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THE BEAUTY WITHIN
KATIE COSTELLO

PHOTOGRAPH OF DHANU BY MARK ULYSEAS



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Reclining Buddha, Wat Pho, Bangkok.

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Live Encounters is a not-for-profit free online magazine that was founded in 2009 in Bali, Indonesia. It showcases some of the best writing from around the world. Poets, writers, academics, civil & human/animal rights activists, academics, environmentalists, social workers, photographers and more have contributed their time and knowledge for the benefit of the readers of the magazine.

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Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

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The Beauty Within

Katie Costello

Katie Costello is a Hubbard, Ohio, USA native. Her greatest love and career is working with animals and she has surrounded herself with all aspects of helping them. She is the owner of *The Canine Campus Training and Wellness Center* and has 2 non-profit organizations one co-founded with her father. When her father died of Agent Orange on July 8, 2015, Katie expanded her humanitarianism to helping victims of Agent Orange. Her first trip to Pleiku, Vietnam (where her father served), working with VAVA, occurred in April of 2017.



'Alternate Voices' and Indian Politics

Dr Parama Sinha Palit

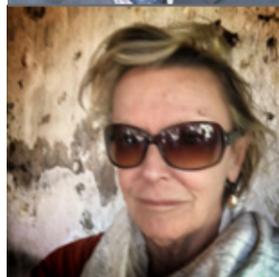
Parama Sinha Palit is an Adjunct Senior Fellow with the Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore and an Associate Researcher with the Swedish South Asian Studies Network (SASNET), Lund University, Sweden. The views are personal.



Pakistani Deep State and the Jaish-e-Mohammad

Dr Bibhu Prasad Routray

Dr. Bibhu Prasad Routray held the position of Visiting Professor and Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) chair, India Studies at Murdoch University, Perth between July-December 2017. He served as a Deputy Director in the National Security Council Secretariat, Government of India and Director of the Institute for Conflict Management (ICM)'s Database & Documentation Centre, Guwahati, Assam. Routray specialises in decision-making, governance, counter-terrorism, force modernisation, intelligence reforms, foreign policy and dissent articulation issues in South and South East Asia.



From the Streets of Singapore

Jill Gocher

Bali based international photographer has spent her life exploring and enjoying Asian cultures. Her work has appeared in National Geographic, Time, International Herald Tribune, Asia Spa, Discovery, Silver Kris and many more. Her books - *Asia's legendary Hotels*, *Periplus*, *Bali- Island of Light* - Marshall Cavendish, Indonesia - *Islands of the Imagination*. *Periplus*, Australia - the land down under - Times Editions, Singapore, Indonesia - the last paradise - Times Editions. She has held exhibitions in Singapore, Kathmandu, and Bali.



Still Lives

Wolfgang Widmoser

Born in Munich 1954. 1973 studied with Ernst Fuchs and Salvador Dali. 1970 he painted still-lives in Switzerland introducing curved mirrors which reflect objects in most surprising ways and led to a proposal for the -elegant Universe. Moving to Tuscany in 1980 landscape and atmospheric effects crystallized to intense, portraits of nature. Since 1984 living in Bali. In his search for the- abstract. Papua New Guinea - Warriors combine the archaic with the futuristic. Wolfgang's motto - aesthetic = ethic - points to places where humans experience the Good, the True and the Beautiful.



Vietnam Perspectives

Vũ Tuấn Hưng

Vũ Tuấn Hưng is a professional photographer and tour guide based in Hồ Chí Minh city. He is a tour guide for mainly German speaking tourists. His photographs feature in numerous publications across the world. If you are visiting Vietnam and need his assistance please email - vietnaminfos@gmail.com



Abiding Life

Selwyn Rodda

Selwyn Rodda is an Australian based painter and draftsman. He trained at the renown Victorian College of the Arts and has been exhibiting sporadically for three decades in Australia and the United States. He works in a loosely Romantic, Symbolist, Surrealist and Metaphysical vein. His oil paintings feature enigmatic 'biomorphic' lifeforms in dramatically lit landscapes, largely unencumbered by human cultivation, while his drawings are populated by closely interrelated humans and animals, or human/animal hybrids or therianthropic characters.



My Dear Asia

Mikyoung Cha

Mikyoung Cha is a graduate in Oriental Painting from Hyosung Women's University, Daegu, South Korea. She has participated in a number of group art exhibitions in South Korea and Japan. In 2016 she took up photography - the camera becoming her paint brush. This globe trotting photographer is a regular contributor to Live Encounters Magazine.



Sand Sculptures

Mark Ulyseas

Ulyseas has served time in advertising as copywriter and creative director selling people things they didn't need, a ghost writer for some years, columnist of a newspaper, a freelance journalist and photographer. In 2009 he created *Live Encounters Magazine*, in Bali, Indonesia. March 2016 saw the launch of its sister publication *Live Encounters Poetry & Writing*. He is the author of three books: *RAINY - My friend & Philosopher*, *Seductive Avatars of Maya - Anthology of Dystopian Lives* and *In Gethsemane: Transcripts of a Journey*.



Turkish Cassoulet - Sucuklu Kuru Fasulye

Ozlem Warren

International cooking teacher and Turkish culinary expert Ozlem Warren is a native of Turkey, lived there and extensively travelled for 30 years. She has been teaching wholesome, delicious Turkish cookery in the US, Jordan, Istanbul and England. Her recipes have been published in the local media in England, Hurriyet and Sabah national daily newspapers in Turkey. Ozlem also took part at the "*Turkish Chefs of the World*", "*Dunyanin Turk Seferi*" TV program aired at TRT, National Turkish TV channel and in 37 countries.



Jebbe and Katie Costello

Katie Costello is a Hubbard, Ohio, USA native. Her greatest love and career is working with animals and she has surrounded herself with all aspects of helping them. She is the owner of *The Canine Campus Training and Wellness Center* and has two non-profit organizations, one co-founded with her father. When her father died of Agent Orange on July 8, 2015, Katie expanded her humanitarianism to helping victims of Agent Orange. Her first trip to Pleiku, Vietnam (where her father served), working with VAVA, occurred in April of 2017. <http://thecaninecampustraