wrestler wins the fifth bout, they can earn the 'falcon' rank, and if they keep winning, they will receive the 'champion' rank.

There are celebratory epithets given to the title of the wrestler who continues to have success at the national wrestling festivals. They are described as 'highly ebullient', 'magnificently robust', 'eagerly expeditious', 'apparently mighty', 'more promising' are among those given to the

‘falcon’ ranked wrestler.

The functions and rules of Mongolian wrestling are not only meant to test the pair of wrestlers’ strength and prowess, but to connect the sport to its place among other national traditional arts and customs.

## **Horse racing**

It is almost hard to believe that 800 years ago Chinggis Khan rode on his horse and conquered lands that measured 23 million square kilometers. At that time, when people got married, they were gifted with horses. This was because animal husbandry had been the mainstay of nomadic Mongolian life from ancient times. It is impossible to imagine the lives of these livestock breeders without the horse. Honoring this tradition, horse racing is held at the Hui Doloon Khudag horse racing site in a competition with 100 to 600 horses. Preparing for the competition, the fastest horses are picked and sorted according to their ages. Note that Mongolians divide horses into five categories rather than four categories commonly used elsewhere. Af-



ter sorting, the training starts. The horses are fed a diet of small quantities of more nutritious grass, and they train everyday according to the distance they will be running in the competition. The two-year-old horses race on a 10 Km track, and three, four, and five year olds on 15, 18 and 20 km tracks respectively. Seven-year-old horses have the longest track, ranging from 25 to 30 km. Since the horses cannot race without a rider, but having an adult mount would make the horse go slower, small kids mount up and race. Jockeys of the swiftest horses are between 5-10 years old. They wear ample, light, and vivid colored clothes, and a helmet to reduce the risk of injury if they fall.

## Archery

An ancient stone inscription found near the Onon river reads: “Yesukhei, grandson of Chinggis Khan, shot a target at thirty-five feet, when Mon-



golians gathered and shot at a target at the place Bukh Sochikhai.” This inscription attests to the fact that these Mongolians have always had great success at accurately shooting arrows over great distances. Archery is divided into “uriankhai,” “buriad,” children’s, and national archery, with differences in the type of bows and arrows and in distances. The competition is based on the tradition of developing the bow and arrow and of improving the skills of the archer at longer distances, striving for greater success in hunting. Starting from the 13th century, every family was sure to have two possession things, and a bow was one of them. (The other was the “morin khuur,” the famed horsehead fiddle, the





Mongolian national musical instrument.) In the archery, both men and women can participate. It is a team sport, with each team consisting of 10 archers. Each archer is given four arrows, and each team should hit at least 33 times out of their 40 arrows. The target, called a 'sur,' is a small woven or wooden cylinder. Two 'sur' are stacked to form a wall, and the two "surs" at the center of the wall score an extra point. After each hit, the wall is newly re-assembled. Men shoot their arrow from 75 meters away while women shoot from 65 meters. The winners of the contests are granted the titles of 'national marksman' and 'national markswoman' respectively. After the competitions end, the President





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gives out awards, and the Naadam Festival ends with a closing ceremony.

During the festival, other events are conducted, including modern sports and other competitions such as ankle bone shooting, as well as exhibitions and shows of national costumes and so on. The Naadam Festival truly reflects the traditional arts, customs, and rituals of Mongolia.

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# Filmmaker Byambasuren Davaa Introduces the World of the Mongolian Steppes



Cameron Shirvani Steiner

Every year during award season, each country is invited by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in the U.S. to submit its best film for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film (“the Oscar”). The Foreign Language Film Award Committee oversees the process and reviews all the submitted films. A startling fact is readily apparent in the list of the films submitted by Mongolia for review by the Academy (Wikipedia).

## 2003 (76th)

The Story of the Weeping Camel

Director \_ *Byambasuren Davaa and Luigi Falorni*

### **2005 (78th)**

The Cave of the Yellow Dog

Director \_ *Byambasuren Davaa*

### **2009 (82nd)**

By the Will of Genghis Khan

Director \_ *Andrei Borissov*

### **2017 (90th)**

The Children of Genghis

Director \_ *Zolbayar Dorj*

### **2019 (92nd)**

The Steed

Director \_ *Erdenebileg Ganbold*

### **2020 (92nd)**

Veins of the World

Director \_ *Byambasuren Davaa*

Of the six films that Mongolia has submitted to the Academy, three of the films, including Mongolia's entry to the most recent 92nd Academy Awards, were done by the same director, Byambasuren Davaa (Roxborough, 2021). Byambasuren is arguably the star of Mongolia's current cinematic wave, with her international recognition unmatched among her contemporaries. It may be useful to introduce Mongolia's cinematic landscape by getting to know the filmmaker who is introducing

contemporary Mongolia to the world.

Byambasuren Davaa was born in Mongolia's capital Ulaanbaatar in 1971. It was there that she first studied International Law before transitioning into cinema, beginning as a director's assistant at Mongolia's state broadcaster, Mongolian National Television. Byambasuren then moved to Germany, where she is still based today, to study documentary filmmaking at the University of Television and Film in Munich. She recounts of this decision, "I wanted to learn how to tell stories. Stories that move people of different cultures that are meaningful and universal. For me, the step out of Mongolia, out of my nomadic family-based culture, was also the yearning to learn to understand and relate to the larger context in the world" (Festival Scope, 2020).

Byambasuren would first make waves with her reflective 2003 documentary *The Story of the Weeping Camel* - co-written and co-directed with Luigi Falorni - which would sell in 60 territories and become the first Mongolian film submitted for Oscar consideration for Best Documentary (Bar-





**Byambasuren Davaa on the set of her film**

Source: X Verleih AG

racrough, 2020). A joyous story in spite of its title, the film tells the story of one of Mongolia's plentiful nomadic families, and the white bactrian camel they raise and attempt to preserve (Id). The narrative documentary is presented in a style akin to "the first documentarian" Robert Flaherty (*Nanook of the North*, 1922), using real people in real situations to tell a story inspired by their lives (Ebert, 2004).

Byambasuren would continue in the narrative documentary tradition with her 2005 second film *The Cave of the Yellow Dog*, centering on a different nomadic family and following how a stray dog impacts

their lives. Byambasuren notes that the split of scripted and non-scripted scenes was “about 50/50.” “[W]e knew what sort of story we wanted to tell -- but we didn’t know exactly how it would be executed,” additionally remarking that the Batchuluun family did not learn any lines, as they were “very traditional and it wasn’t really possible to tell them what to say” (Woo, 2011). Despite the greater involvement of scripted sequences, Byambasuren allows for just enough distance to capture the family and their actions naturally, creating a crunch of authenticity in everything from how the mother cuts the cheese to how the father skins the sheep to sell a coat (Id.)

Her 2020 film *Veins of the World* marks the most significant evolution in Byambasuren’s filmmaking career. While each of her previous films having been partially staged documentaries, or docudramas, *Veins of the World* is Byambasuren’s first true feature film, an invented narrative based on her own screenplay. Byambasuren’s style and thematic focus follow from her previous works, embedded in





A still image from the opening scene of "Veins of the World."

the traditional life of a Mongolian nomad family threatened by their conflict with industry and modernity. In constructing her first feature film, Byambasuren seems to have picked up a baton from the Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami, another master of cinema on the Silk Road. Much like Kiarostami, she uses an ensemble of mostly amateur actors basically playing themselves. Her drama shares with his works a sense of the subtle urgencies of everyday life. Kiarostami made us worry about how a boy from an Iranian village is going to find a way to return a friend's school workbook, and Byambasuren grips our heart with a tale of a young boy from the steppes who wants to sing a traditional song on a televised national singing con-

test. And, like the Iranian master, Byambasuren knows how to speak volumes in a filmic language of long camera shots of sweeping vistas, with no need for dialogue, and bathing the audience in an added dimension of realism by the use of simple, ambient sound.

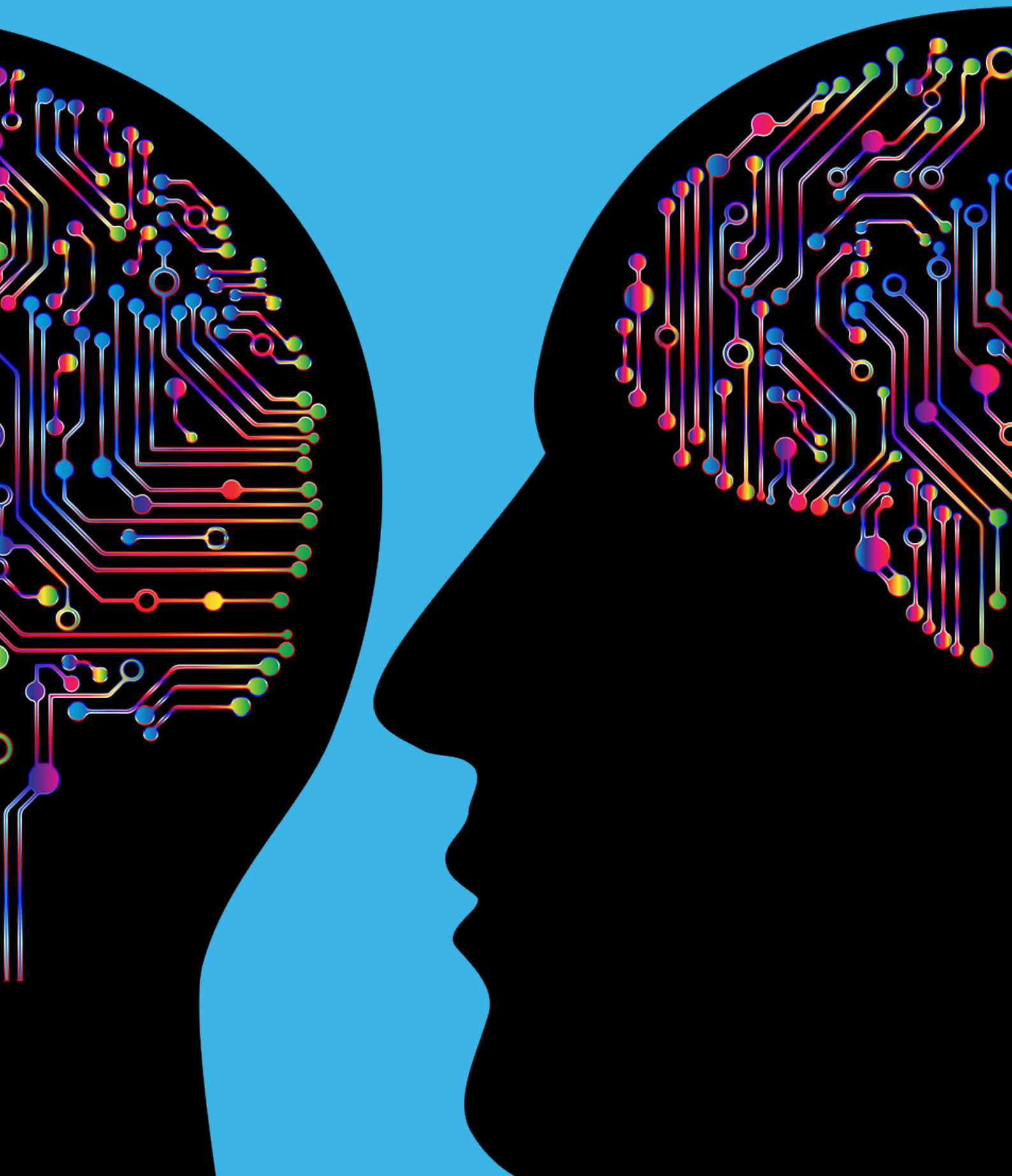
The director and her cinematographer, Talal Khourey, know what they have to work with. The film opens with a series of wordless wide shot scenes of a car making its dusty path across a vast expanse of the Mongolian steppe. The car may be in a bit of a hurry, but the filmmaker is not; she takes her time. With the spare accompaniment of a Mongolian stringed instrument, the motionless camera watching the distant moving car captures the sweep and grandeur of the rolling grassland, framed by distant mountains. And then, as the title fades into view, we see that the car, now closer to the camera, has left the timeless beauty of that landscape and entered a new part of modern Mongolia, an ugly, disfigured gold mining site where a corporation has literally torn open “the veins of the world.”

Like Kiarostami, the great Indian filmmaker Satyajit Ray, and other Silk Road-region masters of cinema before her, Byambasuren rejects the contemporary mainstream perception of cinematic engagement, one in which extravagant direction and dramatic busyness is imposed on a film's characters because it seems necessary to keep the audience's interest. These filmmakers instead compel viewer interest by simply dwelling on their characters, drawn from the depictions of their real lives, and on a cinematography that respects the landscape and mise-en-scène, and on with a minimalist style that is meant to not distract from the focus upon their stories. As the Japanese film master Akira Kurosawa once said in defense of Satyajit Ray's famously slow pace, "His work can be described as flowing composedly, like a river" (Robinson 2003: 314-15). Byambasuren's work similarly flows, like the grass waving in breeze on the steps of her beloved Mongolia.

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**COVER STORY**

# UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN THE ERA OF AI & BIG DATA





CANADIAN  
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# University Education in the Era of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Big Data



**Karim Chelli**

**T**he use of artificial intelligence (AI) and big data is not new to universities. Over the last decade, we have observed a significant increase in digital infrastructure that has shaped the ways in which we teach and convey information, display and store data, and understand and translate instruction.

Technological innovation is at the fore-



front of these advancements, shifting away from the traditional teacher-centered approach to one that is more student-centric and digitally integrated.

This shift from contemporary practice has largely been fueled by the digital era, in which digital technologies are used in nearly every aspect of our lives. The recent ‘COVID-19 normal’ environment has also acted as a catalyst for further educational reform, forcing academic institutions at all levels to reimagine their physical infrastructure and begin to build a more digitalized future.

The reallocation of these priorities in favour of the digitization of education presents a series of opportunities and challenges based on current trends and industry developments. These include but are not limited to an increased demand for personalized learning experiences, a more secure and connected campus, the need for more effective operations, and the rising value of community partnerships.

At Canadian University Dubai (CUD), the expanded City Walk campus has been tailored to a new advanced teaching model

that uses technology-driven tools to reflect this change of preference in support of digitalization.

Creating an environment conducive to learning, research, and creativity is an integral part of the student experience. Fostering academic achievement and celebrating success is significant as well. Although current trends and digital developments suggest these components remain a priority amongst educators, parents, and students, what they truly desire is a more personalized learning experience that will empower young scholars to achieve their academic goals, promote student opinion, creativity, and entrepreneurship, and provide a flexible learning pace as well as improved access to education. As digital concepts become further integrated into institutions for higher learning, these expectations will be more achievable by effective communication between all parties involved, encouraging prosperous collaboration.

Younger generations are no longer content with sitting in on in-person lectures and dissecting relevant texts, forcing uni-

versities to adapt by providing dynamic and interactive experiences supported in and out of the classroom. Failure to adjust to these preferences presents the possibility of losing value.

At CUD, this increased interest in personalized learning has been acknowledged by taking the classic student environment and blending it with the latest modern technologies to provide the academic community with an improved higher education experience. These recently established ‘hybrid classrooms’ introduce students to different methods of learning while promoting the digitalization of education wherever required.

With wide-angle cameras at the front of each classroom, hybrid classrooms at CUD provide remote participants with a 180-degree view of the room. This creates an ambiance that was once unique to being in a physical class, irrespective of where one is connected from.

Hybrid classrooms also feature high-quality, state-of-art microphones and speakers to enable a better conferencing and distance learning experience. This is

further enhanced by voice lifting technology, enabling both professors and students to speak and be heard from anywhere in the classroom for more comfortable discussion.

This new technology is complemented by appropriate lighting that provides a better colour temperature and does not strain the eyes.

It is clear that the digital era, in parallel with the changing academic landscape, has caused institutions for higher learning to reimagine how they configure, enhance, and manage resources. By connecting physical infrastructure with digital technology, universities are beginning to build a more seamless campus experience. Focusing on the classroom, effective technology integration has the power to change the dynamics of the entire learning space. This is largely dependent on which technological tools are provided to students and how they are used.

CUD has invested in many advanced tools to meet these demands, including whiteboards where students can learn by seeing, hearing, and interacting with fac-

ulty and peers. When connected to the Internet, professors can use these whiteboards to access a variety of online tools and information that equips them with innovative ways to showcase their subject material. Other devices such as computers, cameras, and cellphones can also be connected for enhanced instruction, providing a high degree of flexibility with their lectures.

Outside of effective teaching tools, a secure and connected campus also includes the safeguarding of privacy rights and restricted data, yet another pressing concern of the digital age.

In the United Arab Emirates (UAE) there is immense respect and commitment to privacy, due to the Government's emphasis on the safety and security of the nation. The UAE remains heavily invested in many technologies to protect its people. System interoperability, scalability, and extensibility, in line with data integrity and security standards, play a significant role in this process.

In line with the UAE Government's strong commitment to privacy protection,



CUD's expanded City Walk campus has created a data center that accommodates a high volume of data storage with enterprise-level security, as well as capacity for housing mission and business critical services and data.

CUD's City Walk campus also hosts a high-level network and Internet connectivity with redundant lines, as well as enterprise-level firewalls to keep the university community safe and protected.

While investing in the physical infrastructure of an academic institution is still relevant, the future of technology and digitalization extends beyond a university's campus and across various aspects of teaching and learning. This has affected how academic institutions conduct daily operations.

Recruitment and enrolment are just two examples of areas that have seen a dramatic change with the progress of the digital era. Owing to technological advancement, academic institutions have better access to data and analytics, which can assist with the development of inclusive and financially sustainable enrolment strate-

gies to serve new learners better.

Internet of things (IoT) technologies are also amongst these newly introduced resources that can use data and analytics information to gain and retain students, as well as predict enrolment trends. AI technology, such as smart counsellor chatbots, is another recent development that has been introduced to the academic landscape with the hopes of eliminating tedious, time-intensive administrative tasks and improving the efficiency of information technology (IT) processes.

As digital usage continues to increase globally, institutions for higher learning must continue to adapt more convenient processes to meet students where they are – online. Virtual access to services such as registration and student accounts is another example of how universities have evolved in accordance with the changing times and present-day demands.

Diving deeper into corporate strategy, institutions for higher learning have had to specifically incorporate digital marketing into their marketing and communications mix. Campaigns must be tailored to

the modern student; whose profile now involves carrying a mobile device and actively engaging in the use of social media.

The rise in popularity of such platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and Tik Tok, has prompted the emergence of a digital approach to advertising that revolves around driving engagement and interaction. This has made universities substantially more accessible, causing them to shift away from traditional media methods.

CUD has managed to amass a relatively significant following across various social media platforms as institutions for higher learning begin to place digital advertising at the forefront of their advertising efforts. By creating trendy content, CUD has successfully been able to reach current, future, and prospective students, as well as their families.

The COVID-19 pandemic and sudden closures of academic institutions at all levels resulted in drastic changes to the international learning environment. Within the context of these closures, academic institutions had to search for distance and re-

mote learning resources. This led to an increase in partnerships and collaborations largely between academic institutions, private educational platforms (by electronic means), and corporate entities, to provide effective solutions to overcome these challenges.

During this time, CUD turned to established technical partners, original equipment manufacturers, and channel partners of leading technology vendors to establish collaborations. This allowed CUD to manage the unprecedented demands and requirements of the changing information and communication technologies (ICT) situation.

Joining others in the community, be it local or international, encourages the promotion and implementation of activities to broaden and deepen the educational experience. CUD has built a strong network of Canadian partners, including some of the country's most renowned and respected higher education institutions, to fulfill this need.

CUD has also extended its reach globally through collaborations with universities



around the world. This has provided students with a network that extends beyond international borders, offering them endless opportunities abroad.

As a Dubai-based institution for higher learning, CUD also shares in the collaborative vision of UAE Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, and the ‘UAE Strategy for Artificial Intelligence.’ Marking a new level of innovation built on Smart Government, the strategy is the first of its kind in the world, emphasizing investment in the latest AI technologies and tools to enhance government performance and efficiency.

With a focus on future services, sec-



tors, and infrastructure projects in the post-mobile government, the strategy targets accessibility to education and seeks to enhance the desire of future prospects to invest in higher learning.

It has become increasingly clear that the era of AI and big data is revolutionizing university education. Academic institutions are now taking a more progressive, forward-thinking, and digitally integrated student-centered approach to teaching and learning.

As digital concepts become more prevalent, personalized learning experiences are required to meet stakeholder demands. By introducing technology to the learning environment, diverse teaching methods can be delivered, resulting in exciting and dynamic ways for students to understand and translate information.

Introducing new technologies to the physical classroom (including remote learning), presents universities with the opportunity to improve campus connectivity. This provides faculty with more resources to better teach and convey information through increased student en-

gagement and interaction.

Improved digital connectivity means more security is needed to safeguard privacy and restricted data. Academic institutions must remain vigilant and continue to invest in technologies that will protect their communities.

Beyond the connected campus, digitalization has the capability of streamlining everyday processes and shifting the direction of marketing and communications strategies. Internet of things (IoT) and AI technologies enable institutions for higher learning to improve how they conduct business, making daily tasks easier for all parties involved.

As a result of the growing challenges of today (i.e., the COVID-19 pandemic), academic institutions, corporations, and governments must continue to work together and build partnerships to improve the academic landscape. Collaboration encourages communication and helps to provide compelling solutions to overcome difficulty.

In summary, we must continue incorporating new-age technologies, trends, and

developments from the digital era into our scholarly activities and infrastructure to persevere the fundamental role and the significant contribution of our institutions. With stakeholders acting as key driving forces behind these changes, universities must insist on paving new ways for the future to stay relevant in this ever-growing competitive field.

In this era of Artificial Intelligence and Big Data, CUD is committed to providing students with an innovative and positive environment conducive to continual learning and development by embracing the opportunities presented by the digitalized age

**Karim Chelli** is the President and Vice-Chancellor of Canadian University Dubai, UAE.

# The University in the Era of AI & Big Data: A Promising Adventure but Beware of Dragons



**Ronald Steiner**

The convergence of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies and “big data” has created the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Chao 2018). Universities around the world are still thinking about what that Revolution means for how we teach, how we do research, and how we administer our institutions. But if we want to be successful, we need to think bigger.

Consider this warning from Dr. Yang Qiang<sup>1</sup>, an expert on AI and data: “At the

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Yang Qiang is head of Department of Computer Science and Engineering at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and the first Chinese chairman of the International Joint Conferences on Artificial Intelligence.

time when the internet was emerging, in the first stage, a traditional bookstore made a web page and considered itself an online bookstore, which was not the case. In the second phase, websites like Amazon were established, that were completely different from the traditional bookstore” (Chao 2018). Similarly, a traditional university, with some online capacity through Zoom and a commercial learning management system, is not the same as the university of the future, which also will be something “completely different” from the traditional university.

The era of big data and AI ultimately will impact every aspect of the university:

### **1. How we teach:**

The university is becoming a cyborg, a cybernetic organism, where technology mediates the types and degree of interaction between faculty and students. There is some good in that: We can let students take more control over their education with a self-paced curriculum of an entirely new and efficient form. We can collaborate globally with learn-



ing platforms that soar across space and, with asynchronous learning, even across time. But it won't just be a matter of doing what we're already doing with greater efficiency – we will need to re-think what a curriculum means when we can easily hyper-target students' needs and interests through machine learning.

## **2. What we teach:**

The university must become a place where students can learn to become citizens of a world where AI and big data shape their expectations and responsibilities. Whether as a doctor or engineer, as a designer or an editor, as an artist or performer, and even as a citizen, our graduates will have to be fluent in a new language and capable of using the new technologies.

## **3. How we research and create:**

AI and big data have already started to revolutionize the agenda for scholarship and creative activities at many universities. Once again, these new tools allow

us not only to do the same old things in more efficient ways, they also will allow us to ask new questions and express new insights that we could not have even imagined in the past.

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#### **4. How we function:**

Like any other big institution, the university will be impacted by new decision-making routines in hiring of faculty and staff, recruitment and retention of students, scheduling and curriculum planning, as well as administrative procedures for maintenance, purchasing, etc.

The new university will be different. It doesn't have to be a kind of soulless hellcape controlled by thinking machines like in the nightmare of so much science fiction. But, as it was said on the fearful maps of the old maritime Silk Road, there be dragons out there on the uncharted seas of the 21st century university:

1. Difficulty establishing personal relationships.

2. Inhuman if not inhumane work environments.
3. Loss of faculty jobs or loss of status in jobs as full time tenured faculty get replaced by an army of part-time instructors who monitor data indicating student progress.
4. A massively increased digital divide between haves and have-nots, both within and between countries.
5. Unethical research projects, including support for improper surveillance and manipulative misinformation by both governments and private interests.

But like those brave adventurers who charted those once uncharted seas, the pioneering universities of today will build a university of the future, full of new possibilities. An individualized curriculum can meet students where they are and with whatever preparation and interests they have, and allow them to learn in new and effective ways. A university not limited by location and time zone can collaborate globally in teaching and scholarly and creative activities.

Customization and individualization are at the heart of the recent revolution (Dagge 2020). Using masses of data and AI, cutting edge services and businesses have created a culture in which users expect an individually tailored experience, with access to what they want and need on their own terms and on their own schedule. As that demanding user becomes a bigger part of the university, there will be increasing disinterest in the traditional ways of doing things.

Imagine a student who decides they need better statistical skills in programs like SPSS or R to do their research. The traditional university tells them: “You need to take a semester long course that meets in the Math Building on Mondays and Wednesdays at 11:00a.m., and, by the way, that course is only taught in the fall term, so you’ll have to wait until then.” But the cutting-edge academic programs of the future will tell them: “You can start learning right now, perhaps tonight at 11:00 p.m. when the kids are asleep and the kitchen is clean, and you can learn at your own pace in order to finish the process in a

couple of weeks and then get on with your research.” The new student wants this cutting-edge experience, but the traditional university will have a hard time deciding if and when they want to implement such an option, and then go through tremendous contortions to arrange new administrative routines for registration, billing, assessment, staffing, and accreditation.

Those who are charting the new routes on the unknown seas are already changing what we teach and how we do research—which aren’t really different things in the best academic programs. Dr. Hesham El-Askary, a colleague at my university in California, works with collaborators and students from throughout the world in the Earth Systems Science Data Solutions Lab, where they collect and analyze masses of data to advance specific sustainable development goals related to agriculture and food productivity, water resources, air quality, clean energy, and climate action. The Lab uses rapidly increasing data sources from space-based Earth observation satellites and other remote sensing technologies, together with artificial intel-



ligence and machine learning, to develop algorithms and statistical models in which machines rely on patterns and inference to independently carry out a specific task with no need for explicit instructions. Space based Earth observation allows for a previously unimaginable scale of data collection regarding land use, evapotranspiration, surface soil moisture, etc. to better understand hydrological changes, famine risks, and desertification. In collaboration with colleagues from Alexandria University in Egypt, King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, and the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture, the Lab does both current research and, very importantly, trains students to be the researchers of tomorrow. Dr. El-Askary notes:

**“I believe now is a golden age for young professionals and other practitioners in the space and water domain: satellites are providing us with an unprecedented wealth of data with the ongoing development of satellites observations, cloud computing, very**

high-resolution imagery, radar images and others. Combine that with the new developments in data processing and storage, and in artificial intelligence for various applications, and you can see there



Dr. Hesham El-Askary of the Earth Systems Science Data Solutions Lab, Chapman University

is an order-of-magnitude change in capacity. This golden age of remote sensing and modeling can bring all fields into a markedly less uncertain state of present knowledge and decadal scale forecasts. The best, the trendiest and the most successful research is the one done with an interdisciplinary lens, keeping in mind all points of view and inviting researchers from different disciplines to collaborate. There is so much to work with these days” (Kicking 2020).

But outside of the realm of cutting-edge

research, the most significant impact of AI at the university seems to have been in adaptive student assessment and grading, predication of student performance, and student retention (Guan et al. 2020).

Other potential growth areas include :

- Virtual reality (VR) which offers “a simulated experience that enhances learning and engagement by allowing user to view and interact with virtual features or items.”
- Augmented reality (AR) which brings “an interactive experience of a real-world environment into the classroom where the objects that reside in the real world are enhanced by computer-generated perceptual and sensory information.””
- Educational “gamification” which uses games designed for learning or practicing a skill rather than as entertainment.
- Adaptive learning/adaptive teaching which uses computer algorithms “to orchestrate the interaction with the learn-

er and deliver customized resources and learning activities to address the unique needs of each learner.”

- Assessment design which uses new instruments involving machine learning, neural network, automatic scoring or other AI techniques to richer diagnostic outcomes than what conventional testing can do (id.).

These innovations are not unimportant, but in practice most universities haven't done much to address the deep structure of teaching and learning itself. The reality is that in higher education “most so-called AI applications for teaching and learning today are heavily focused on content presentation and testing for understanding and comprehension,” or on efforts to understand and predict the conditions of student success or failure (Bates et al. 2020). Partly this reflects the fact that universities have not been the real leaders in this revolution; they left the field to Google, Facebook, Amazon AWS, YouTube and many other businesses who are offering their services

“for free,” while using all these contacts to refine their algorithms and commodify the data (id.).<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, even though academics like to think of themselves as thought leaders, the reality is that higher education historically lags behind in the adoption of new technologies. “Lack of willingness to take risks, or to adopt new innovations, and lack of funding for anything different from traditional methods of teaching militate against the adoption of new technologies in all sectors of education, learning and development” (Bates et al. 2020, citing Wheeler 2019).

What are we doing wrong? Big data won’t be worth anything if it is bad data, and right now we are “using data that is easily collectable rather than educationally meaningful (Lynch 2017). We suffer from “information underload,” according to Professor Mike Caulfield, Director of Blended & Networked Learning at Washington State University Vancouver: “We

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<sup>2</sup> Harvard Business School Professor Shoshana Zuboff has warned of this in her pioneering work on “surveillance capitalism” (Zuboff 2019).



suffer not because there is just too much good information out there to process, but because most information out there is low quality slapdash takes on low quality research” (Caufield 2017). AI and big data were designed to help us cope with “the firehose of content.” But according to Caufield, “the big problem is not that it’s a firehose, but that it’s a firehose of sewage” (id.) There needs to be evidence-based and worthwhile content, and we are not doing enough to develop AI in ways that reflect the evidence from the science of learning (id.).

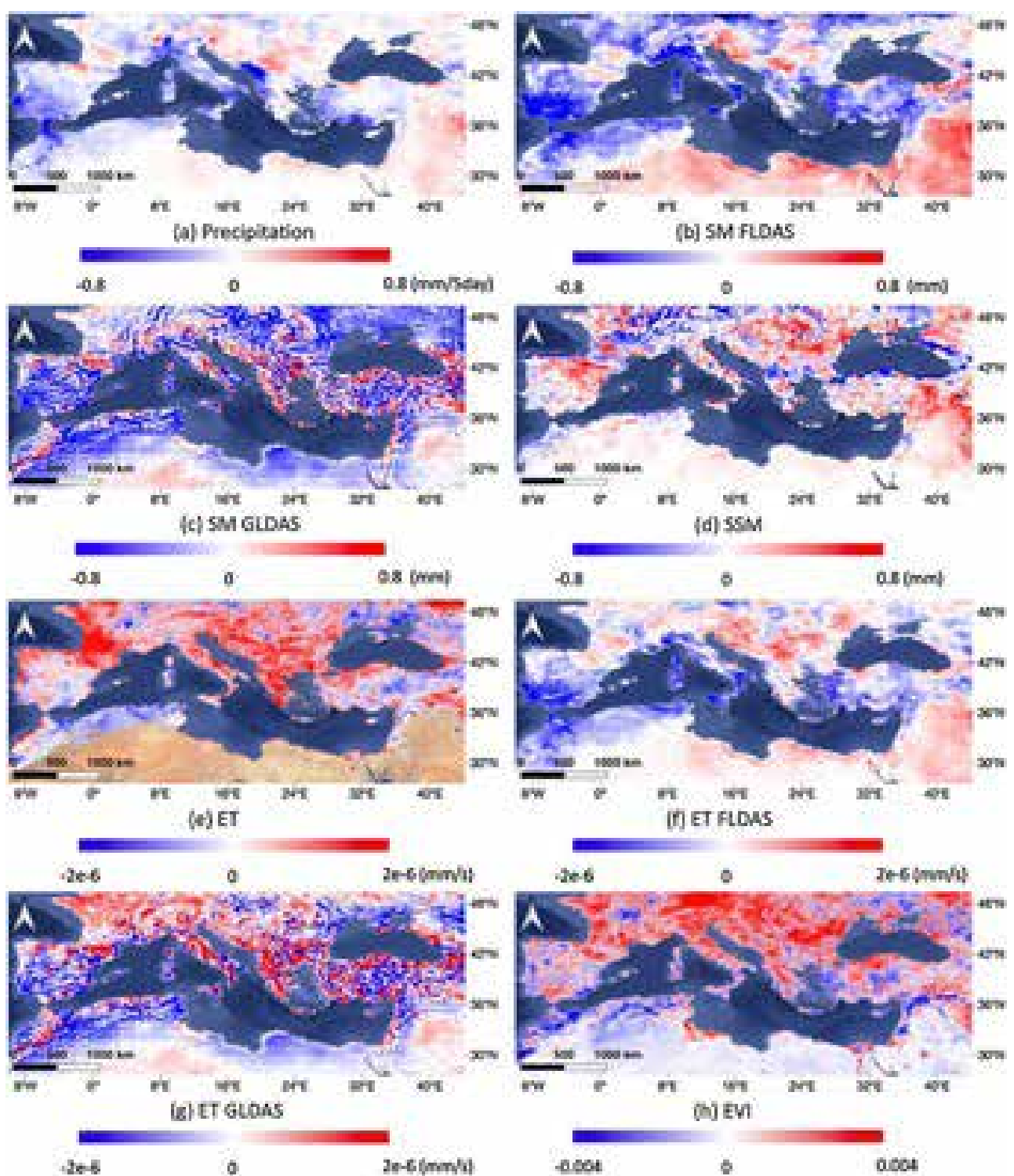
Faculty members need to take ownership of the re-visioning of higher education because they are precisely those best positioned to do so.

“Learning is not only about having the right information at the right time. There is no unique or specific magic formula to deliver learning to everyone in any place, at any time. More than 40 years of research has shown that learning takes place when a number of complex intervening conditions co-

alesce. These include relevant context, appropriate motivation, requisite time and opportunity, personal skills and other social and emotional factors that may extend beyond our cognitive capacity” (Bates et al., 2020).

The trend map of Precipitation, SSM, ET, and EVI obtained from observational data in Mediterranean region, from Li, Wenzhou et al. (2021), “Investigating Decadal Changes of Multiple Hydrological Products and Land-Cover Changes in the Mediterranean Region for 2009–2018,” Earth Systems and Environment, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41748-021-00213-w> (Courtesy of Earth Systems Science Data Solutions Lab, Chapman University).

There is much that universities and even



professors themselves must “unlearn and relearn” (Wheeler, 2015). This absolutely does not mean that every student becomes a computer scientist. Not everyone needs to learn how to code (though everyone probably should have some sense of what coding is and how it works). But too much of the existing technology really isn’t very good. In the words of the insightful higher ed critic Audrey Watters, “no one would ever describe the learning management system, the student information system, or the vast majority of education technology tools as graceful. They're clunky and unwieldy. They suck” (Watters 2020).

To do better, we must remember that effective teaching and learning includes an affective element, and we cannot “delegate the human function of education to a machine” (Watters 2020).

“[W]e needs to resist this impulse to have the machines dictate what we do, the shape and place of how we teach and trust and love. We need to do a better job caring for one another — emotionally, sure, but also politically. We

need to recognize how disproportionate affective labor already is in our institutions, how disproportionate that work will be in the future. We need to agitate for space and compensation for it, not outsource care to analytics, AI, and surveillance” (id.)

Still, the highest and best use of an instructor is not “content presentation, content management and testing of content comprehension,” which can be done as well or better by digital technologies; the instructor should be focused on skills development (Bates et al. 2020).

Excerpt from “Marine map and Description of the Northern Lands and of their Marvels, most carefully drawn up at Ven-



ice in the year 1539 through the generous assistance of the Most Honourable Lord Hieronymo Quirino” (1539), This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-SA

Professors must become curators of resources made available to students, who are becoming more individualized as learners. Professors also must help students develop information literacy. Students need to have an awareness of where reliable knowledge, data, and information can be found, and what to do with it once they find it.

“The good news is that, used in this way, AI supports teachers and instructors, but does not replace them. Perhaps the less welcome news for some is that many teachers and instructors will need to change the way they teach or they will become redundant” (Bates et al. 2020).

More than 40 years ago, at the dawn of the modern era of computing, science fiction author and futurist Arthur C. Clarke wrote about “electronic tutors,” what we



today would call computer-aided instruction. “Where does this leave the human teacher?” he asked, and then gave this challenging answer to his own question: “Any teacher who can be replaced by a machine should be!” (Clarke 1980).

Clarke was optimistic that “the electronic tutor” can take over “the sheer drudgery [and] the tedious repetition” that can be part of teaching, and “[b]y removing the tedium from the teacher's work and making learning more like play, electronic tutors will paradoxically humanize education” (id.)

More ominously, Clarke the futurist didn't think that it was just some teachers who should be replaced by a machine. He challenged the university as a whole to be subject to the same test: if any university, “however ivy-covered its walls, can be replaced by a global electronic network of computers and satellite links,” perhaps it should be (id.).

With the rise of AI and big data, the revolutionary world that some futurists predicted has now come into view. But we should heed the warnings they gave us:

There really are dragons out there in the uncharted seas of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, dragons big enough to swallow entire universities. Some universities are up to the challenge and will survive, but many are not.

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# **COVID-19 Attests to Importance of Research in Universities**

**IVI director notes vaccines originating from universities**

**Dr. Kim stresses SUN's role in connecting universities, opening up inward-facing countries on the Silk Roads**

**By Amali Ranavi Thantrige**

**V**accines have become a global hot topic in the wake of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic that has been plaguing the global village for more than one and a half years. While the world is welcoming the development of COVID-19 vaccines in a relatively short period of time, it also has brought about concerns and controversies regarding the vaccines' safety, efficacy, and equity in distribution.

It is against this backdrop that



**Dr. Jerome Kim, Director General of the International Vaccine Institute, talks with SUN Secretary General Professor Sungdon Hwang (right) and *SILKROADIA* Editor-in-Chief Shi-yong Chon at his office in Seoul on May 14.**

SILKROADIA interviewed Dr. Jerome Kim, Director General of the International Vaccine Institute located in Seoul, South Korea. Established in 1997, IVI operates as an independent international organization under a treaty signed by 35 countries and the World Health Organization.

Dr. Kim, a Korean American physician and expert in viruses and vaccines, was named one of “The 50 Most Influential People in Vaccines” in 2014 by the Vaccine Nation, a vaccine industry group.

In the interview held at his office, Dr. Kim introduced the role of IVI and dis-

cussed the importance of vaccines in protecting people from diseases. Regarding COVID-19, he suggested taking vaccines as soon as possible and warned about the possibility of similar pandemics hitting the mankind in the future.

The IVI director general pointed to the lack of global leadership in responding to COVID-19, not least the G-7 and G-20. He also emphasized the importance of a multilateral effort to ensure that everyone can benefit from new vaccine technology.

Dr. Kim, who was a professor of medicine before taking over IVI, emphasized the role of universities in research. He noted that most of the COVID-19 vaccines came out of universities. He also stressed the role of SUN and other organizations in connecting universities and opening up what he called “inward-facing” countries on the Silk Roads. Excerpts from the interview with Dr. Kim are as follows:

**Q: First of all, would you please introduce the IVI to our readers?**

**A: IVI is the first and only international**



organization dedicated to discovery, development, and delivery of safe, effective, and affordable vaccines for global health. From our headquarters here in Seoul, near Seoul National University, we work in 28 countries around the world, doing a very wide array of studies that includes epidemiologic studies, looking at the burden of various diseases around the world, the development of actual vaccines, the testing of vaccines in animals and humans, then the approval of those vaccines and the development of all the systems necessary in order for the vaccines to have impact. You see that in the COVID pandemic as well, where it is one thing to invent the vaccine and rush it through testing, it's a completely separate issue to get that vaccine manufactured, recommended and in the arms of people who actually need to benefit from the vaccine. We work on all those things, and actually you'll see in one of the other answers why that have been important in COVID-19.

**Q: Has the IVI been involved in the research, development and delivery of vac-**

## **cines against COVID-19?**

**A:** Yes. Because we work, route, we call the vaccine value chain, because we can test to see where COVID is in the world, because we can test the vaccines in the laboratory, and in humans, and because we have experience taking vaccines beyond the stage of licensure and delivery, we have funding from a variety of different organizations now to do all of those things. We are working with 12 to 14 companies to test their vaccines in various ways, either in animals or in humans. We are also soon to get a grant to do what we call a post-efficacy study.

**Q:** Vaccines against COVID-19, which have been developed in a relatively short period of time, gave both hope and concerns, the latter being about the efficacy and ill effects. How effective and safe are they?

**A:** Although they developed the vaccines in 11 months, instead of 5-10 years, went through the usual steps that we would take vaccines through in testing. They were tested in phase one for safety, then phase

two for whether they are making the right protective responses, then phase three to actually see if those protective responses keep people from getting sick and getting infected. As far as we can tell from tens of thousands of, I think in all, over 200,000 people around the world or actually more, have participated in clinical trials of these vaccines, which is a very large population. In the studies that have been done through phase 3, the vaccines appeared to be safe and efficacious. And efficacy according to the World Health Organization has to be more than 50%, and many of the vaccines were way over 50% - you know, Pfizer was 95%, Moderna was 94.5%, Gamaleya was 92%. I think the vaccines are safe and efficacious. I would suggest taking a vaccine as soon as you can, because the sooner we get to some level of herd protection, then the sooner the government will feel more comfortable removing restrictions.

**Q: What do you think is needed to fight the so-called vaccine nationalism and ensure equal distribution of COVID-19 vaccines? Will international organizations**

like the WHO, IVI, and the Global Vaccine Alliance is able to contribute to fast and equal distribution of vaccines?

A: Yes, I think that is true, but not fast enough. I say that for a particular reason. For most global health vaccines, it takes decades for a vaccine to make its way from the rich country where it's developed, to the poor countries where vaccines are also needed. With COVID-19 and COVAX, we are committing to providing what at least 20%, but now the number will be probably 30% if all the contracts come through. 30% of all the needed vaccines will be delivered in the first year, to 189 countries around the world, which is really remarkable, because we have never been able to start vaccination in lower- and middle-income countries.

So, IVI is committed to access. We have technology transferred vaccines to India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Korea. I think the most important things that countries and companies can do is to get as much high-quality vaccine manufacturing started as quickly as possible. That doesn't mean building a new factory in a

green field somewhere in Korea and Africa. It means going to a company that knows how to make vaccines, and very rapidly transferring the technology, making sure the regulatory authority, the Ministry of Food and Drug Safety in Korea, is capable of actually monitoring the quality of production. Equity will be the measure of our success, because the data from the Gates Foundation suggests that if we don't provide equity in the first two billion doses of vaccines used, and we have already expended the billion doses so far, then global COVID deaths will double.

**Q: How do you assess the responses of the international community, including the World Health Organization, and governments to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic?**

**A:** The Global response to COVID-19 has lacked leadership. That responsibility falls squarely on the G-7 / G-20. Many of those countries have failed to lead, or to empower others to lead, or to hold themselves responsible. It is easier wagging your finger to remonstrate than to pick up the flag and

lead the charge. WHO is a creation of its members, and only when that membership is aligned, supportive, and empowering can WHO be effective. We could put the politics of the Cold War behind us to create the program to eradicate smallpox – but politics, around the science, around equity, around China have been a distraction when action and leadership were needed.

**Q: There would be a lot of factors for predicting when the COVID-19 pandemic will end and the mankind will get back to normal life. Overall, when do you expect that will happen?**

**A:** I would expect this to happen in phases. Assuming the variants remain controllable by vaccines, countries should start to see decreases in cases as rates of vaccination increase (i.e., before “herd” protection levels) but we should continue to emphasize that (1) “herd” protection isn’t a magical number, it is a number on the way to complete vaccination of a population; (2) masks/distancing will continue to be necessary, and premature release of these re-



strictions could have negative consequences; (3) monitoring (test-track-isolate-treat) needs to continue to be active and aggressive; (4) support for international efforts to do surveillance for variants, to provide vaccine for low- and middle-income countries, and to ensure the availability of necessary medical supplies to deal with outbreaks at home and abroad.

**Q: You have just mentioned the possibility of a next pandemic. Is there any possibility of COVID-19 or any mutant viruses, or an entirely different virus or other infectious diseases massively hitting the mankind again in the future?**

**A:** Yes, definitely. We called this the once-in-a-century pandemic because the last big pandemic was the Spanish Flu, which was about a hundred years ago. But we've known now three coronavirus outbreaks. The MERS outbreak, actually MERS started in 2012, but it hit Korea in 2015. We had a SARS-1 outbreak in the early 2000s. The coronaviruses are real targets for pandemics. Influenza viruses are real targets. And another group of viruses is called the

paramyxoviruses, which also exist in humans and animals. So, you can see the pattern here. Influenza exists in humans and animals, coronavirus in humans and animals, and paramyxoviruses as well. They have the potential to leap from one species to another, and those are the viruses that right now we are concerned about. Could there be others, like larger outbreak of Ebola? Yes, there will be these outbreaks in the future. I think the world needs to prepare for these pandemics. The way Korea used the lessons of MERS to prepare for COVID-19, hopefully the United States uses the lessons of COVID to prepare for next time.

**Q: What are the most important lessons the international community, governments and people should learn from the COVID-19 pandemic?**

**A:** Despite progress in science and medicine, infection and pandemics remain a major threat to the health of humankind and to our economies. Bearing that in mind we did learn about the (1) ability to get vaccines from lab to licensure in 11

months; (2) the value of multilateral cooperation in CEPI; (3) that through contracts and licensing vaccine manufactures can get billions of doses made (it would be good to ensure that ways to leverage these relationships could help with pandemic influenza (or other diseases); (4) mRNA and adenovirus based vaccines can be vehicles for prevention of disease; (5) innovation – especially in biotech – can greatly improve the speed and effectiveness of pandemic solutions; (6) COVAX – a multilateral effort to ensure that everyone can benefit from new vaccine technology (notably, we have to work hard to ensure that COVAX meets its aims, or exceeds them).

**Q: You have been a professor of medicine and researcher as well. What role do you think universities must play in overcoming crises like the COVID-19 outbreak and other challenges to the human civilization?**

**A:** I think research in universities is really critical, because out-of-the-box thinking comes from these universities. The Oxford vaccine came out of Oxford University, the

AstraZeneca vaccine. The Moderna vaccine was developed with a lot of funding from the U.S. National Institutes of Health. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, again, was funded by NIH, by Drew Weissman's lab. Drew actually worked for Tony (Anthony) Fauci, director of the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID). And the German who took that technology to BioNTech, worked with Drew. They're at the University of Pennsylvania. And the INOVIO vaccine came out of David Weiner's lab at the University of Pennsylvania. So, there are really critical links to universities in the response. Actually, the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, the Ad26 vaccine—they were introduced to Dan Barouch at Harvard. Universities are critical, because they're the source of ideas. And the government that fund universities are doing only what governments can do. It requires lots of fund to improve research and developments. I only encourage countries around the world to support research and development, because it's really important, in terms of getting those ideas going that hopefully will be linked to commer-

cialization, and rapid development of test kits and vaccines, or hopefully, new drugs.

**Q: The COVID-19 pandemic is exposing the already deep economic gaps among the countries on the Silk Roads. What international efforts should be made to close the gaps?**

**A:** Vaccine access and equity are critical to the recovery of economies, but health systems infrastructure – the ability to deliver vaccines, or universal health care – needs to be strengthened.

**Q: The Silk Road Universities Network, founded in 2015, has grown to embrace 79 universities along the ancient Silk Road routes. Aiming to revive the spirit of the old Silk Roads such as peace and cooperation, co-prosperity, diversity, and inclusiveness, it has been undertaking diverse programs. In order to achieve its mission, what role do you think it can play and what programs it can undertake?**

**A:** I think the university-to-university contacts are very important. We reached out, or actually, Iran reached out to us. It

was really remarkable to go to Tehran and to visit the universities there and talk to them about vaccine development and vaccines of various kinds, and how interested they were and how much talent they have. It is important to reach out and establish these relationships and to cross-fertilize by exchange, by students and professors going to different universities and spending sabbatical time. To the extent that you can get a government to support those exchanges, you know, sabbaticals are expensive for universities, but to the extent that governments can do that, we can really build much closer relationships and encourage a lot more multiculturalism. A lot of the countries along the Silk Roads are very inward-facing, and part of what I think that SUN and other organizations that work along this [can do] is to open these societies up, and to at least create among the educated members of that culture or society, a tide to other similar-thinking people.

**Q: Besides the pandemic, university students of today live in a very different**



environment than the one your generation lived and studied in. What do you think they should focus on during their college days?

A: I think that the pandemic, these events, should change the way we think about each other and the way we deal with our responsibility. We are in the West, and in modern society. We're very much into 'our rights.' - Our right to freedom, primarily, to do things. What we fail to see is that each of those freedoms comes with a particular responsibility in the exercise of that freedom. We fail to fully understand the implications of that. So, I think that the students who have grown up under COVID have probably a little bit better understanding of what it means to have a responsibility. If it's the responsibility to wear masks to protect your grandparents or parents from an infection that may not hurt you but may kill them, that's an important thing. If it means thinking about poor students at a university who don't have access to internet, and can't attend class, then trying to helping them out. Or if it means helping provide meals or other

things during the pandemic, I think all of those things are things that we didn't have to deal with. My generation, the epidemic of the day was HIV. There was while we didn't know what caused it, and people were dying of it. But the mechanism of the spread was much more specific.

This pandemic has been much more dramatic, in terms of its ability to reach very quickly to all the corners of the world. I think, hopefully, this pandemic has given us a sense of our vulnerability. With all of our modern capabilities, with all of the ability to do science and develop vaccines very quickly, and medicines quickly, and to put people in intensive care, we were not able to do it fairly or equitably.

**Q: Please tell us about your childhood dream. Why have you chosen medicine and become a vaccine expert?**

**A:** I wanted to combine my desire to prevent and treat illness with my interest in science and research. I developed an interest in how antibodies develop during lectures in the first year of medical school, and this led me to my thesis advisor, Prof.

Kim Bottomly. In that same year, AIDS struck, and through research in HIV, its impact on immune systems, and in the development of a vaccine to prevent HIV, I came to focus on vaccines and vaccine development, while retaining a strong interest in the science of vaccines and vaccine immunology.

**Q: We understand that you like to run. Why do you like it? And do you have other hobbies?**

**A: In the U.S. my hobbies (besides running) were cooking, gardening and ball-**

**Dr. Jerome Kim (second from left), Director General of the International Vaccine Institute, and SUN Secretary General Professor Sungdon Hwang hold the SUN WRICOS AND PHOCOS booklets. *SILKROADIA* Editor-in-Chief Shi-yong Chon (left) and Editorial Assistant Amali Ranavi Thanthrige were also present.**



room dance. In Korea we live in an apartment, and couldn't find a place where dancing was offered. I think cooking is as close to getting back into a lab as I can be, at this point, and it is relaxing.

**Q: Please tell us about your family. What was the most important thing you emphasized bringing up and educating your children?**

A: I was born in the U.S., to Korean-American parents who had also been born in Hawaii. In fact, my father's mother had also been born in Hawaii; she met my grandfather while attending college in Los Angeles. He was a member of the Korean independence movement and worked to raise money to support the provisional government.

Both my wife (a Ph.D. in immunology) and I have emphasized the importance of education to our two daughters. We also wanted to make sure that they were "well rounded" – that is, had interests outside of school work. They seem to be more comfortable in the humanities than in science or medicine. But we felt that it was our re-

sponsibility to ensure that they should be intellectually able to choose any career. We've also emphasized that they should feel a sense of responsibility, a duty, to contribute to society, but it is still too early to tell if we were successful there.

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# Genghis Khan proud of globalization led by Mongol Empire

In fictional interview, the great emperor talks about tolerance, flexibility and openness that connected East and West



**Elisabetta Ragagnin**



**Davide Rizzi**

**G**enghis Khan (Mong. Činggis Qa'an), the founder of the Mongol Empire, was probably born in 1162 or 1167 - the year is debated - in today's Khentii region of northeastern Mongolia, where the Kerülen and Onon rivers originate.

The *Secret History of the Mongols* (Mongolian: *monggol-un ni'uča tobčiyān*), the





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only source written by the Mongols themselves, narrates the genealogy and life of Genghis Khan and how he laid the foundations of the empire, later expanded by his successors. This masterpiece of world-literature is an epic chronicle, mixed with alliterated prose and poetry, where legend and history are intertwined. Originally, it was written in the so-called Mongolian-Uyghur script by an unknown author, most likely in 1228, soon after Genghis Khan's death. The original is, however, lost. There is a Mongolian language version written in Chinese phonetic transcription from the Ming period. Parts of the *Secret History* are also contained in the *Altan Tobči* (Golden Book), a 17th century Buddhist work.

Other important sources for the history of the Mongols, predominantly Chinese and Persian, include Rašīd-ud-dīn's *Jāmic al-tawārīkh* (The Collection of Histories), and the Chinese chronicles *Shengwu Qinzheng Lu* (The Campaigns of Genghis Khan) and *Yuan Shi* (History of the Yuan Dynasty).

Genghis Khan was the son of Yisügei Ba'atur, 'the Brave', of the Kiyat Borjigin clan, and of Hö'elün, belonging to the Olqunu'ut lineage, a subtribe of the Qonggirat. The marriage took place after Yisügei Ba'atur had kidnapped his future wife – a custom still widespread in the Mongolian-Turkic world—shortly before she was given in marriage to a chief of the Merkit tribe. Many future Mongolian Khans chose their wives from the Qonggirat clan, for instance Börte, Genghis Khan's first wife, and Čabi, the beloved second wife of Qubilai Qa'an.

Ancestors of the Borjigin clan were a blue-grey wolf (*Börte Činua*) and a fawn doe (*Qo'a Maral*), as we read in the first lines of the Secret History of the Mongols. The future Genghis Khan as a child was given the name Temüjin, literally 'black-

smith' (from *temür* 'iron', augmented by the suffix *-čīn*). At birth, he held a lump of blood in his hand, a premonitory symbol of his tenacity, determination, and strength.

According to the traditions of the time, Temüjin was betrothed at the age of nine to Börte. Immediately after the engagement, on his way back to his camp, Temüjin's father, Yisügei Ba'atur, was poisoned by Tatars. As a consequence, all the clans that previously obeyed Yisügei Ba'atur abandoned the family of Temüjin, not wanting to recognize a nine-year-old young boy as their leader. According to the *Secret History*, the family was reduced to feeding on berries and roots to survive, but despite these hardships and their spartan lifestyle, Temüjin quickly managed to seize a prominent role. He was endowed with an extraordinary charisma and political and organizational skills, and also benefitted from an alliance with Toghril khan, the chief of the Kereite lineage and the most powerful khan of the steppes of his time and anda (blood brother) of his late father, Yisügei Ba'atur. Temüjin soon



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began to attract young steppe warriors, many of whom later became his important generals. After consolidating the tribes of Mongolia, Genghis Khan turned to the conquest of the sedentary civilizations of Eurasia.

The title “Genghis Khan” was given to Temüjin in 1206, the year of the Tiger. On this date, as we read in the *Secret History of the Mongols* (paragraph 202) “the people of the felt-walled tents (yurts) gathered at the headwaters of the River Onon; the white nine-tailed banner (*tuq*) was raised and there was assigned (to Temujin) the title Genghis Khan”. According to the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*, the shaman Teb-Tenggeri Kököčü bestowed this title on Temüjin. Between 1218 and 1225 Genghis Khan seized



an immense territory extending from China to the Near East. Genghis Khan probably died in 1227, soon after his campaign against the Tanguts. Neither the cause of death nor the place of burial is known. Rašīd-ud-dīn describes his funeral procession to Mount Burqan Qaldun, where he would be buried according to Mongolian traditions, i.e. in a secret and forbidden place. Since Genghis Khan died in the month of August and Mongols did not practice embalming of corpses, it is also possible that the body was not transported to the sacred regions of Burqan Qaldun in the Khentii region.

Even today there are numerous archaeological expeditions that take place every year in an attempt to identify the geo-

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graphical location of his tomb.

*Q: Genghis Khan, Your Majesty, may I ask you what do you think about globalization?*

A: Sure, my pleasure. Well, as you surely know, it was my Eurasian world empire that actually established the first form of globalization. The empire I founded was based on trade, tolerance between peoples and cultures, political flexibility, openness to religious plurality, and international diplomacy, thus establishing a real global network, connecting East and West. Our contribution to world history was ignored for centuries by much of the Western world. I am happy to see that the situation is changing.

*Q: Genghis Khan, Your Majesty, I heard several stories on the legendary bravery and strength of Mongol women. Last week, for instance, I read a very fascinating story on the Mongolian wrestling uniform. I finally understood why the upper body piece is an open chest collarless jacket! Legends narrate that the chest covering is missing because in the past a woman wrestler outperformed all other*



*wrestlers, becoming champion. As a consequence of this and in order to prevent women from competing in male wrestling tournaments, the chest part of the vest was removed. Can you tell us more about Mongol women?*

A: Ah, yes, the strong ladies of our lineage: our ancestress Alan Qo'a; my mother Hö'elün; my first wife Börte; Sorqatani Beki – the mother of my nephew Qubilai; Qutulun – the daughter of Qaidu; Manduqai; and many more. Without them Mongol history would not have been the same! I'd like to recite you the story of our ancestor Alan Qo'a as it is narrated in our epic poem that came down to you as the Secret History of the Mongols. We used to call it differently at our times.

*Before long, Dobun Mergen died. After his death, Alan Qo'a, although she had no husband, bore three sons who were named Buqu Qatagi, Buqatu Salji, and Bodončar Mungqaq.*

*Belgүнүtei and Bүgүнүtei, the two sons born earlier to Dobun Mergen, said to each other, behind the back of their mother Alan Qo'a, "Although this moth-*

*er of ours is without brothers-in-law and male relatives, and without a husband, she has borne these three sons. In the house there is only the man of the Ma'al-iq Baya'ut. Surely these three sons are his." Their mother Alan Qo'a knew what they had been saying to each other behind her back. One day in spring, while she was cooking some dried lamb, she had her five sons – Belgүнүtei, Bүгүнүtei, Buqu Qatagi, Buqatu Salji and Bodončar Mungqaq – sit in a row. She gave an arrowshaft to each of them and said, "Break it!" One by one they immediately broke the single arrowshafts and threw them away. Then she tied five arrowshafts into a bundle and gave it to them saying, "Break it!" The five sons each took the five bound arrowshafts in turn, but they were unable to break them. Then their mother Alan Qo'a said, "You, my sons Belgүнүtei and Bүгүнүtei, are suspicious of me and said to each other, "These three sons that she has borne, of whom, of what clan, are they the sons?" And it is right for you to be suspicious. Every night, a resplendent yellow man entered by the light of the*



© Euihwan Cho

*smoke-hole or the door top of the tent, he rubbed my belly and his radiance penetrated my womb. When he departed, he*

*crept out on a moonbeam or a ray of sun  
in the guise of a yellow dog.*

*How can you speak so rashly?*

*When one understands that, the sign is  
clear:*

*They are the sons of Heaven.*

*How can you speak, comparing them  
To ordinary black-headed men?*

*When they become the rulers of all,  
Then the common people will under-  
stand!”*

*Further, Alan Qo’a addressed these  
words of admonition to her five sons:  
“You, my five sons, were born of one  
womb. If, like the five arrowshafts just  
now, each of you keeps to himself, then,  
like those single arrowshafts, anybody  
will easily break you. If, like the bound  
arrowshafts, you remain together and of  
one mind, how can anyone deal with you  
so easily?” Some time went by and their  
mother Alan Qo’a died.*

*Q: Genghis Khan, Your Majesty, may I  
ask you a very direct question?*

*A: Sure, my pleasure. I have always been  
a very curious person and pretty bold, as*

you know from history. I have always listened to foreigners.

*Q: Where is your tomb located? Generations of archaeologists have been busy – spending fortunes - in trying to find out where your tomb is. Many scholars think that it may be located somewhere in the holy Burqan Qaldun mountain. They photographed it from all possible angles.... but to no avail...We know that your grandson Hülegü was buried on Šāhī Island, once the biggest island of Lake Urmia in Iran, with all his wealth. However, his tomb too has not been uncovered yet. Could your tomb also be on a secret island or at the bottom of a lake? Could you give us some light? We are totally in the dark.....*

A: hahahaha....tenggeri minu.....once you will get to know where my tomb is, you will also disclose many other important secrets of world history. There are sooo many precious items preserved there. The same is true for the tombs of my successors. I am very sorry, I cannot help you for the time being. Time is not ripe yet. You still need to work by yourselves. Next time

we meet, I will give you some hints as a remuneration for all the great work mongolists are carrying out on epigraphy, history, and culture.

*Q: Genghis Khan, may I ask you a last question?*

A: I am sorry, I am running out of time. I have an important appointment in the Celestial City at our special club. Alex(ander the Great), Confucius, Julius Caesar, Charlemagne, Tamerlane, Avicenna, Mozart, just to mention a few, are waiting for me. Rašīd-ud-dīn has just written me a message via WhatsApp not to be too late and not to forget to take a nice wineskin of fresh koumiss. You surely know it, don't you? Our fermented mare's milk; all my friends in the Celestial City love it. Tonight we have a very important lecture:our dear friend Igor de Rachewiltz, who has lately joined our club, will read us some chapters of the Secret History of the Mongols... His translation is so delicate. I always get goosebumps when I listen to him.Bye, see you next time, saikhan amraarai, as people say in modern khalkha Mongolian. Our language has changed sooo much in the

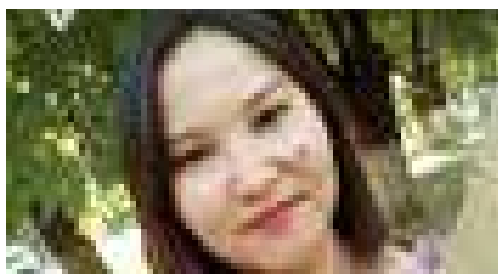


last centuries! Luckily, Rinchen - Byambyn RinchenI mean - is giving me private lessons on the evolution of Mongolic languages. Such a fascinating topic!

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# The Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi

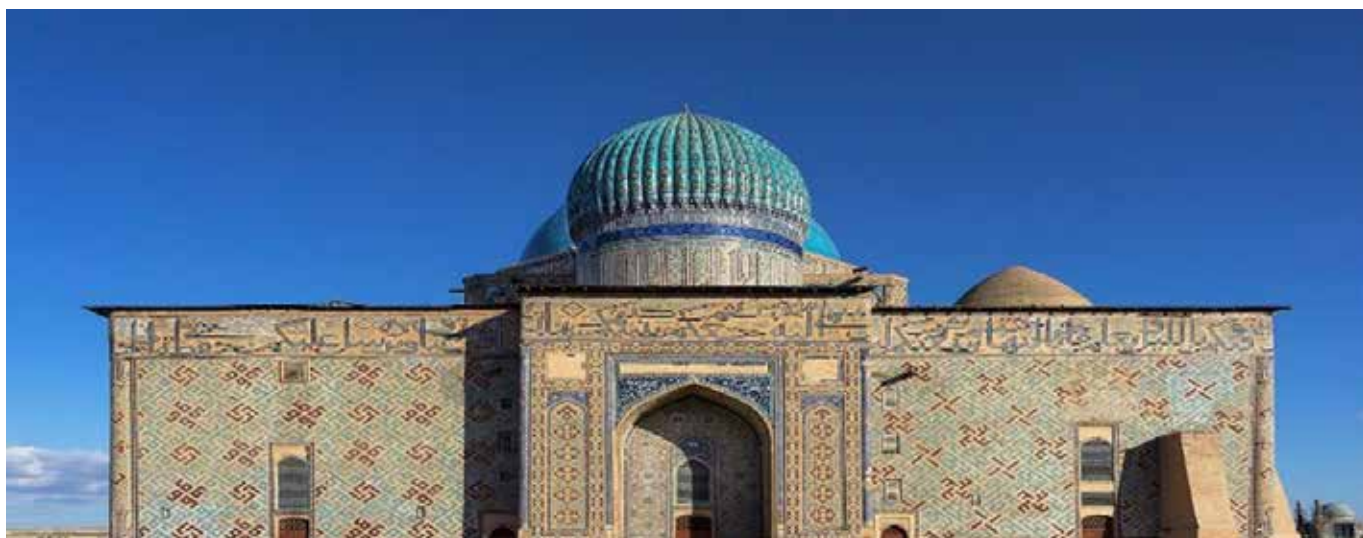


**Sagyndykova Symbat**

**T**he spread of Islam into the territory of Central Asia and Kazakhstan led to the establishment of a significant cultural unity from Baghdad to the Syr Darya and Semirechye. The Silk Roads also contributed to this development. Numerous merchants brought various goods, while itinerant scientists broadened the horizons of people and facilitated the transfer of crafts, science, and art. Vasily Bartold was one of the first scholars to emphasize this connection between religious missionary work and international trade. Islam as a religious study, worldview, and life-

style became prominent in the south of Kazakhstan and Semirechye in the second half of the 8th through the 9th centuries, as confirmed by the archeological excavations of ancient settlements in the south of Kazakhstan at the Otrar and Turkestan oases (Baypakov 2012, p.284). From this time, mosques became an ubiquitous and important detail of urban development in the region. The construction of the mosque also was the guarantee of posthumous bliss.

The mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi is located in the center of the City of Turkestan in south-central Kazakhstan. What is apparently the first reproduction of a drawing of the mausoleum appeared in August 1866 in the “Military Collection,” without specifying its authorship, but attached to an article by Mir-Salikh Bekchurin, “Description of the Azret Mosque, located in the city of Turkestan.” This engraving was technically well executed, but when transferring it to the blackboard, an unknown draftsman greatly distorted the original, depicting the monument in a very primitive way, which was noted by Peter



**The entrance to the tomb**

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Lerch . A more artistic depiction of the mausoleum was published in 1870 in the magazine “World Illustration” (Baitanaev and Yu 2013, p.302.).

The first construction of a mausoleum over the grave of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi dates back to an uncertain earlier time. Researchers associate several fragments of carved terracotta slabs found over the years during restoration with the decorative facade of an early building, but that original building itself is thought to have been completely destroyed at the end of the 14th century during the construction of a grandiose khanqah complex on this site at the behest of Emir Timur. From it are preserved what are commonly believed to be “bows” and fragments of carved terracotta tiles, found during probing the walls from the 14th century in some parts of the

gurkhana, lined with bricks paired with inserts. Based on such very fragmentary data, it is assumed that the mausoleum was built immediately over the remains of the saint after his burial in 1166. Its decorative design corresponded to the style of its time, and “a relatively small pattern of ornaments indicated that the size of the mausoleum was small” (Masson 1930).

Sergey Khmelnitsky believed that “the 12th century mausoleum over the grave of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi was probably a square room with 7.5 m sides and shallow axial niches on all sides, which were cut through by entrances - the building should have been centric, like a chortak” (Mankovskaya 1962). There is every reason to believe that the first mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi in Turkestan was by no means an ordinary modest building but was on a par with the most elite and perfect structures in terms of the decorative properties of monuments of this era.

Researchers believe that the current, extant mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi is a multifunctional complex and should

be considered a khanqah. It includes a jamaatkhana (a hall for meetings and dhikrs), a gurkhana (the space with the tomb of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi), a mosque, large and small aksaray (space for conferences and theological disputation), and kitabkhana (space for the library and correspondence papers). The dimensions of the building are 60 × 50 m, the height is 15 m., with the domes and arches of the portal rising to 38 m. The axial arrangement of the main structure is revealed by the powerful volumes of the arch of the main portal, the domes of the jamaatkhana, and the tomb. The architecture of the facade is simple and almost devoid of plastic elements. The large, smooth planes of the walls are occasionally cut through by window and door openings (Smagulov 2004, pp.94-98). At the base, on three sides, the mausoleum is surrounded by a panel of yellow sandstone slabs, above which there is a one-and-a-half-meter strip of glazed tiles. Above the panel, all of the walls, drums, and domes are covered with light blue, blue, white tiles with large patterns



on a yellow-blue background of bricks. The majestic portal was left unadorned.

Doors with carvings and traces of bone inlay mark the entrance to the central and largest room, measuring  $18.5 \times 18.5$  m. In the center of the hall, there is a huge bronze cauldron, which, according to legend, was cast near the village of Karnak, 25 km to the north-west of Turkestan. Once upon a time, a sweetened water was poured into it and then distributed at the end of the Friday prayer. Behind the central hall of the mausoleum (kazanlyk) is the tomb of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi, whose tombstone is made of smooth slabs of light green serpentinite. The room itself is also modest: the white walls below are clad with a blue tiled panel with blue corner half-columns (Proskurin 1994, pp.273-277). There are many other spaces in the mausoleum, including a mosque and hujras for pilgrims. Some of the hujras were converted into crypts shortly after construction, and the names of the entombed are writ-



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ten on gravestones from the 15th through 19th century.

## **The grand portal**

In the architectural and artistic decoration of the monument, medieval craftsmen used all types of applied arts: wood carving; works of alabaster, bone, stone, and metal; glazed tiles painted in blue, light blue, and white; and brickwork forming a complex ornamental pattern (Proskurin 1994, pp.273-277). Texts from the Qur'an were inscribed on the dome friezes which framed the mihrabmas a form of canonized handwriting. The carpets hung on the walls contain frequently repeated theological maxims in stylized letters. The ribbed

dome of the burial vault is especially decorated and entirely covered with glazed polychrome tiles.

The construction of the monument was never completed, and that incompleteness reveals some technological features of medieval construction. Ancient wooden scaffolding, adapted for lifting loads, have been preserved. Exposed fired brickwork allows us to understand the technique for erecting large-span arches. In the space of the portal itself can be found traces of temporary staircases from the construction period, as well as niches in the walls for fastening circular domes and plaster templates of arches.

Even contemporaries appreciated the beauty of the memorial. “The mausoleum of Ahmed Yasawi,” wrote Ruzbekhan , “is one of the most monumental buildings in the whole world. The architecture of the mausoleum displays human art to the point of astonishment and admiration” (Baypakov 2012, p.284). Religious construction is an important element of any civilization from any time. Today, the mausoleum is a central object of the historical and

cultural museum “Hazret Sultan”, to which tourists and pilgrims flock from all over the world.

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The article was translated from Russian to English by **Azhibayeva Dana**, specialist in the Department of International Cooperation.

# Sheep on Roads of Silk



**Maryam Bolouri**

**D**omesticated animals are central to the history of the Silk Roads. They played an irreplaceable role not only as key commodities but also as the principal means of transportation on the Silk Roads.

The importance of specific animals would vary depending on local geography and ecology. Central Asian nomads traditionally kept four or five kinds of animals—horses, sheep, goats, camels, and cows. In some areas of Eurasia, other animals also were important. For example, nomads living in high mountainous regions would raise yaks, and donkeys were

usually kept in towns and agricultural regions throughout Central Asia. In the north of China, nomads would keep horses, oxen, and sheep, but in smaller numbers. They bred camels, asses, mules (horse-ass hybrids), wild horses, and other equine hybrids as well. Many nomads made a living by exchanging products such as silk, wool, leather, horses, sheep, and other animals. The herds provided food, such as meat and dairy products, as well as wool and leather from which they made clothes and other household items, including felts, quilts, pillows and mattresses, and necessary decorations.

Horses and camels were an essential requirement and played an important role in the development of business and exchange on the Roads. Sheep and goats, on the other hand, supplied the necessities of everyday life for local people and travelers. Our focus in this short article will be sheep husbandry and its most valuable asset, wool.

Sheep were domesticated about 10,000 years ago in Central Asia, probably from an originally wild sheep species. None-



theless, it took years for people to learn to spin wool, one of the most essential products along the Silk Roads. Ironically, it was wool that changed life and history along the so-called Silk Roads. Despite the commercial development of the Silk Roads, the spread of civilization would have been impossible without sheep. It is claimed that sheep husbandry is humanity's oldest organized industry and that wool was the first commodity of sufficient value to warrant international trade along what came to be called the Silk Roads. However, due to various circumstances and technical reasons, it was not possible to do large scale sheep husbandry in all regions, and this influenced the development of trade along the Silk Roads.



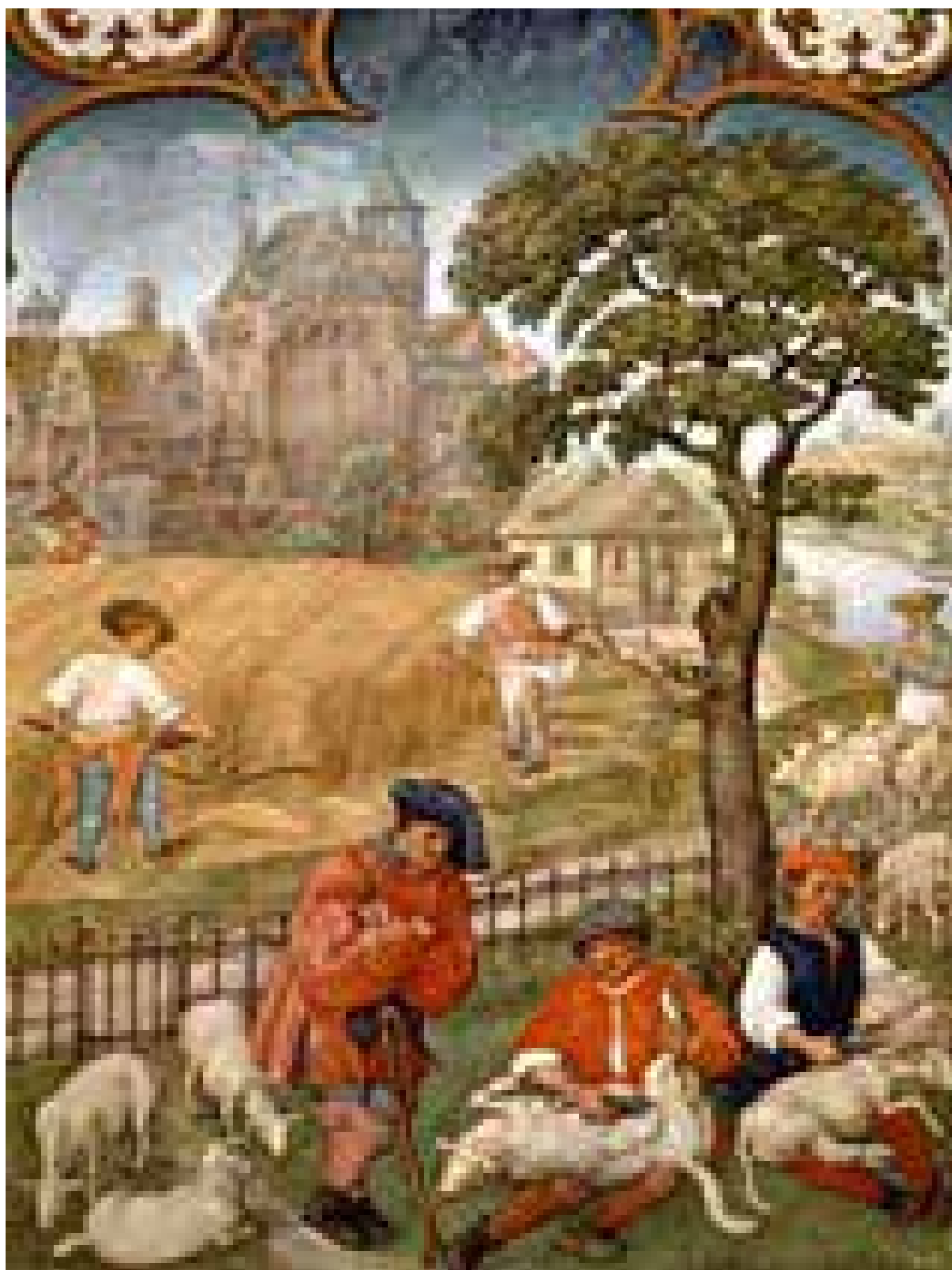
Sheep in North Iran

Sheep rearing needs large open pastures; therefore, it was and still is not possible to do it in all regions. Each country might have special problems in this regard. For example, sheep farming is more common in the northwestern provinces of China, but China has developed many sheep resources over a long history of sheep breeding. In Japan, sheep farming does not have a long history, and despite all the Japanese government encouragement and efforts to import Yorkshire, Berkshire, Spanish merino, and numerous Chinese and Mongolian sheep breeds, the weak foundation of this tradition has meant that a sheep farming culture could not get established. The tradition of sheep herding has been around for many years in Mongolia and that explains why sheep farming is today a principal economic activity and lifestyle among Mongolians.

Spain also had a very prosperous wool industry, which assisted in their economic achievements. For instance, Queen Isabella of Spain invested the profit of the Spanish wool industry of that era into the voyages of Columbus and other explorers. It

might be interesting to note that Columbus had sheep with him as a walking food supply on his exploration of Cuba and Santo Domingo. Another famous Spanish explorer, Cortez, later arrived in Mexico and the Western United States with the offspring of Columbus's sheep.

Iran has had its own great success in breeding sheep. With its various agro-ecological zones (arid, semi-arid, humid, temperate, and highland cold types) and semi-arid climate, two main stocks of wild sheep could be found in the natural areas of Iran, the Asian mouflons (*Ovis Orientalis*) and the smaller Asiatic Urial (*Ovis vignei*), as well as the Bezoar goat (*Capra aegagrus*), which was the main wild progenitor of the domesticated goat (*Capra hircus*). The Baluchi region has been the most important breeding ground of sheep in Iran. The ancient and highly useful Karakul sheep species is common in Iran, as well as in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Afghanistan. It is believed that this versatile sheep originated from Bokhara in Uzbekistan. Finally, some ancestors of the famed Merino sheep, which



Sheep shearers, Flanders, the Grimani Breviary ,1510

are resistant to humid and wet environments and to many parasites, can be bred in the northern areas around the Caspian Sea, which has high rainfall and dense forests. These so-called Zel sheep are the only non-fat-tail breed common in Iran, and appear in different colors from white to black or brown.

Sheep are very lucrative animals. First, they supply milk and meat; the fat of the tails of certain varieties of sheep is an essential part of many diets in various regions. Second, and very importantly, sheep are prized economically for their valuable wool. It is used to weave gossamer-thin shawls or thick carpets of great value.

The shearing of sheep traditionally is done in spring or before the regional warm period. After the wool is sheared people soften it by vigorously beating it with special smoothed sticks. A certain amount of wool is placed on a tarp and several people sit in a circle and start beating it very hard with two sticks to make it soft and to get rid of its dirt and dust. Then the wool is washed and prepared to make felt. The felt is produced by rolling up a mat of raw wool and pressing it. The literature indicates that this ancient technique dates back more than 2000 years. Obviously, sheep breeders are very concerned with the quality of the wool. Sometimes they have to cross-breed their sheep with Merino and other high-quality wool sheep



The Good Shepherd  
by Murillo, Bartolomé Esteban, 1655

to achieve a high-quality product.

Wool and the wool industry have been a vital part of human history. A host of people in different regions have been involved in this job. The variability of environmental patterns such as the level of rainfall and availability of animal feed has always had a dramatic influence on the lifestyles of sheep herders. Farmers have been deeply concerned about desertification, deforestation, water shortage, and erosion. Market conditions also have driven people to look for new natural pastures and innovative ways of cross-breeding to have high-quality wool.

The products made possible by raising



sheep have been of great importance, particularly in Central Asian societies. Nomads and traders needed woolen items on their long journeys. For instance, basic felts have been used for their insulating properties in cold climates, and everywhere for rugs and saddle cloths. Even in modern times, many families prefer making their woolen quilts and pillows rather than buying factory-made items. Newly married brides in Central Asia still may be expected to have a dowry full of hand-made quilts, mattresses, and pillows stuffed with wool or cotton and covered with colorful soft textiles. The skin and leather of sheep have been used to make clothing items such as pants, vests, hats, and also various household items to store milk and flour.

Wool and other products of sheep husbandry were among the most important commodities among the societies and people of the old “Silk” Road.

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# The Greek Santouri



George Kitsios

The Greek santouri is a trapezoid-shaped stringed instrument which belongs to the hammered dulcimer family. The term “dulcimer” is claimed to derive from the Latin dulcis (sweet) and the Greek melos (song). On the other hand,



Santouri

Source: Strange Traveler

the term santouri is the Greek version of a series of similar terms (i.e. santur, santour, santoor) used to describe an instrument that is present in quite a few musical traditions across the world in similar forms. There is no definitive consensus on the instruments' origin either etymologically or organologically (i.e., the scientific classification of musical instruments). Although it is widely considered as an invention from the Iranian or Mesopotamian region, the commonly used name "santur" suggests a different possibility, perhaps deriving from the Greek word psalterion (plucking instrument), thus implying a completely different historical and cultural background.

The basic organological characteristics of the Greek santouri include its' isosceles trapezoid shape, on which approximately 100-110 strings are horizontally placed, 3-5 per note, covering a range of up to three and a half octaves. The complex, wooden load-bearing construction is mostly made up of spruce, maple and beech. Using steel keys placed on the far right of the instrument, it is tuned equally tempered in

fifths, in such a manner that almost the entire chromatic scale is available. The sound is produced by hammering the strings with a pair of small wooden mallets, the striking end of which are usually covered either by leather or by cotton. Due to the instrument's ability to perform simultaneously the melodic, harmonic, as well as the rhythmic musical elements, it has also been called "the Greek folk piano". Some musicians also played the much larger, Hungarian-style concert cimbalom, which stood on four detachable legs and featured a four-octave range as well as a damper pedal. Among the musicians who emigrated to the United States during the late 19th-early 20th century, many had made numerous recordings with both of these



**A cimbalom**

Source: Xylosmygame

instruments.

There seems to be no consensus about the exact timing or the specific use and changing forms of the santouri, especially since the early 19th century, when the Greek revolution led to the formation of the newly founded state. It was mostly found in the Greek mainland, East Aegean and the Dodecanese, while after 1922, Greek refugees from Asia Minor gave a new boost to the wide spread use of the instrument and its role not only in traditional music, but also in rebetiko music, a popular 19th century musical style from the poor urban quarters of Greece. Quite often, santouri players would hang the instrument in front of them using a cloth around their neck so as to be able to perform on the move if the occasion called for it, such as during a wedding march (*patinada*). This instrument also dominated the musical life of Athens in the early 1870's, when it was so widely used in certain venues that it gave them their name, *café santur*, though this term was soon supplanted by the more long-lasting designation, *café aman*. The most common combination of





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instruments, in addition to the santouri, included clarinet, violin, lute and percussion.

After WWII, and especially during the 60's and 70's, santouri was introduced in a wide variety of musical genres in the works of many important Greek composers, including Mikis Theodorakis, Giannis Markopoulos, Elias Andriopoulos, Manos Loizos and Stavros Xarchakos. In 1985, renowned virtuoso, Aristides Moschos (1930-2001), founded the “Folk School of Traditional Music” (Athens) where, under his teaching, a new generation of santouri players emerged, along with many others who studied at the newly established public secondary music schools later on. Some



notable new soloists were Tasos Diakogiorgis (1924-2007), Nikos Kalaitzis (aka “Bida-gialas”) (1925-2012) and Nikos Karatasos (1931-2017). Among the latest generation, Dimitrios Kofteros (b.1951) has recently published a revision of his *Essay for the Greek Santouri* (2019). One of the youngest and most well-known Greek santouri players is Areti Ketime (b.1989), a dynamic young woman keeping a traditional instrument fresh and alive for new generations.

**George Kitsios** is an assistant professor of ethnomusicology at the School of Music, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

# Saami-wear Traditional Costume

By Darya Panova

Folk costume has always been a significant national symbol that conveys a message of unity. It belongs to the splendid cultural heritage of a nation and reflects its customs, traditions, and even climate conditions. A traditional costume of each folk is a noteworthy object of study that requires thorough examination.

The Sámi are an indigenous people inhabiting the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, and Finland, as well as the Kola Peninsula in northwestern Russia. The subarctic climate and tundra territories forced the Sami to choose warm and dense



Source: Folk Costume & Embroider

cloths. Their clothing also had to be comfortable while working, particularly while herding reindeer. In the 17th to 18th centuries, the main material for clothing included skins of sea animals, bears, and deer. Colored suede, heavy felt, and pelts were used for trimming. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the Sami began using purchased fabrics such as chintz, sackcloth, velvet, and silk, and also sheep wool for knitting socks, gloves, or belts. By this time Sami traditional costume had already been greatly altered under the influence of

northern Russian and European clothing.

The Sami clothing can be worn both daily and on special occasions, only in the latter case it is more elaborately decorated. It represents a person's marital status, financial state, and origin. The main difference between men's and women's clothing lies in the fact that women's costume is traditionally more exquisitely embellished. Moreover, women's headdresses are more varied.

The women's summer headdress has a birchbark framework which is covered with red heavy felt. There are inserts of yellow heavy felt and, sometimes, fox fur at the bottom. The earflaps have ribbons with beads that are tied under the chin. Shamshura is a summer headdress for married women. It resembles a kokoshnik, a Russian arch-shaped headband. Women's winter hats are also decorated with triangles of green and blue heavy felt. Men's headdresses are not less heavily ornamented, and the shining example is a Four Winds hat. It usually has a shape of a four-cornered star, and its main colors are blue and green, with red and yellow in-

serts.

A cotton undershirt with long sleeves is the main piece of clothing. In summer the Sami people put it on beneath the gakti, a tunic with blue, red, yellow, and green patterns worn in Norway and Finland, or, on the Kola Peninsula, beneath the yupa, a straight, heavy felt shirt of white (for women) or grey (for men). Varying by region, their collars and sleeves are decorated with embroidery, beading, or appliqués of geometric shapes. The Sami costume includes a warm coat with a stand-up collar called a beaska. It is traditionally made of buckskin. A luhkka is another article of winter Sami clothing, worn on top of gakti or beaska. It looks similar to a fringed poncho. Keeping in mind the subarctic climate, it is necessary to mention the gloves. They are made of buckskin or colored yarn.

All the outerwear is belted. Leather or woven belts usually have a symbolic meaning. For instance, square buttons mean that the wearer is married, while round, that the wearer is single. Sami belts can also have a sheath, accessories for a fire, sewing notions, and other tools, along with

amulets.

The Sami people pay particular attention to the quality of their footwear as they always have to cover long distances during migration and even while working. Traditional Sami footwear includes either short shoes or high boots with heavy felt embellishments, depending on the season. They are typically made of buckskin and have pointed or curled toes. In order to make them warmer and protect feet from frostbite, the Sami fill their shoes with dried grass.

At the end of the 19th century, traditional Sami wear was partly replaced with the clothing of their neighbors – the Russians, the Komi, and the Nenets. Despite these gradual changes, the Sami people cherish their customs and treasure their traditional clothing down to the present day.

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## HERITAGE

# Unwrapping Samosas

By Abhigyan Sharma

India is often described as the ‘land of unity in diversity,’ and, yes, its vast variety of cultures, traditions, cuisines, and ethnic groups is what makes India greater than the sum of its parts. Every community or region in India has its own recipes, spices, and cooking techniques for different occasions and seasons. Food and snacks from across India have a well-established historical importance and have

gained admirers in many other nations.

One dish that is considered quintessential for parties, a starter for traditional weddings, perfect to accompany tea with friends, a quick snack for an unexpected guest—you get the idea—is a triangular-shaped pack of spiced potatoes which typically goes with ketchup or chutney, the samosa. Every cook, store, and shop has its own variety of this staple of Indian cuisine. The samosas from Kolkata, often served with sweet jalebis, are considered to be some of the best, though it is also popular in Odisha, West Bengal, and Jharkhand, and available almost everywhere.

The basic, traditional samosa recipes use boiled potatoes and green peas with some spices. Fennel and coriander seeds are the two most important ingredients in the traditional flavour of this snack. Other ingredients like ginger and green chilli add the spicy flavour and Chaat masala adds the tangy taste.

The ever-popular pair of chai-samosa (tea and samosa) is something that unites the country in enjoyment. What a pleasant



feeling it is to have hot, freshly served samosas with steaming chai while enjoying a rainy day. From street food to grocery stores to the menu in restaurants small or large, the samosa is practically synonymous with Indian cuisine.

It is undoubtedly one of the brightest stars of Indian street food. When you savour its golden crustiness, what you taste is the story of India itself – a perfect mixture of cultures and cooking traditions.

The journey of Samosa to Indian sub-continent from Central Asia, from Lybia to Egypt and down the coast of Africa, and from Central Asia to India earned this snack lots of popularity. Some of the first mentions of samosa can be found

in 9th-century Persian writings, and it is also mentioned in other Arabic sources from the 10th through the 13th centuries. In the 1300s the samosa made its first appearance in India. It was introduced into South Asia by the Middle Eastern chefs during the Delhi Sultanate and was traded throughout Central Asia by hawkers and vendors. With time, the samosa found its way to the subcontinent under the name samsa, named for its triangle or pyramid shape similar to Central Asia's pyramids.

As the centuries passed, the recipe changed, gaining new flavours and names, and every region in India and then elsewhere around the globe added its own flair to the traditionally simple pastry.

One can find recipes to make samosas on internet, and what a boon it is to prepare and try this finger-licking snack yourself. But the real taste is when you relish it handmade and served on Indian streets. Needless to say, that experience is unparalleled.

**Abhigyan Sharma** is a student at Bal Bharati Public School Rohini, Delhi India.

# Nowruz Customs and Rituals in Kandahar

By Ramila Barakzay

**T**he Nowruz (“new day”) celebration is one of the oldest customs and traditions of the Afghan people. Held on the first day of spring, it marks the start of the traditional calendar. It is celebrated in all provinces of Afghanistan with special enthusiasm, and people generally make special preparations for it. Some religious scholars condemn the celebration of Nowruz as they believe that this cultural practice is in conflict with Islamic principles and therefore must be stopped in Islamic countries. Most people think differently and consider the purpose of celebrating

this day to be joyful and thankful for God's blessings.

Kandahar is one of the cities that have kept the Nowruz flame alive, and every year this celebration begins in the city of Kandahar with prayers and good wishes for all people. Celebrating the days of the New Year in Kandahar according to customs and traditions is very interesting and spectacular. The people prepare delicious food and sweets on the night and days of Nowruz, go to tombs but also places of entertainment, see and visit each other, and play interesting and spectacular games.

The central Nowruz customs in the beautiful province of Kandahar include special Nowruz food and sweets and interesting games.

### **Nowruz Food and Sweets**

The sweets and foods include vegetable pilaf (which is prepared on the first night of the New Year), rooster meat, seven fruits, samanak, jalbi and "elephant ear."

#### ***Vegetable Rice***

This food is seen on the table of many





Afghan families on Nowruz nights, even those whose daily income is very low, because the green color has a special place among the people of Afghanistan and brings good luck. This food is a combination of spinach, coriander, leeks and rice, and it is made with the local Afghan rice.

### *Rooster Meat*

One of the favorite foods in all provinces is rooster meat. The roosters must be white in color and prepared at home. The reason for choosing white rooster is that Afghans wish to start a year full of chivalry, purity and honesty.

### *Seven Fruits*

In Afghanistan, people prepare seven fruits for Nowruz. Seven fruits consist of seven different types of dried fruits in-



cluding raisins, elm, pistachios, hazelnuts, dried apricots, and four nuts. They put these dried fruits in water for a few days before Nowruz comes. In addition, sweet and various syrups are made and eaten on Nowruz days.

### ***Samanak***

The preparation of Semno (Samnak) is one of the oldest traditions of Nowruz, which has many fans among women in Kandahar province. Samanak is a special food that is prepared from wheat flour, wheat germ, and water. Women gather around the Samanak pot, sing happily for the arrival of green and lively days during

cooking Samanak.

### *“Elephant Ear” (Gosh Feel) and Jalbi*

The people of Kandahar have another tradition of making sweets called “elephant ears” for the days of Nowruz. It is one of the most important sweets of celebration. Groups of several women and girls, around the stove, bake these sweets on Nowruz nights. Another type of delicious sweet that is popular among the people of Kandahar during Nowruz is called Jalbi which is very delicious and colorful.



### **Interesting Games for Nowruz**

Holding some competitions and games has added to the attractiveness of New Year in Afghanistan. Nowruz games and entertainment include Buzkashi (goat-tug), wrestling, kite flying and war eggs as the

most important and ancient ones.

### *Buzkashi*

Buzkashi is one of the oldest and most popular games of the Afghan people and one of the national sports of the country. Although Buzkashi is one of the local games of the Northern provinces of Afghanistan, because of its attractiveness, this game has many fans in all the provinces of Afghanistan, and Buzkashi competitions are held in all provinces at different times, especially during Nowruz.

In Buzkashi, horse riders, known as “printers,” try to throw a goat that has already been beheaded to a place called the Halal Circle. Two groups compete with each other, playing with 12 printers on each side. Any printer that picks up the goat from the circle and gets it out of the printers of the rival group, show his high skills in winning this game.





## *Traditional Wrestling (Koshti)*

Wrestling is a pastime of many young people during Nowruz. Wrestling is one of the ancient, popular sports among the people of Afghanistan, and is held mostly in areas outside the city in the presence of enthusiastic spectators. Local wrestlers gather in places covered with grass or soft soil, and the wrestlers compete against each other two at a time. Crowds gather before the start of the competition, the heroes first greet the New Year, hug each other, and then the competition begins with the spectators cheering the competitors.

## *Kite Game*

Kite flying is also one of the favorite games in all provinces. On days when the wind blows steadily, the sky of most provinces is full of colorful kites. Young people in the city gather on a hill during Nowruz and try to raise their kites.

## *Egg War (Tokhm Jangi)*

“Egg war” is another of the special Nowruz games. It is one of the most popular games in all provinces, and is mostly held



in recreational areas and parks where people go for fun. In this game, two people hold boiled eggs in their hands and hit the eggs against each other. The person whose egg breaks first is the loser, and the counted egg is awarded to the winner.

The game has fans not only among young people, but also among adults, and is often played among families between family members.

Although the Nowruz celebrations in Kandahar have faded in recent years, the people of this province still come together in their finest clothes, and after prayers of thanksgiving and blessings, seeking peace



and security in the New Year, they greet each other. They visit forty shrines and sanctuaries and wish a year full of joy and happiness for their family and friends.

**Ramila Barakzay** is a student at Herat University Afghanistan. This article was revised by **Maryam Bolouri**, the Secretary-General of USSUN, from Allameh Tabataba'I University, Iran.



**TRAVEL**

**Travertines of Pamukkale**

Source: Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, <https://muze.gov.tr/>

# Pamukkale and the Ancient City of Hierapolis



**Oktay Gökhan BANBAL**

**S**tunning white calcium pools, clinging to the side of a ridge, have long been one of the most famous picture postcard views of Turkey. Pamukkale, literally meaning “cotton castle”, is also the site of

the ancient city of Hierapolis, which has many interesting ruins, and is a very popular destination for a short visit.

The geological characteristics that generated the Pamukkale thermal source have shaped the entire region. There are 17 hot water areas in the region, with temperatures varying between 35 – 100° C. Pamukkale was formed when a thermal hot spring with a high content of dissolved calcium bicarbonate cascaded over the edge of the cliff, where the waters cooled and left hardened calcium deposits. This formed into natural pools, shelves, and ridges, into which tourists now plunge and splash in the warm water.

The Pamukkale thermal source is a vital feature of the region, and has been since ancient times. The thermal water, after leaving the source, comes to the head of the travertine via a 320-meter-long canal and is deposited on the travertine layers, where there is a partial sedimentation of 60-70 meters over a distance of 240-300 meters.

Hotels began springing up in the 1960s to cater to the large influx of tourists, and



**Ancient Hierapolis, above Pamukkale**

Source: Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, <https://muze.gov.tr/>

shortly afterwards UNESCO declared it a World Heritage Site. But by the 1990s, tourist activity took its toll on the state of the calcium pools, and restrictions were placed on access to these travertine terraces. Many hotels were knocked down, and visitors are now only allowed on major paths around the sites, and must remove footwear to stand on the calcium deposits. This seems to have been a successful move, as the water supply is now used to preserve and repair some of the damaged calcium deposits.

Deriving from springs in a cliff almost 200 meters high overlooking the plain of Cürüksu in south-west Turkey, these calcite-laden waters have created an unreal landscape, made up of mineral forests, petrified, waterfalls and a series of terraced

basins which are the very Pamukkale (Cotton Palace) that gives the place its name. Located in the province of Denizli, destined to be a vital station on the Silk Road's southern route through Anatolia, this extraordinary landscape was a focus of interest for visitors to the nearby Hellenistic spa town of Hierapolis, founded at the site of an ancient cult by the Attalid kings of Pergamum. Information about Hierapolis is limited, though it is known that the King of Pergamum, Eumenes II, founded the city in 190 B.C.E, and named it Hierapolis after the Amazonian Queen Hiera, the wife of Telephos, the legendary founder of Pergamum.

Hierapolis was destroyed by an earthquake in 60 C.E. (A.D.) during the time of Roman Emperor Nero. Through the reconstruction after the earthquake, the city lost its Hellenistic style and became a typical Roman city. Remains of the Greco-Roman period include baths, temple ruins, a monumental arch, a nymphaeum, a necropolis, and a theatre. At the beginning of the Roman period, Hierapolis became an important center because of its commercial

and religious position. Christian writings describe how, in 80 C.E., St. Philip came to Hierapolis and was murdered after preaching there. Following the acceptance of Christianity by the emperor Constantine and his establishment of Constantinople as the 'new Rome' in 330 C.E., the town was made a bishopric. As the place of St. Philip's martyrdom, commemorated by his Martyrium, built in the 5th century, Hierapolis with its several churches became an important religious center for the Eastern Roman Empire. The Turks conquered Hierapolis at the end of the 12th century C.E.

The combination of striking natural formations and the development of a complex system of canals that bring the thermal water to nearby villages and fields is exceptional. The springs are the source of a hydrological system extending 70 km northwest to Alasehir and westwards along the valley of the Menderes River. Pamukkale forms an important backdrop to the original Greco-Roman town of Hierapolis and the cultural landscape which dominates the area.

The site is largely intact and includes all



the attributes necessary to meet the World Heritage standard of “Outstanding Universal Value”, based on the strong integration between the natural landscape (the white travertine terraces and numerous thermal springs) and cultural developments (the city ruins from the Greco-Roman and Byzantine period, especially the theatre and the necropolis). The extensive boundaries of the site are adequate to reflect its historical and natural significance.

Most of the site is free of modern buildings and its architectural monuments can easily be appreciated. Some old monuments are in use again, for example the theatre is used for performances with participation of thousands of people, while excavation and restoration work on the site is still on going. All the projects are reconstructed based on anastylosis methods (i.e., using original techniques and styles) such as the *frons scaenae* (i.e., architectural background) of the theatre, the gymnasium, and the *templon* in front of the altar of the Church of St. Philip.

Archeological research has unearthed many of the main buildings in the ancient

city. These include the ancient theater, which was replaced by a theater in the northern part of the city, built using architectural pieces from the original theater. The first theater, which belonged to the 1st century C.E., was destroyed during the earthquake of 60 C.E., and a restoration was completed during the Severus period (206 C.E.), after many construction phases. The theater was built into a hillside and is a Greek-style theater with a capacity of approximately 10 thousand people. The vertical cavea (seating area) is divided into two parts by the diazoma (a horizontal walkway separating upper and lower sections). The ancient theater of Hierapolis, which is nearly 1800 years old, is the only example of a Roman theater in the Mediterranean Basin which has been preserved with all its architectural features.

Another of the most important buildings is the Martyrium of St. Phillip. The octagonal church was built on the top of the hill in the early 5th century. Eight rectangular buildings open to a central space with three arches carried by marble columns, decorated with acanthus leaves. The Church

had a wooden central dome, and the plan of the central space refers to the number eight, a symbol of eternity. The Church was placed in a rectangular plan and opened to the outside with 28 places where pilgrims were welcomed.

A final important building of note is the Phoutonian (Pluto's Gate). It is one of the most famous temples in Asia Minor dedicated to Pluto, the god of the hell, along with his wife Persephone. Ancient writers described the ceremonies held in front of the cave where the water source that feeds the Pamukkale hot spring emerges and toxic gas is emitted. For these reasons, the cave was considered the entrance to hell. At this site, archeologists have unearthed a huge statue of Pluto, a statue of Cerberus, the three-headed dog who is the guardian of Hell's Gate, and statues of two snakes, symbols of the underworld.

Like explorers, researchers, and tourist through the centuries, you would find much to study and enjoy on a visit to Pamukkale and Hierapolis.

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**Oktay Gökhan BANBAL** is a Research Assistant at Ankara University, Turkey.





Source: [www.Ministryofcrab.com](http://www.Ministryofcrab.com)

## TRAVEL

# Ministry of Crab - Colombo, Sri Lanka: A Story of Special Comestible Crab Dishes



Amali Ranavi Thanthrige

“Keep calm and grab your crab.” Ministry of Crab, a noteworthy restaurant from the South Asian island nation of Sri Lanka, has made its way several times to “Asia’s Best 50 Restaurants”, include for 2021, and now even has a few branches in countries like India and Singapore. Beginning small, through the total commitment of owner Dharshan and his team, they were able to make their restaurant one of the best in Asia, and even the world, within a short time.

Ministry of Crab, Colombo has a few unique features, and though Dharshan was not new to the restaurant field, this was his first time starting a crab restaurant. He was born in Japan to a Sri Lankan father and Japanese mother, and this helped him to add both flavors to his menus, and he had previously opened a Japanese restaurant in Sri Lanka. However, his latest efforts have paved the way for Sri Lankan Lagoon Crab dishes to get attention at an international level.

Although it has no intention to compete with others, the Ministry of Crab has several features that make it irreplaceable.



First is its unique location. The current restaurant is in an old building which used to be the old Dutch hospital located in the heart of Colombo, capital of Sri Lanka. The building is about 400 years old and features seventeenth-century Dutch colonial architecture. Indeed, it is one of the few buildings lucky to remain after the British colonial era and a period of civil war. There is a story behind how it became the home of a modern restaurant. While Mr. Darshana was searching for a place, a new remodelling project of colonial buildings by the Urban Development Authority was launched, with the blessing for restaurant owners to use it as the ‘Ministerial’ area. With the partnership of Mr. Mahela Jayawardana and Mr. Kumar Sangakkara, well recognized cricket stars, the story of the Crab Ministry began in 2011, providing an opportunity to Sri Lankans and foreign visitors to experience export-quality large crabs.

And the second but most significant thing about this restaurant is its specific menu, crabs. Sri Lankans love seafood, but most of the time they choose to export



Source: [www.TripAdvisor.in](http://www.TripAdvisor.in)

large and high-quality crabs rather than giving them to local consumers. Among other Asian countries, Singapore takes those crabs and uses them for their culinary purposes. Mr. Darshana recognized this and, with a friend's suggestion, he took the chance to start a crab restaurant to show the world that Sri Lankan food goes beyond curries and rice.

As its name signifies, the restaurant serves several crab dishes created by culinary expert Dharshan and his team. The large crabs are the 'stars of the show', featured in dishes such as Pepper Crab, Baked

Crab, and ‘Garlic Chilli Crab’, offered in different sizes as the restaurant’s signature dish. In addition, there are other special dishes that they prepare, such as King Prawns caught in Sri Lankan rivers, which are proving a favourite selection for seafood lovers.

Last, but not least, the restaurant is notable for its atmosphere. It has a yellow theme everywhere, from walls to casters. According to the official website. they use yellow as the restaurant’s signature colour. The menu itself features a large yellow crab set on a quiet dark background, which further adds to this atmosphere. Meanwhile, the dining table is decked out with bibs, crab crackers, and a large bouquet of Heliconia flowers, which have a special shape that well suits the place. These decorative touches show that the Ministry of Crab really is the place for crabs.

Many European and South East Asian people do not use their hands to eat due to various reasons. However, Asian countries like Sri Lanka and India have long used their hands when eating, though now

these eating patterns have changed somewhat with the impact of modernization. However, people who visit the Ministry of Crab have complete freedom to use their hands to taste crabs with their family or friends. Therefore, in other words, this is a place where everyone can enjoy not only the crabs, but also their unique cultures, without worrying about people's reactions.

**Amali Ranavi Thanthrige** is majoring in International Studies at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies Seoul, Republic of Korea.



## TRAVEL

Fig. 1. Canaletto, *The Bacino di San Marco on Ascension Day* (c.1740). The iconic image of the Doge's Bucintoro returning to the Ducal Palace in Venice after the ceremony of the Marriage to the Sea.

Source: The United Kingdom Royal Collection Trust

# Venice's Marriage to the Sea: Ritual, Representation, and Environmental Transformation



Pietro Daniel Omodeo



Heiner Krellig

**T**he Marriage to the Sea is the annual ritual through which the “Maritime Republic” of Venice (Lane, 1973) represented its particular position in the Mediterranean Sea. For hundreds of years, until the end of the Republic as an independent state in 1797, the ritual would begin at the threshold of the summer of every year, precisely on the day of the Ascension of Christ. The Doge, the head of state, would leave the Ducal Palace in his golden vessel, the Bucintoro, to reach the place of the Two Fortresses where the confines of the Lagoon opens to the Adriatic Sea, accompanied by the most prominent political and religious authorities and a long procession of ships. There, he threw a golden ring into the water to sanction the unique relation of the City with the aquatic element, uttering the propitiating words in Latin: “Desponsamus te Mare, in signum veri perpetuique domini”, that is, “We marry you, o sea, as a sign of true and perpetual dominion.” (See Figure 1.)

According to the version of history passed down by the Venetians, this political-religious celebration found its justifi-



cation in the privileges that Pope Alexander III bestowed upon the city in 1177 as a recognition for the assistance given in the war against the invasions by the Emperor of the Holy Empire Frederic I, called Barbarossa. (See Figure 2.) At that time, Venice occupied a hegemonic position in the Mediterranean Sea, and it was a center of power at the crossroads of the most lucrative Eastern Mediterranean trade routes between the Europe, Asia, and Africa. Venice controlled the European commerce with the Levant and was an inflection point between the Silk Road commerce on the sea and that on the mountainous roads across the Alps to the Northern European countries. As *longue-durée* historian Fernand Braudel emphasized, Venice's beauty can be considered as the material synthesis of the medieval Mediterranean culture that flourished thanks to its connecting water element. In Venice, the accumulation of wealth found its representation in its architectural majesty, which has survived the end of the City's political-economic prominence. The Marriage of the Sea was the highlight in the ceremonial calendar of the

“Republic of Processions,” as Venice has been called (Muir, 1981), due to the variegated and unifying system of state-building feasts which celebrated outstanding events in the history of the Republic. In the eighteenth century, a century that has often been regarded as a time of decline, the Marriage to the Sea was celebrated as a memorial to the Republic’s past glories rather than the affirmation of real geopolitical influence. In such sublimated form, Venice’s perpetual dominion of the waters has been transferred to an eternal image, one that has been wisely constructed



**Fig. 2. Andrea Vicentino, The Doge introduces Ottone to the Pope and receives the ring with which the wedding of the sea will be celebrated every year (c.1600).**

Source: The Ducal Palace, Venice

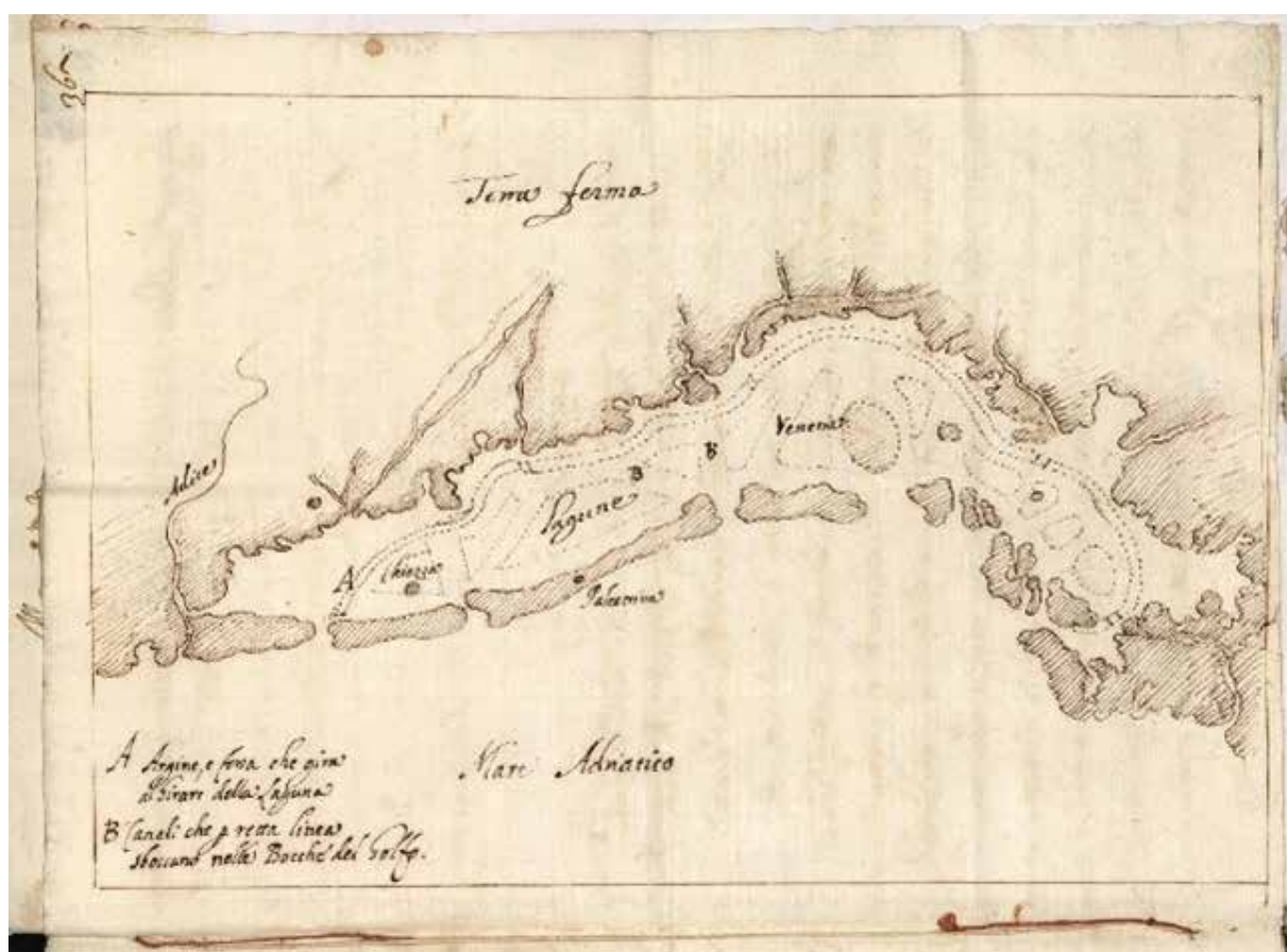
throughout the centuries.

Such is the image of serene power of a city that never needed to be protected by stony walls, because the surrounding waters secured both an effective defense and the splendor of its skyline – anticipating the iconic image of New York and other contemporary waterside metropolises. The view of Piazza San Marco and the Ducal Palace facing the waters of Venice’s harbor basin was the embodiment of self-confident power. That panorama, which welcomed the travelers who arrived from the sea, was almost serially reproduced and circulated through vedute (“vista”) paintings, the best known of which are those of Giovanni Antonio Canal, better known as Canaletto. These contributed to the consolidation of an image of Venice that still dominates a great part of our collective imagery.

Yet, a concurring image has rapidly emerged in times of global environmental change: that of the high waters that threaten the survival of Venice. Its once-celebrated dominion over the liminal element risks being overturned by the opposite

fate: submersion. Under the scenario of an uncontrolled sea level rising of about 1.50 meters during this century, 37 of 49 UNESCO World Heritage sites in the Mediterranean region are at risk from exceptional coastal flooding, and 42 of 47 threatened by coastal erosion. Unless the system of sluice gates that is now experimentally operating to protect the City in the Lagoon succeeds, Venice without doubt will be one of them. Nevertheless, although today Venice's relation to the water looks far from serene, the environmental historian should remember that its setting is far from a purely natural one. As a matter of fact, it is neither natural nor artificial, but actually both. It is the fruit of political and technological decisions and interventions that occurred over the course of the centuries, especially from the late Middle Ages onwards.

All of the in-flowing rivers were gradually diverted outside the Lagoon in order to preserve its waterscapes and the specific lifestyle of a city that united the interests of fishermen and merchants. The constant reshaping of the hydrogeology of the Vene-



**Fig. 3. Seventeenth-century project of channel excavations in the Lagoon of Venice, in a time in which the level of its waters was dramatically lowering.**

Source: The State Archive of Venice (Savi ed esecutori alle acque, Atti, pezzo 123, f. 362r)

tian Lagoon was achieved thanks to the scientific and technological expertise of specific institutions, most importantly, the Magistrate of the Waters. The documentation the Magistrate has produced from the sixteenth century onwards – including surveys, hydrogeological maps, engineering projects, environmental assessments – is a gold mine of information on cultural-environmental co-evolution in the era of the ‘Anthropocene’ (according to the geological neologism), an era in which the harmonization between human society and the Earth is urgently needed at a global scale. (See Figure 3.)

Today, the marriage between Venice and the sea acquires a new meaning as the promise of a wished-for solution to the threatening consequences of climate change, one that should occur as part of an effort to find a new balance between culture and nature.

## **Acknowledgments**

The themes of this essay are relevant to the following projects, all based at the Ca' Foscari University Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage: The Max Planck Partner Group “The Water City” (Max Planck Society, in collaboration with the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science - Berlin), ERC CoG Endeavor “EarlyModernCosmology” (Horizon 2020, GA 725883), and FARE Endeavor “EarlyGeo-Praxis” (Italian Ministry of University and Research).

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**Pietro Daniel Omodeo** is professor of philosophy of science and **Heiner Krellig** is a professor of art history, both at Ca' Foscari University of Venice.

# SUN NEWS

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Dr. B. Ochirkhuyag, President of NUM

## **The 7th General Assembly and the 6th IASS Conference of SUN- in Mongolia**

This year's General Assembly (GA) of SUN will be held online in September due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It will be the second time that SUN has held the GA virtually, fol-



Virtual meeting with the NUM to discuss about upcoming GA

Following last year's meeting hosted by Ankara University in Turkey. This year, the GA will be held for two days, a measure to give more time to participants. The Seventh General Assembly is scheduled for Sept. 29 and 30, 2021. The hours will be from 4p.m. to 6p.m. in Ulaanbaatar time (GMT 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.)

The GA will be hosted by the National University of Mongolia (NUM) in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, jointly with SUN Secretariat and Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (HUFS), Korea which is the chair University of SUN. The theme of the upcoming GA is "Next Steps of SUN as Intellectual Forces: Toward Peaceful Co-existence and Economic Co-prosperity in the Second Phase of SUN".

NUM and SUN have held several online conferences to prepare for the GA. Decisions made include the organization of the GA into

four parts: Part 1- Opening Ceremony; Part 2- Next Steps of SUN as Intellectual Forces: Toward Peaceful Co-existence and Economic Co-prosperity as the Second Face of SUN; Part 3- UPSUN/USSUN Workshop; and Part 4- Closing Ceremony.

The 6th Annual IASS Conference will also be hosted by the National University of Mongolia. The IASS conference will be held on November 27 and 29, 2021, also for two hours each day. The 6th IASS conference's theme is to be announced.

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## **The 6th PHOCOS and the 5th WRICOS**

The 6th Photo Contest of SUN (PHOCOS) and the 4th Writing Contest of SUN (WRICOS) in 2021 were held in succession. The submission deadlines had been extended to May 21 for PHOCOS and May 31 for WRICOS, and the result announcement was made on June 21. A total of 114 photos by 32 students were submitted to the PHOCOS, whose theme was "The Silk-Roads Architecture: Traditional and Modern."

Participants of WRICOS submitted 26 poems and essays. Students from 14



universities wrote poems about “Song of "Silkroadia" and essays about “What Can University and University Students Do for Peaceful Co-existence, Co-prosperity, and Sustainable Cultural Diversity along the Silk Roads?”



The 6th Photo Contest of SUN

**PHOCOS**

**2021**

**MOBILE PHONE PHOTO CONTEST**

**Submission due: April 30, 2021**

[sunofficialphocos@gmail.com](mailto:sunofficialphocos@gmail.com)

[www.sun-silkroadia.org](http://www.sun-silkroadia.org)

**Theme of the Contest**

**THE SILKROADS ARCHITECTURE**

Traditional and Modern

**PRIZE & PRIVILEGE**

**Grand prize (1 Award)**  
A Round-trip ticket to the Venue of the 6th General Assembly with accommodation in addition to a certificate of merit

**Excellence award (2 Awards)**  
Accommodation in addition to a certificate of merit

**Special Selection(s) Award(s)**  
Certificate of merit

**Selection (10 Awards)**  
Certificate of merit

All of the award-winning photos will be published in a booklet and displayed in the exhibition during the General Assembly as well as at the digital exhibition gallery in the website of SUN for a year.  
\*The prize may be adjusted accordingly in case of insufficiency of fund and extension of COVID-19

**SCHEDULE OF CONTEST**

Application Period: November 1, 2020 – April 30, 2021  
Result Announcement: June 1, 2021  
Award Ceremony: During the 7th General Assembly of SUN to be held at National University of Mongolia, in 2021.  
(The venue may be changed by circumstances and the specific date will be announced.)

**ELIGIBILITY**

Students from member universities of Silk-Road Universities Network (SUN)  
\*Students of non-member universities are eligible for application, but no additional award other than certificate will be given.

**HOW TO APPLY**

Fill out the entry form available on the website of SUN ([www.sun-silkroadia.org](http://www.sun-silkroadia.org)) and email it along with your photo up to 5 photos to [sunofficialphocos@gmail.com](mailto:sunofficialphocos@gmail.com).

Grand Prize Winning Photo of PHOCOS 2020 taken in Bandar Abbas, Iran  
Javad Lark Jannati  
University of Coimbra, Portugal

Hosted by  SILK-ROAD UNIVERSITIES NETWORK

Organized by  UNITED STUDENTS OF SILK-ROAD UNIVERSITIES NETWORK

**PURPOSE**  
To facilitate linguistic diversity along the Silk Roads.

**THEME**  
**Poem: Song of Silkroadia**  
Write the poem for the song of SUN, which contains the spirit of the Silk Roads (Silkroadia).  
Silkroadia is the spirit of SUN embracing the following writings and contemplation:  
Recognizing and acknowledging differences between individuals as reason for celebration rather than segregation.  
Diversity is the beauty, a source of strength and vitality for human flourishing.  
Fostering peace and prosperity through mutual understanding, dialogue and collective action.  
Remembering dignity and pride to human civilization.

**Essay: What Can University and University Students Do for Peaceful Co-existence, Co-prosperity, and Sustainable Cultural Diversity Along the Silk Roads?**

**SUBMISSION DUE**  
April 30, 2021

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF WINNERS**  
June 1, 2021

**HOW TO APPLY**  
Fill out the application form on the website of SUN: [www.sun-silkroadia.org](http://www.sun-silkroadia.org)

**PRIZE & PRIVILEGE**

**Grand Prize: 1 award for poems and 1 more for essays respectively.**  
Certificate and invitation to the 7th General Assembly of SUN and the award ceremony to be held at National University of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia with full coverage of the cost for round trip flights, accommodations (hotel and meals), and the official culture food by the organizer.

**Award of Excellence: 2 awards for poems and 2 more for essays.**  
The same as for Grand Prize mentioned above except that the recipients of this award are expected to take care of the cost for flight by themselves.

**Award of Selection: 7 awards for poems and 7 more for essays.**  
The same as for award of excellence mentioned above except that the organizer will provide only the official culture food and meals for the recipients of this award.  
\* Subject to change depending on the situation of COVID-19 and other unexpected events.

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**SUBMISSION DUE**  
**APRIL 30, 2021**

**THE 5th WRITING CONTEST OF SUN**

**WRICOS**

**2021**


Hosted by  SILK-ROAD UNIVERSITIES NETWORK


Organized by  UNITED STUDENTS OF SILK-ROAD UNIVERSITIES NETWORK

# The 2nd S-DECOS

It was the second time that SUN has held a speech contest as part of the S-DECOS (Speech- Debate Contest of SUN). This year, the speech contest constituted the only contest of the S-DECOS due to the corona virus pandemic. The theme of this year's speech contest was 'Speaking Hopes' in the era of COVID-19'.

Nine students from seven universities participated in the contest. Nikita Panichev of Moscow State Linguistic University, Russia, won the Gold Medal, the Silver Medal went to Ali Reza Elyas of Herat University, Afghanistan, and Zoi Triantou of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, won the Bronze Medal.

 **1<sup>st</sup> Place**



Name: Nikita Panichev  
University : Moscow State Linguistic University  
Nationality : Russian  
Topic : Revolutionary changes in higher education in the post – COVID-19



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Place



Name of the Participant: Ali Reza Elyas  
University : Herat University  
Nationality : Afghan  
Topic : Revolutionary changes in higher education in the post corona

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Place



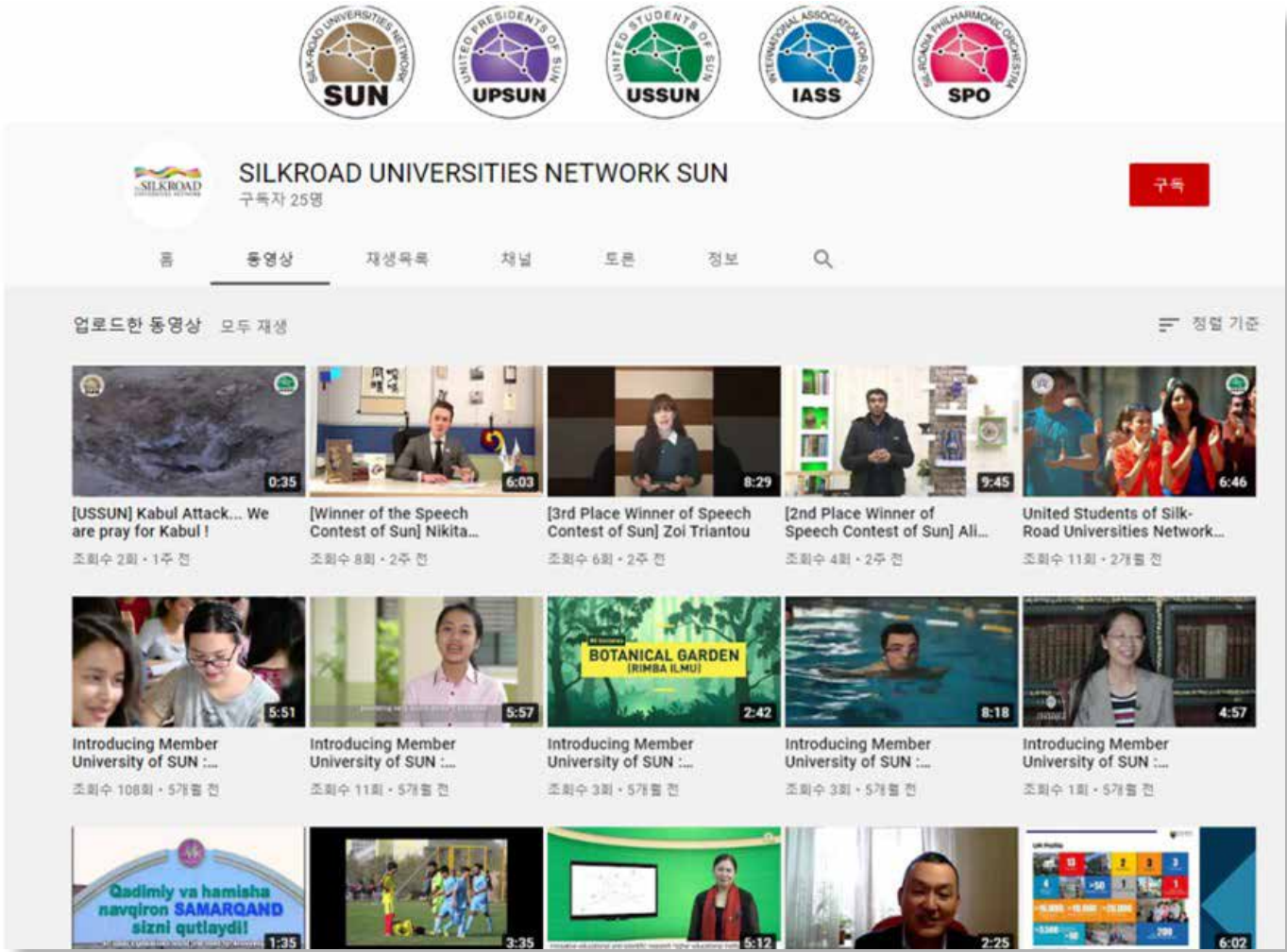
Name: Zoi Triantou  
University : Aristotle University of Thessaloniki  
Nationality : Grecian  
Topic : Innovative start-up businesses that have flourished during the pandemic

# Welcome to our YouTube channel

SUN launched the YouTube channel 'SILKROAD UNIVERSITIES NETWORK SUN'. (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaWe0wLJ492WA7RE34Uk60Q>)

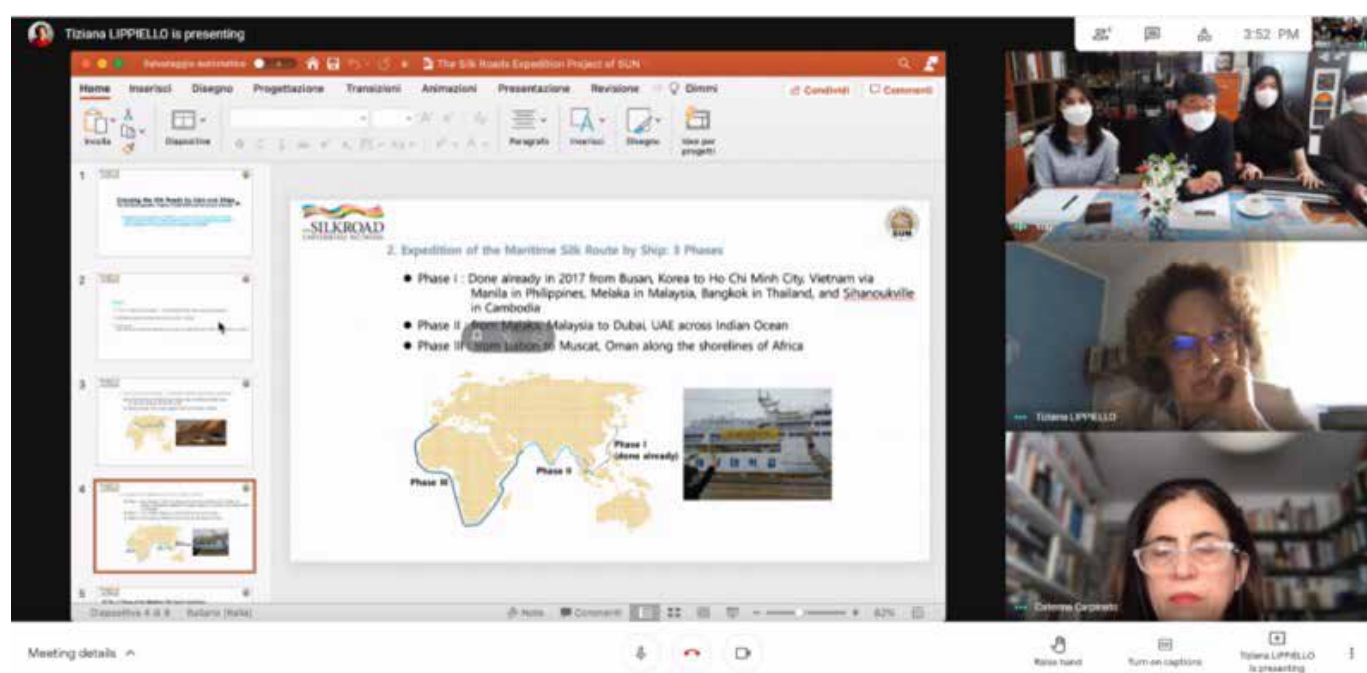
SUN launched the channel for the purpose of connecting member universities and their students and promoting SUN. Videos posted on the YouTube channel include SUN

events, General Assembly, UPSUN Workshop, introductory videos of member universities, Speech Contest and other programs. We hope the YouTube channel help SUN communicate with people within the network and around the world. Please visit our channel and enjoy watching what SUN is doing.



## Celebrating the 1600th anniversary of the city of Venice

In order to celebrate the 1600th anniversary of the city of Venice, SUN and Ca' Foscari University of Venice held an online conference. The topic for this conference was 'Crossing the Silk Roads by Cars and Ships'. SUN presented the Silk Roads expedition projects



to inspire young students so that they can take pride in the value of the Silk Roads and the beauty of cultural diversities in harmony along with the land as well as maritime Silk Roads.

Also, SUN agreed to participate in the celebration of the 1600th anniversary held by the city of Venice in February 27, 2022. For this event, SUN and Ca' Foscari University of Venice collaborated to carry out three joint projects. The first project is the video festival. Each participant of this project will make a video about his or her experience and memory of Venice. The second project is the glass and mask craft. The finished craftworks will be displayed at the exhibition. The third project is the T-shirts contest. This is a pattern designing contest for young students at design schools. The themes for this contest are Venice, Silkroadia, and Marco Polo. Participants can choose one of these themes. The selected designs will be

produced as T-shirts and sold at the Venice celebration. The winner of this contest will have the opportunity to start a business with the support of Dolce & Gabbana.

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## **Preparing for the 8th GA and the IASS Conference 2022 in Dubai**

SUN and Canadian University Dubai (CUD) held online conferences several times to discuss the upcoming 8thGA and annual IASS Conference 2022 which are to be held in Dubai, UAE. Although the usual General Assembly of SUN and the International Conference of IASS have been held separately, they are expected to be held together this time as a five-day conference. The conference will be held from February 20 to 24, 2022.





# USSUN NEWS

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## December 2020

A USSUN meeting with the contest winners on the Zoom platform happened immediately after the GA2020. The students and university representatives got to know each other and proposed suggestions for the upcoming year. The Secretary-General submitted her proposal for a new project to be known as PINE, which calls for collaboration among member universities to take 'Paces to Introduce the Network Extensively'. Pine is evergreen. It populates everywhere. It is useful, as we use its seeds,



resin, wood, and cones; and it is resilient – if a pine loses its needles, it will grow new ones immediately. Thus, pine is a wonderful symbol for USSUN.

## January 2021

The 2021 USSUN election was carried out virtually via a Google form which could be submitted only once by participating students only. In light of the pandemic conditions and the absence of any face-to-face interactions among students, it was decided to have eligibility for students who previously had contributed to SUN but did not have a prior opportunity to the president or vice president.

## February 2021

The USSUN Secretariat, in cooperation with President and Vice Presidents, decided to lead some virtual tours on the official account of USSUN on Instagram. First, it was planned to visit the countries and cities of the Presidents: Romania, Afghanistan, and Mongolia. Seoul and Tehran were also among the suggested destinations, as the locations of SUN and USSUN Secretariat.

The Secretariat of USSUN and the ECO Cultural Institute agreed in December 2020 to ded-



icate a special February issue of the quarterly magazine, ECO HERITAGE, to the cultures and traditions of the ECO-region countries in celebrating Spring. In line with that commitment, a trilateral activity between AllamehTabataba'i University, SUN, and ECI was successfully held. The event offered a unique opportunity for USSUN students to submit articles in English and introduce their traditions to other SUN members. From December 2020 to February 2021, all the students working in the Secretariat of USSUN were actively engaged in the call-for-papers, editing and revising of submissions, photo collection, and publication of the articles in the edition of the journal.

THE QUARTERLY CULTURAL MAGAZINE OF ECO CULTURAL INSTITUTE (ECI)

# ECO HERITAGE

ISSUE 27

## NOWRUZ

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Jan 10, 2021  
PUBLICATION DATE: SPRING 2021

The Students of ECO Region are Kindly Encouraged to Introduce their Cultures, Customs, Ceremonies, Rituals and Festive Traditions which Carry on the Lineage of their Ancestors.

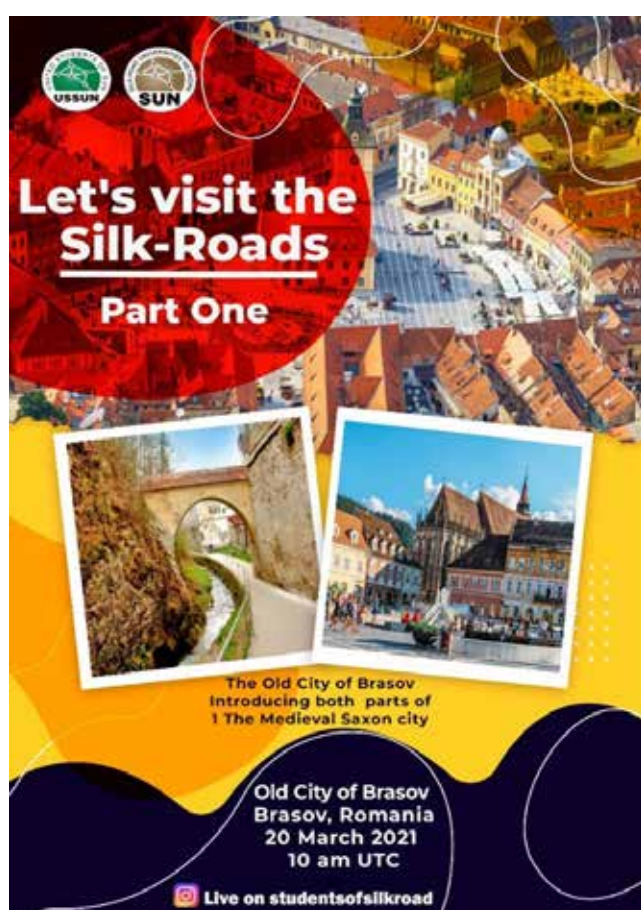
The manuscripts must observe 3000-4000 words limit.  
Relevant, non-copyrighted photos MUST be attached (300dpi resolution)

Ussuniran@gmail.com      www.en.ecieco.org

# March 2021

USSUN-HUFS and other USSUN students met each other in March on the Webex platform. They shared their experiences and talked about their interests. It was great manifestation of the impact and potential of SUN.

On 20 March 2021, the students made a virtual visit on Instagram Live to the historic city of Brasov in Romania, both the Medieval Saxon City and the Old Roman section. In a good demonstration of how to confront the challenges of an interconnected world, the group had to find a time to meet that worked for students in many different time zones. Ultimately, 10 a.m. UTC was chosen as an appropriate time, and the event coincided with the first day of the new solar year, Nowruz, in more than ten countries located alongside the Silk Roads.







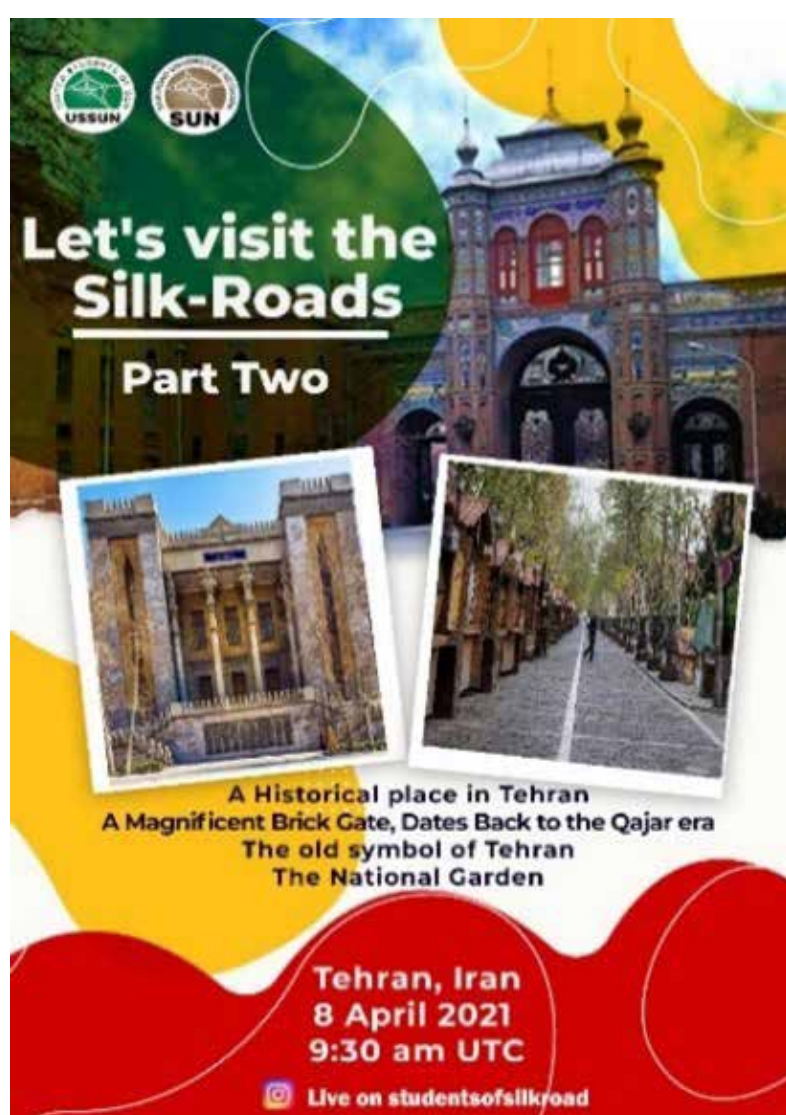
The release of ECO magazine also occurred in March 2021. It received a warm welcome from the students and professors of the ECO region. It was inspiring to for the students to see the capacity of USSUN and show how the cultural heritage of the Silk-Roads countries continues to reflect the cultural traditions among the SUN members. Such measures manifest the core principles of SUN, including “diversity is beauty,” as it is the source of strength and vitality for human flourishing, and a commitment to “the restoration of peace through mutual understanding, and collective action.”

Subsequent to the electronic publication of the special edition of ECO magazine, the Secretariat decided to sponsor a congratulatory video for the upcoming Nowruz holiday; therefore, more than 15 video submissions from the 10 ECO-region countries were collected, screened,

and selected. The final version was shown at-Nowruz festivities at various embassies and universities. Certificates of appreciation were also sent to all the professors who dedicated time to this project.

## April 2021

On 9 April 2021, the students made a second virtual visit, this time to old Tehran, including the national garden and a magnificent brick gate as an historic symbol of the city. Again, rising to the challenge of



different time zones, an Instagram Livesession began at 9:30 a.m. UTC. Despite having made previous arrangements, the three students of USSUN-ATU who were present at the site had to adjust because of some strict Covid-19 protocols, which prevented them from leading a walking tour. But they met this challenge, too, and continued the Instagram Live tour from inside the car, and, therefore, it was the first 'driving-tour' of the "Let's visit the Silk-Roads"



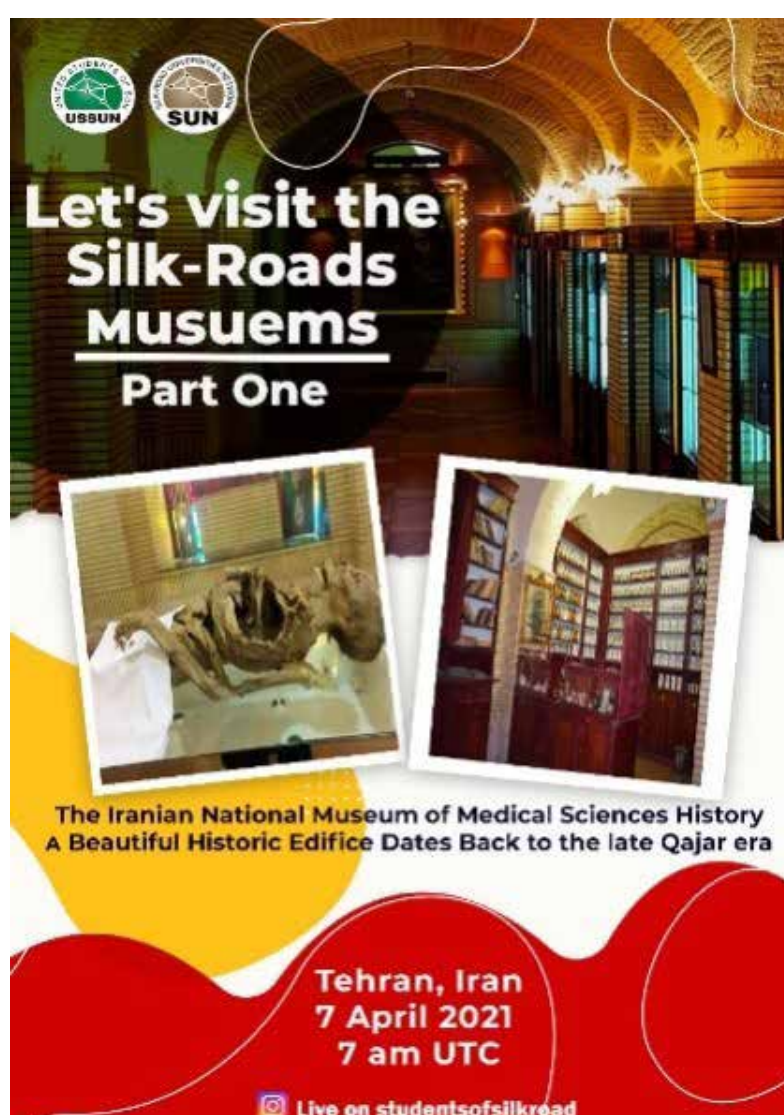
series.

A third virtual tour was held on 24 April 2021 by a volunteer student from Herat, Afghanistan. USSUN students got to experience the inside and outside of the Citadel of Herat, also known as Qa-

laIktyaruddin (Persian: آنی دل ارای ت خاه علق).

However, due to the slow internet connection, the program could only last 20 minutes, but such challenges are a fact of life that students in this new world are learning how to handle.

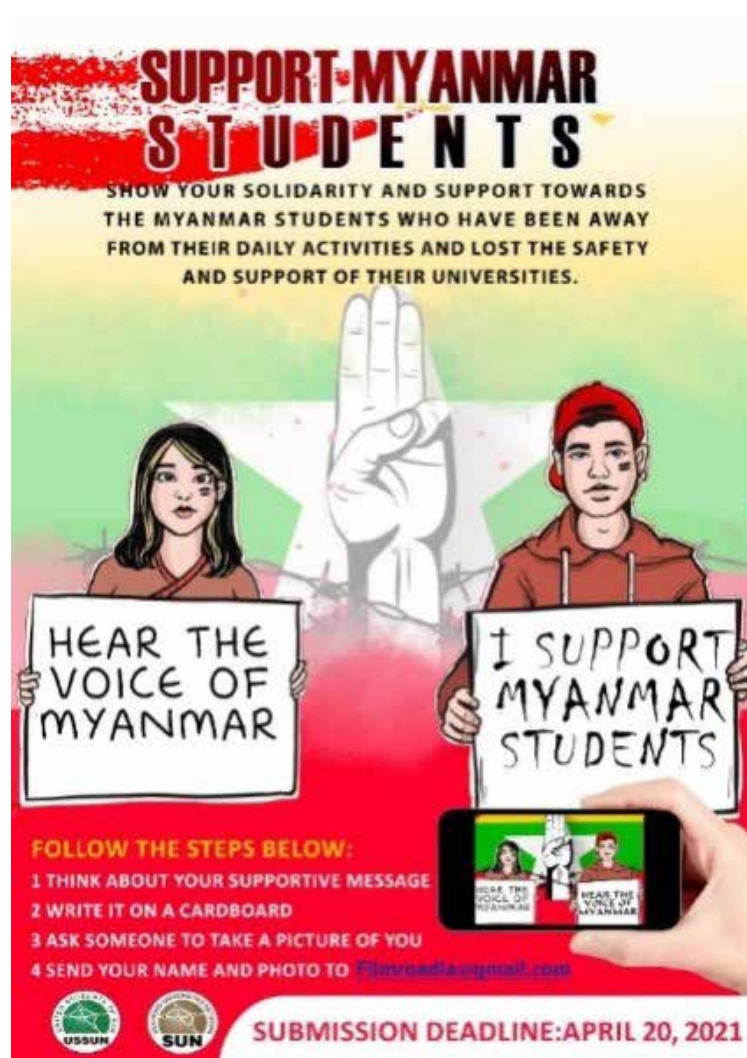
The fourth virtual tour was held on 25 April 2021. Digitally traveling to Naples, Italy, the students were able to visit Castel dell'Ovo, Palazzo Reale, and Galleria Umberto via the lens of Blanca Taglialatela of the University of Naples "L'Orientale",



a winner of PHOCOS-2019.

For the first time, an interesting opportunity to make a virtual visit of a major museum was held on 7 April 2021. The students visited the National Museum of Medical Science in Tehran. Although thus far only one such visit has been streamed, USSUN hopes to continue this program and visit other wonderful museums of the world.

In the first week of April, to draw attention to the situation in Myanmar, where there are a number of students who are also members of SUN, the Secretariat decided to send positive messages from USSUN students to those Myanmar students who face disruptions to their personal lives and academic activities. Therefore, a poster immediately was prepared and sent to all the member universities asking for a show





of solidarity and support for students in Myanmar who have been away from their daily activities and lost the safety and support of their universities. Additionally, the Secretariat of SUN under the supervision of Professor Hwang designed and made a special logo for this event.

## May 2021

The Myanmar video, including the positive messages of more than ten students from every corner of the world, was finalized and shown to the world via different platforms.

A message of condolence for a tragic incident on 30 April 2021 at a girl's school in Kabul, Afghanistan, was published and accompanied by a video showing the Secretariat's heartfelt sadness and sympathy. It was also read in a memorial ceremony, called Mother, Get up! which was held at Allameh Tabataba'i University on 19 May 2021.



A scream talks to god among the ruins of the school: (The girl's voice)  
But I asked my teacher what love means and the teacher said that it is an element.

But  
The wind and soil and fire and blood are plenty here.  
What kind of an element it is which is not found here?

I studied at Sayyed al-Shuhada and thought water must be that rare element.  
So unfortunate that I did not know humanity has long been dead.  
And the songs of girls swirl and swirl. And we are left with mothers who scream  
Mother, get up!!  
Fathers who look to the far with astonishment and murmur, where is my darling??  
These beautiful Afghan girls are no longer with us.  
What is apparent is that the girl students, not only in Afghanistan, but in every  
corner of the world are the potential powers that the future will be in their hands.  
This cannot be denied simply by killing women and girls.  
After the attack on the province of Logar on 30 April, again we lost a number of  
science loving students. The victims of this massacre were after science, not revenge.  
They wanted peace and tranquillity for themselves and their compatriots, not savagry.  
The silk roads universities network (SUN) condemns this massacre and the violent  
attack, and offers condolences to the families of these victims.  
We pray for the souls of the victims and the quick recovery of those injured in the  
terrorist attacks and ask for all the nations, universities, and the student's councils  
of the region to get together in solidarity and condemn the use of terrorism as a  
tool for domination.

**Maryam Bolouri**  
Secretary general of USSUN



**مادر بلند شو...**

**یادمان دختران مکتب سیدالشهدای دشت بروجی**

سخنرانی:  
دکتر آرمن امیر، رئیس پژوهشکده فرهنگ و ارتباطات دانشگاه علامه طباطبائی  
حاجم مریم بلوری، رئیس اتحادیه دانشجویان شبکه دانشگاه های راه نورشوم  
دکتر حمید حکیم، عضو هیئت علمی پژوهشکده فرهنگ و ارتباطات دانشگاه علامه طباطبائی  
دکتر احمد شاه احمدی، رئیس مرکز توسعه سلامت روان مهاجر  
حاجم مهرداد هراتی، عضو هیئت علمی دانشکده ادبیات و علوم انسانی دانشگاه علامه طباطبائی  
حاجم اعظم ده صوفیانی، دانشجوی دکتری علوم ارتباطات دانشگاه علامه طباطبائی  
مهندس داور موسوی، موسس و مدیر مدرسه طره گردان فرهنگ و خانه کوه کن افغانستان  
دکتر علیرضا صادقی، عضو هیئت علمی دانشکده روزنامه‌نگاری و علوم ارتباطی دانشگاه علامه طباطبائی  
آقای جعفر احمدی، شاعر معاصر افغانستان و دانشجوی دکتری زبان و ادبیات فارسی دانشگاه تهران  
مجموعه: حاجم لطیفه محبی، دانشجوی کارشناسی ارشد مطالعات منطقه‌ای، موسسه آموزش عالی افروز

**زمان: چهارشنبه ۲۹ اردیبهشت - ۱۴۰۰، ساعت ۱۵ تا ۱۸**

**محل برگزاری: نشست**

<https://meeting.atu.ac.ir/eh/regional-studies>





A fifth virtual tour was held on 29 April 2021 in South Korea. USSUN students had the opportunity to visit historic Gyeongbokgung Palace, originally constructed in 1395, and the long-time seat of the Joseon dynasty. With the cooperation of the SUN Secretariat in Seoul, students Yun Hee Jung, Inhye Hwang, and Sujin Lee from USSUN-HUFS led this tour and walked for 40 minutes around this historical site to show the lifestyle of the Korean people in previous generations.



# Let's visit the Silk-Roads

## Part Five



**Time slip in Seoul**  
**The Gyeongbokgung an ancient palace of**  
**Joseon Dynasty**  
**The ancient Gwanghwamun Gate**

**South Korea**  
**Saturday**  
**29th May**  
**8 am (UTC)**



**Live on studentsofsilkroad**



# NEWS FROM **MEMBER UNIVERSITIES**

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## **UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA (UOM), Malaysia**

### **Dean awarded fellowship from the American College of Surgeons**

Professor Dr. April Camilla Roslani, the Dean of Faculty of Medicine and a professor in the Department of Surgery at the University of Malaya, has recently been bestowed with an Honorary Fellowship from the American College of Surgeons (ACS).

ACS is the largest organization of surgeons in the world, with more than 82,000 members across the globe. The Honorary Fellowship of ACS has been awarded annually



since 1913 to renowned surgeons around the world in recognition of their achievements.

Prof. April's achievement is highly notable, as she is the only female recipient of the fellowship this year and only the second Malaysian recipient since the inception of this prestigious fellowship. This year's recipient list of nine fellows also included a Nobel Laureate.

The recipients of this fellowship must undergo a rigorous evaluation process according to the high standards established by ACS. Furthermore, nominations of fellows must be made by existing fellows of ACS.

This fellowship highlights Prof April's contribution and leadership roles at UM, ACS, and the Asia Pacific Federation of Coloproctology, underpinned by her academic and professional credibility in driving for clinical excellence, and a long history of international collaborations in research and education. This fellowship opens potential collaborations with other members and fellows of ACS, many of whom are senior faculty members in prestigious institutions in the US.

As an Honorary Fellow, Prof. April will travel to the US annually and have access to the vast network of ACS to establish training opportunities in surgical specialties, possibly on an exchange basis, as well as research opportunities, such as placements, travel grants and collabo-

rations.

In a brief interview, Prof. April emphasized the importance of research visibility. “Make your presence felt. Do the hard work to establish credibility, then have the confidence to showcase your abilities in the international arena,” she said.

She also accentuates the need for Malaysian researchers to identify the strengths that they have to offer as collaborators, such as unique epidemiology and value-for-money expertise.

### **UM team wins moot court championship**

University of Malaya emerged triumphant in the Championship Round of the Asia Pacific Regional Rounds of the Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition 2021.

The Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition, also known as the Jessup Moot, is the oldest and largest international moot competition in the world, attracting participants from almost 700 law schools in more





than 90 countries in recent years.

The UM team was comprised of five undergraduate students from the Faculty of Law: Ms. Ameerah Nasri (Year 4), Mr. Nevyn Vinosh (Year 3), Ms. Peh Qi Hui (Year 3), Ms. Saradha Lakshmi (Year 3), and Mr. Chew Thean Ern (Year 2). They were crowned Champions after mounting an incredible 7-0 unbeaten run en route to victory, winning all four matches in the Preliminary Rounds, Quarter-Finals, and Semi-Finals. Among the notable scalps included University of Auckland, University of Padjadjaran, and University of Gajah Mada.

In the Championship Round, Team UM faced off against the National University of Singapore before an eminent bench consisting of Honorable Dato' Mary Lim Thiam Suan (Malaysia), Associate Professor Dr. Danielle Ireland-Piper (Australia), and Daria Krasilnikova (Russia). In the earlier rounds, the team had the privilege of submitting before an impressive line-up of legal experts from the United States, Colombia, Germany, Spain, Russia, Ukraine, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Singapore, and Malaysia.

The competition attracted 25 teams from 6 countries: Indonesia, Cambodia, Singapore, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, and Malaysia. With lucrative cash prizes sponsored by Shearn Delamore & Co and a diverse pool of over 70 ex-

perienced judges from across the globe (Asia, Europe and the Americas), the stage was set for a fierce battleground among the region's top universities.

In the run-up to the Global Rounds, University of Malaya played host to the Asia Pacific Regional competition from 24th to 28th February 2021. This year's edition of Jessup was quite special as the competition was conducted fully online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. All teams from the Regional Rounds will go on to participate directly in the Global Rounds without the traditional qualifiers at the national stage.

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## **Moscow State Linguistic University (MSLU), Russia**

### **MSLU signs agreement with Italian Cultural Institute**

MSLU Rector Irina Kraeva and Director of the Italian Cultural Institute Daniela Rizzi signed an agreement on organizing and holding courses on the Italian language. This new long-term project of MSLU and the Italian Cultural Institute will grant its students a chance to improve their mastery of Italian and take certification exams.

The students and post-graduates are taking internships at the University, working in the library, and helping to organize film festivals and other events. MSLU, in cooperation with the Institute, organizes conferences, assists with translations, and conducts online lectures. The meeting also set new tasks for joint work for 2021.

### **MSLU signs agreement with Argentinian TV company**

On March 3rd, 2021, MSLU signed a cooperation agreement with the Argentinian TV company “Asia TV”. In her welcoming speech, MSLU Rector Irina Kraeva shared her ideas on the major directions of cooperation with the Argentinian partners, one of which can potentially be participation of professors in programs dealing with relevant problems of international relations, and also ideas for innovations in education, culture, art and science.

The Rector noted that the Institute of International Relations and Social and Political Sciences and the Institute of Humanities and Applied Sciences have highly experienced professors who are ready to share their knowledge with Argentinian viewers. General Director of “Asia TV” Ivone Alves expressed her willingness to aid in MSLU’s search for new partners among Argentinian universities and in the

mass media.

The ceremony was attended by Deputy of the South American Parliament Pablo Viles, Rector of the Latin American Pedagogical Institute Mario Morant, Deputy Director of the Latin American Department of the Russian Foreign Ministry D. V. Belov, Director of American Programs of the “Russkiy Mir” Foundation N. N. Mikhailov, as well as Dean of the Faculty of Translation and Interpretation E.A. Pokholkova, Head of the Department of International Cooperation and Internationalization I.M.Shokina and Director of the Center for Ibero-American Programs, Professor of the Department of Theory and History of International Relations in the Institute of International Relations and Social and Political Sciences Y. A. Burlyai, as well as professors of other higher educational institutions in Argentina. All those present unanimously noted that the signed agreement will contribute to the further expansion of mutually beneficial ties between Russia and Argentina.

### **MSLU launches cooperation with UNIDO**

On January 25th Veronica Peshkova, one of seven goodwill ambassadors of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), delivered a speech at the Academic Council Assembly of MSLU. The organization chose MSLU as one of its partners.

UNIDO operates in many spheres and provides its partners with the best cooperation options. The organization is a specialized entity of the UN, with a mission to support and hasten inclusive and sustainable industrial development in the member-states, and also to promote international industrial cooperation. The HQ of UNIDO is in Vienna, Austria, and the organization represents 170-member countries.

### **New project with the European Parliament**

As part of its mission, the Terminology Coordination Unit of the Directorate General for Translation of the European Parliament cooperates with universities on a project called “Terminology without Borders,” for which they created a website called ‘YourTerm’. The project contains different thematic areas and different possibilities for structuring terminology projects.

On January 20, 2021, MSLU held the first coordination meeting on the project. At the coordination meeting, a scheme of cooperation for the second semester of the current academic year was determined. Under this scheme, several groups of transfer students will complete terminology projects on various topics.

This will be only the first phase of cooperation with the European Parliament. The subsequent stages will include internships for MSLU



students and professors in Luxembourg, master's theses under the supervision of European Parliament experts, and other projects. In this meeting it was decided that MSLU would become a partner of the Terminology Coordination of the European Parliament with regard to terminology work in Russian.

## National University Of Mongolia (NUM), Mongolia



### NUM opens first “Virtual Laboratory”

Prof. A. Enkhbayar, Head of the Open Laboratory of Computer Graphics and Multimedia Research at the National University of Mongolia, together with other researchers, officially established Startup Digital Solutions LLC as a re-



sult of the NUM Innovation Project, and signed a technology license agreement with the National University of Mongolia in 2019.

Prof. Enkhbayar, the founder of “Start Digital Solutions” LLC, has implemented many activities to develop high technology and innovation within the company's development plan and through foreign and domestic cooperation, and has established and inaugurated the first Virtual Laboratory at NUM.

The opening ceremony was attended by Dr. Ch. Lodoiravsal, Vice President for Research, Corporate and International Cooperation at NUM, G. Tseren, Director of the Library, D. Lkhagvasuren, Senior Specialist of the Center for Innovation and Technology Transfer, Prof. F.A. Enkhbayar, and others.



During the opening of the laboratory, “Start-up Digital Solutions” LLC (<https://www.facebook.com/DigitalSolutionsMongolia>) handed over 6 devices to NUM, supporting 21 courses with virtual content based on virtual reality technology. Created as a result of scientific achievements and the creative work of researchers, this training device is open to students of NUM, as well as high school students and the public.

These virtual lessons use Facebook's Oculus Quest-2 device, and allows the user to delve into the depths of nature, travel to the planets and through time, and explore the country's natural and historical monuments. It also introduces innovative learning methods to the public, such as conducting laboratory experiments in a virtual environment, learning while playing, independently developing oneself, and completing tasks with interest and engagement.

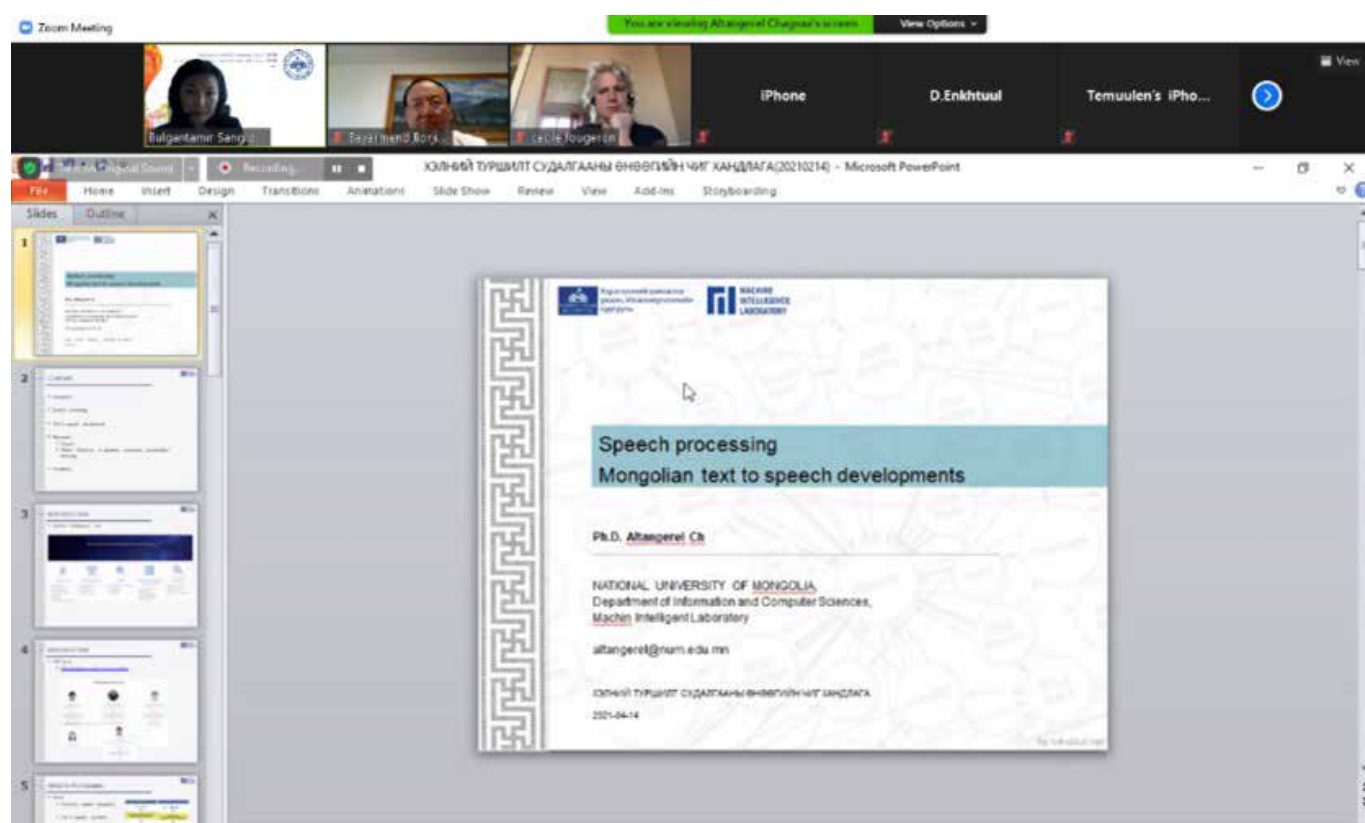
## **NUM opens Language Experimental Research Center**

In order to solve some social problems, there is an urgent need to develop research, to conduct experimental research, to create new knowledge and new methodologies and new ideas based on the latest scientific achievements and new technologies, and to use the results of re-

search in the various humanities fields, including linguistics. The need to turn results into innovative products and introduce them to social development is a priority. To this end, and consistent with the NUM strategic plan, an interdisciplinary Language Experimental Research Center has been established at the Division of Humanities, in order to contribute to the development of the University's research and enhance its international position.

A high caliber linguistic research environment has been created at NUM with the opening of this Center, which features the latest equipment and techniques, such as a recording studio, Ultra Speech Sound, Eye tracker, Psychological Linguistics, Cognitive Psychology, Applied Linguistics, Audio Aeronautical Software, Bunting Storage Server for Corpus Linguistics, and Dedicated Sound. The Center is equipped with state-of-the-art equipment such as recording cards, Shure professional microphones, router microphones, microphone amplifiers, HDD audio recorders, and control audio speakers, as well as splitting and measuring and processing via Win Pitch and AAA applications.

As a result, linguistics research in Mongolia will be conducted according to the highest experimental standards, and interdisciplinary research in linguistics, experimental aeronautics,



psychology, cognitive psychology, psychiatry, and neuroscience will be developed, with results that will lay the foundations for the solution of a number of socio-economic and development issues in the country.

On the occasion of the online launch of the Language Experimental Research Center of the School of Arts and Sciences, a webinar, “Current Trends in Language Experimental Research,” was successfully organized. The webinar featured many important presentations about research on issues of the modern Mongolian language, foreign linguistics, and linguistic experimentation. Outstanding examples included: “Priorities and results of language experiments at the University of Inner Mongolia” by B. Bayarmend, Professor, Inner Mongolia University, China; “The results of language experiments in the Laboratory of Aeronautics of the Sorbonne University in France” by Prof. Cecil

Fujeron, Deputy Director, Laboratory of Aeronautics and Phonology, Sorbonne University; and “Mongolian language processing and text translation” by Ch. Altangerel, Associate Professor, Department of Information and Computer Science, School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, NUM.

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## **Aristotle University Of Thessaloniki (AUTH), Greece**

### **AUTH scientists recognized in world ranking**

The strong impact of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki on the global scientific community is highlighted once again through the renewed ranking of the world's most important scientists, "Data for updated science-wide author databases of standardized citation indicators (2020)", published by a team at Stanford University.

This ranking includes several AUTH scientists based on the impact of their published work throughout their careers.

The list includes the top 100,000 scientists worldwide from all scientific fields, as well as 2% of the top scientists in their specific field who have published at least five articles. The evaluation was based on the impact of their research work and specifically on the reports ac-



cording to the Scopus database.

## **AUTh scientists offer service for monitoring ground movements**

In order to better manage geo-hazards, such as earthquakes, landslides, volcanic eruptions, etc., scientists from the Department of Geology at AUTh have used radar data from the Copernicus Sentinel-1 satellite mission and created a new advanced service (called S motioP mAPPING) for monitoring landscape movements.



The service, which has already been utilized during the recent strong earthquake at Samos (magnitude 7.0 on the Richter scale) is offered through the Geohazards Exploitation Platform (GEP), an initiative of the European Space Agency (ESA). Its implementation was carried out by European scientists, headed by Michalis Foumelis, Assistant Professor in the Department of Geology at AUTh. The services of the GEP platform are used worldwide by more than 80 organizations in 32 countries.



## **AUTh joins "Fiber in the Sky" program of the European Space Agency**

With the aim of developing a new generation of secure satellite communications in the European Union using quantum optical signal encryption, the Holomontas Astronomical Station of AUTh in Halkidiki was selected by the European Space Agency (ESA) for its pilot program, "Fiber in the Sky", following a proposal by the Department of Astronomy, Astrophysics and Engineering of the Department of Physics of AUTh.

Once fully developed, the Station will use two specialized robotic telescopes, which also will be used in other research project, such as the observation of potentially dangerous paragliding asteroids and the detection of gravitational wave sources in the optical wavelengths, as part of the scientific team of AUTh Professor of Physics Nikos Stergioulas of the international Virgo program.

The "Fiber in the Sky" program will provide services such as: interconnection and integration of satellite systems, support of terrestrial networks and provision of telecommunications services, provision of services to search and rescue operations and emergencies (e.g. natural disasters), coverage of remote areas with high speed telecommunications, and remote handling of equipment at distant locations. The "Fiber in the Sky" program is part of the broad-

er Euro Quantum Communication Infrastructure (QCI) program.

## Three AUTH students awarded in WRICOS 2020 of SUN



The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki achieved three excellent distinctions in the 4th Writing Contest of the Silk-Road Universities (SUN), WRICOS 2020, as three members of its student community managed to stand out with awards in the poetry competition. The competition was organized under the auspices of SUN, of which the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki is a member.

# University Of Coimbra (UC), Protugal

## Interview with Rector published in Guangming Daily (China)

“Now is the best time for countries to  
work together and strengthen multi-  
lateral mechanisms”

现在是各国携手合作、加强多边机制的最佳时机

The Chinese newspaper Guangming Daily (光明日报) published an interview with Prof. Amílcar Falcão, Rector of the University of Coimbra, and Prof. Zhang Min, Senior Research Fellow at Institute of European Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and Chinese executive director of the CASS-UC Centre for China Studies. The article was originally published on December 9, 2020.

光明日报

时政 国际 时评 理论 文化 科技 教育

首页>光明日报>正文

现在是各国携手合作、加强多边机制的最佳时机

来源：光明网-《光明日报》 2020-12-09 04:03

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【光明国际论坛对话】  
科学防控、齐心协力是葡萄牙的抗疫要诀

张敏：尊敬的法尔康校长，您好！新冠肺炎疫情之前，我有幸多次访问您领导的科英布拉大学，这所建在当年王宫上的大学被联合国教科文组织评为世界五大遗产大学之一。“光明国际论坛对话”为我们提供了交流的机会，很高兴与您就抗击新冠肺炎疫情和后疫情时代的话题进行讨论。当前新冠肺炎疫情仍在世界各国蔓延，全球新冠肺炎确诊人数已突破6600万，死亡人数超过150万，人类正遭遇第二次世界大战结束以来最严重的全球公共卫生突发事件。您如何看待这次疫情对人类社会的冲击？



阿米卡尔·法尔康 (Amílcar Celta Falcão) 葡萄牙科英布拉大学校长

法尔康：这样的跨国交流很有意义。令人担心的是，当前欧洲各国正遭遇新冠肺炎疫情第二波的冲击。新冠病毒暴发必将对人类社会各个方面带来深远影响，不仅影响各国经济运行的方式，也对

值班总编推荐

“做题家”做题并没错，错的是什么

光明日报：把城市家庭从教育竞争中解放出来

光明日报评论员：把严的主基调长期坚持下去

追思



追忆历史学家蔡美彪

他们，与星同在

李德顺 冯瑞 王玉青 李冠兴 金展鹏 陈继雄

## UC hosts “Asian and European-Lusophone Civilization” Lecture Series



A lecture series, “Asian and European-Lusophone Civilization,” was organized by the Sino-Lusophone Academy of the University of Coimbra with the generous support of the Eurasia Foundation.

From 18th February until 27th May, 2021, the University of Coimbra hosted (online and in-person) 15 lectures from Professors from Portugal, Brazil, China, South Korea, Japan, Germany and Italy on multidisciplinary themes such as literature, law, philosophy, history, geography, education, sociology, and others, with the objective of promoting cultural and academic dialogue between Asia, Europe, and the Lusophone world.

## UC ranked the most sustainable higher education institution in Portugal, the 21st in the world

According to the third edition of The Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2021, released on April 21, 2021, the University of Co-

imbra was the institution with the best overall performance in Portugal in meeting the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a total score of 92.7 out of 100.

The University of Coimbra is the third best in the world in reaching the Sustainable Development Goal 2, which aims to eradicate hunger, and the University also stood out in the fulfillment of SDG 9 - Industries, Innovation and Infrastructure - occupying the 13th position worldwide.

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## **Hankuk University Of Foreign Studies (HUFS), Republic of Korea**

### **HUFS joins hands with four eastern Seoul universities for innovation sharing**

HUFS inked the Innovation Sharing and Exchange Agreement with Kyung Hee University, Korea University, Sungkyunkwan University, and Hanyang University at Seoul Tabolo 24 at the JW Marriott Dongdaemun Square on February 19, 2021. The Agreement aims to share digital innovations in education content and technology to bolster online learning, which has become the new normal in the COVID-19 era. The universities pledged their commitment to their roles and responsibilities to ensure that





the sharing and exchange platform increases cooperation among other universities.

The Agreement allows HUFS to promptly respond to the recent changes in the global education environment. Serving as a platform for practical exchanges with the other universities, it will also help HUFS establish and implement a new model of sharing and cooperation and thereby fulfill its goals of cultivation of future talent and innovative value creation in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

## **Center for Critical Foreign Language Education hosts ambassadors' forum**

Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (HUFS) President Kim In-Chul welcomed dignitaries and guests to the HUFS Center for Critical Foreign Language Education, under the direction





of Prof. Oh Jong-Jin, at a forum at Aekyung Hall on April 30, 2021. The forum invited the ambassadors of 12 critical language-speaking nations (Brazil, Azerbaijan, Oman, Uzbekistan, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Thailand, Turkey, Portugal, and Poland), and the HUFS CFLE Center introduced each of the critical foreign languages and sought ways to promote critical foreign language learning within the nation. Inaugurated as the 1st CFL Ambassador Forum, it highlighted the “new southern” and “new northern” languages in the first session and the languages of strategically important regions in the second session. The forum holds great potential as a platform for HUFS and critical language-speaking nations to foster both their friendly networks at home and abroad and for various discussions on critical foreign language learning. It will serve as a significant milestone in encouraging critical foreign language

learning in Korea and domestic and international cooperative networks. Amid the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, which has necessitated social distancing and subsequent online learning, the education sector has gradually gone online. International exchange and cooperation endeavors initially were hit hard by the coronavirus outbreak, but are gaining new momentum in a digital world free from physical constraints. Aware of this growing importance of a digital presence, the 1st CFL Ambassador Forum was held both online and in person, with strict compliance with social distancing measures. The forum was joined online by some 100 HUFS CFL students and others interested in CFL learning. Offering the online audience, a Q&A session with the participating ambassadors on their languages and cultures, it served as an excellent opportunity to better understand CFLs and foreign cultures.

# Allameh Tabataba'i University holds virtual conferences with Silk Road Universities

Allameh Tabataba'i University, as the largest humanities and social science-specialized university in West Asia, has tried to continue to expand its international academic cooperation with the universities in the Silk-Roads region during the Covid-19 Pandemic. In the autumn of 2020, the 4th iteration of the Cultural Dialogues between Iran and Italy program was held online by Allameh Tabataba'i University.

Moreover, the Kazakh Language Online Teaching program, a first for Iran, was established in partnership with Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, a member of the Silk-Roads Universities Network (SUN). Allameh Tabataba'i

University is also contributing to the development of Persian language instruction in Kazakhstan by having sent Dr. Owrang Izadi to Almaty to teach the Persian language in Kazakh-





stan.

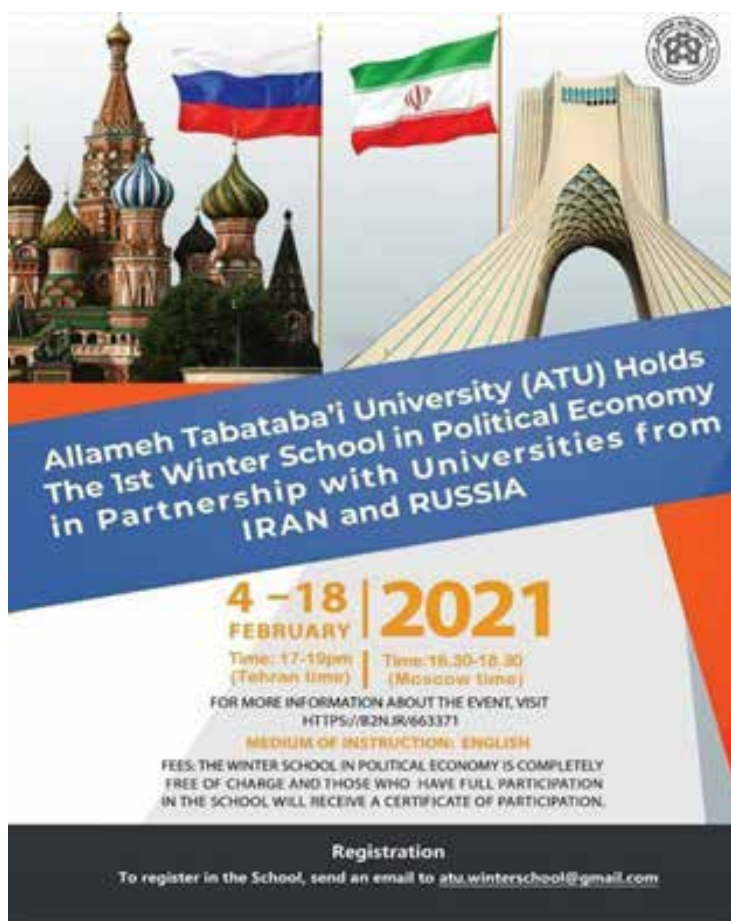
In Fall 2020, Allameh Tabataba'i University and St. Petersburg University of Humanities and Social Sciences organized six joint courses on cultural policy, in both Persian and Russian languages. The courses were well received by professors and students in Iran and Russia. The "Role of Women in Peacebuilding Processes" was the title of another program organized by Allameh Tabataba'i University, where women professors from Central Asia, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan shared their ideas and expertise on this crucial topic.

A series of Russian Studies workshops were also held by Allameh Tabataba'i University in cooperation with universities and academic institutes in Iran and Russia.

In addition, Allameh Tabataba'i University,



in collaboration with the Moscow State Linguistic University, organized a series of translator-training workshops regarding the Russian and Persian languages, and students from the two universities participated in this program.



In December 2020, the first meeting was convened of the Presidents/Rectors of Kabul, Balkh, and Herat Universities from Afghanistan and Allameh Tabataba'i University, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, and the University of Sistan and Baluchestan from Iran, on the topic of how to expand research partnerships between professors and students in the two countries.

In the winter of 2021, an International Conference entitled "Cultural and Civilizational Ties between Iran and China" was held at Allameh Tabataba'i University, and professors from various universities in Iran and China participated in this event.

The Winter School in Political Economy was also held on the topic of the impact of the pandemic on the economic structures of countries. Seven universities from Russia and seven uni-



versities from Iran participated in this winter school.

In addition, Allameh Tabataba'i University always has been committed to expanding cultural ties between the peoples of different lands, especially within Asian countries. As part of this commitment, it has held numerous joint cultural celebrations and rituals, including the Yalda Celebration (celebrating the longest night of the year on 20 December, each year), the Nowruz Celebration (celebrating the beginning of spring in the Iranian cultural sphere on 21 March, each year), and the Ramadan Celebration (the month when Muslim nations fast). During these celebrations, Allameh Tabataba'i University has invited dozens of professors and thinkers from West, East, Central, and South Asian countries and introduced the cultural traditions and rituals within the various countries of this ancient continent to the professors and students, thereby expanding academic cooperation among these universities.



# University Of Valencia (UV), Spain

## UV is committed to the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 Agenda

The University of Valencia, as an agent of social transformation, has a long history in achieving sustainable development by trying to reconcile economic development with the protection of social and environmental balance. Consistent with this commitment, the University joined the challenge posed by the United Nations in 2015. Since that year, and thanks to the invaluable support of the Generalitat Valenciana (the local government) and specifically the Council of Participation, Transparency, Cooperation and Democratic Quality, progress has been made to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

According to the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (2020), the capacities of universities in education, research, and innovation, as well as their contribution to civic, social, and community leadership, suggest a unique role for universities in helping society to address these challenges.

The University of Valencia prioritizes the several main areas of action, following the fundamental principle of shared responsibility in a common impulse for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.



From the University of Valencia, alliances are built (per SDG 17) that provide a common framework for different organizations to connect and work together in shared interests. Within the project “ODS: yo si” (“SDG: I do!”), discussion forums are being developed where the University of Valencia, the Valencian public administration, organizations, and companies can contribute their points of view in a coordinated way on different participatory strategies leading to the implementation of the SDGs.

In addition, awareness-raising activities have been promoted, thus contributing to the appropriation of the 2030 Agenda by citizens, including:

I. Participatory processes for students - “Ideation: Marathon of ideas for the achieve-

ment of the SDGs at the University of Valencia”;

II. 2nd edition of the contest, “Communication Campaign of Sustainable Development Goals”, “Assemble your objectives”; this xylographic graphic work was created in the esplanade of the Faculty of Philosophy and Sciences of Teaching and a living sculpture of the SDGs was constructed;

III. “Collaboration Day: Agendas Educionales”, with a triologue on Cooperation, Agenda 2030, and SDGs, a collaboration which presented the project “Green Libraries for Climate, RECIDA. Treasures to change the world” (SDG13) in which the United Nations Depository Library (ONUBIB-Universitat de Valencia) is a participant. It also contributes to the dissemination of the SDGs through a travelling exhibition that is provided to both the different faculties and to secondary schools.

The University of Valencia marks its progress, evaluation, communication, and accountability in achieving the SDGs through the TOSSD report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, including all the resources mobilized with public support aimed at promoting

sustainable development in developing countries, and to support development enablers or address global challenges at the regional or global level.

## Write for us

**SILKROADIA** is the official webzine of the Silk-Road Universities Network (SUN). We have more than 800,000 subscribers including professors, researchers, students, presidents, rectors, and chancellors of universities & research institutions located along the land and maritime Silk Roads. We welcome your articles and images on any of the topics related to the Silk Roads. The topics are those mentioned below but not limited to:

**Culture on the Silk Roads:** religion, local cuisine, artwork, jewelry, toys, pottery, dance, music, musical instruments, traditional / contemporary dress, types of dwelling, festivals, rituals, weddings, funerals, taboos.

**Heritage on the Silk Roads:** archaeological / historical heritage sites, literature, paintings, statues and sculptures.

**Travel on the Silk Roads:** natural wonders, markets, hotels, caravan-serais, transportation.

**Any interesting and diverse stories** about people, places and events in your area, including the life of ordinary people and interview.

\*All articles and images shall be original and not infringe upon copyright rules. The working language is English and contributors' contact information must be included.

Please send to [sunwebzine@gmail.com](mailto:sunwebzine@gmail.com)



## SILKROADIA seeks student reporters

**SILKROADIA** is looking for students who are willing to write articles about the Silk Roads and other topics of their interest.

### What SUN student reporters do?

- Report Silk Roads-related activities and events in their country
- Report important activities and events in their university
- Work on articles or images as requested by the SUN Secretariat

### Qualifications

Students of the member universities of SUN

Must be fluent in English

Must send at least two writing samples in English to **sunwebzine@gmail.com**

SUN student reporters are usually expected to work for one semester.

### What they get

Articles and images published on SUN webzine and website.

Receives the official certificate from SUN

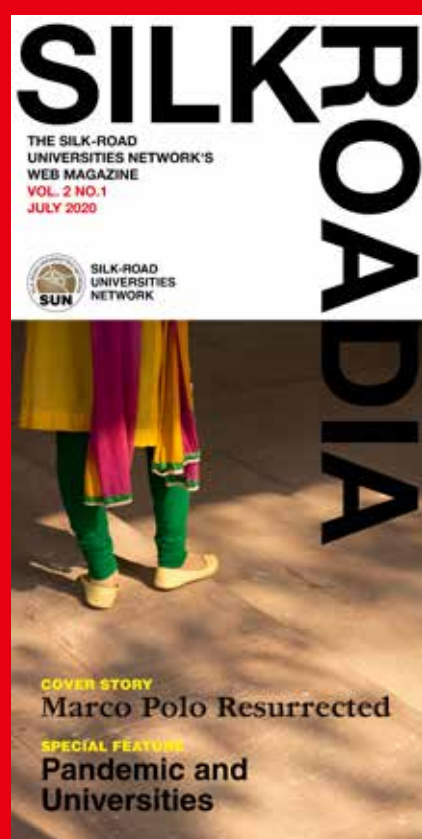
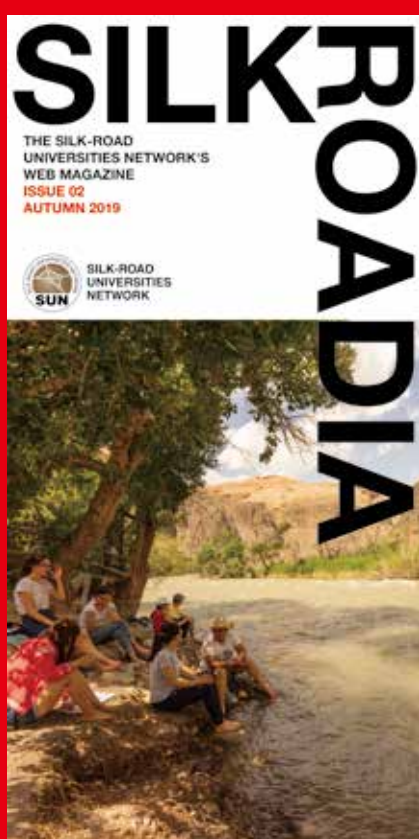
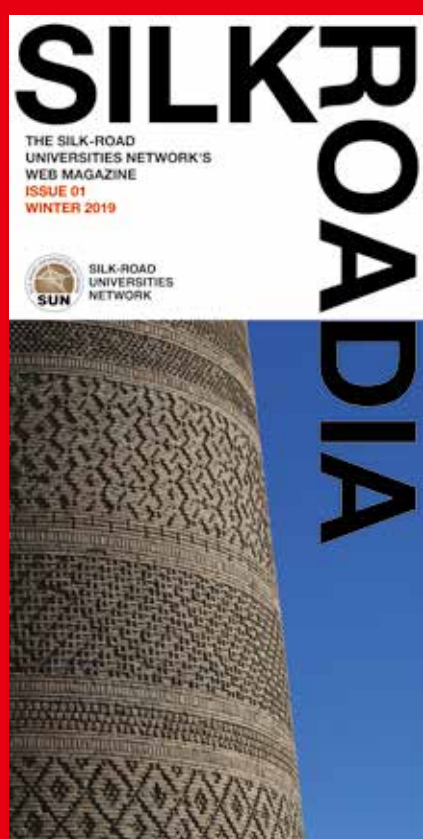
The student, who is annually selected as the best reporter by the SUN secretariat, will be invited to attend the annual General Assembly of SUN with full coverage of the air travel and accommodations.

### How to apply

Click the link below for the google form of application:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeI6Bps3q05KUx1FdvZfJcl5W-g4x-lo8eLVBDfFjuhdARo3Ag/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1>





# Advertise on SILKROADIA

**The official webzine of SUN  
to carry advertisements from  
next issue**

***SILKROADIA***, the official webzine of the Silk-Road Universities Network, is a biannual publication which was launched in 2019. All the four editions published so far are available at the website of SUN, including the latest one published on the occasion of the Sixth General Assembly of SUN held online on December 3, 2020.

As the official publication of SUN, ***SILKROADIA*** aims to serve as an effective medium of communications among the SUN Family members and between SUN and the outside world.

In order to fulfill its mission, ***SILKROADIA*** features a variety of interesting, informative and insightful articles and images, most of them provided by professors and students of

the SUN member universities and institutes. The contents vary from in-depth academic articles and commentaries authored by experts to easy-to-enjoy stories on heritage and travel on the Silk Roads. We are proud of having published genuinely original contents – like the imaginary interview which highlighted people like Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta, the legendary travelers and adventurers who are identified with the ancient Silk Roads.

Such an abundance of interesting contents on **SILKROADIA** draws a lot of readers from around the world. The webzine already boasts of a regular audience of about 800,000 people, including the faculty members and students of the 82 member universities and institutes in 65 cities of 28 countries along the Silk Roads. This is one of the reasons we began thinking about the potential of **SILKROADIA** as a potential place for advertisements.

Carrying advertisements on **SILKROADIA** has two objectives: First, advertisement revenue will certainly help SUN stand on its own financially, which has become more urgent in the wake of the ceasing of support from the Gyeongsangbuk-do Provincial Government. Second, advertisements on **SILKROADIA** will help the webzine raise its standard to a higher level. Good publications draw good advertisers and a genuinely popular publication cannot go without advertisements.

It is against this backdrop that **SILKROADIA** will carry advertisements from the next issue, which is expected to be published around June 2021. The first potential advertisers could be member universities and institutes of SUN who wish to promote their academic programs, exchange of students and other international programs and events. The advertisement pages of course will be open to those outside SUN, including educational associations, organizations and companies.

Details, including the rates and formats, will be released soon, which will be delivered to member universities and institutes and outside organizations through the official communication channel of the SUN Secretariat and **SILKROADIA**.

We expect active support from SUN members. Thank you.

**Ad rates (tentative)**

Page size	Price	Submission due
Full page	USD 500	TBA
1/2 page	USD 300	TBA
1/4 page	USD 200	TBA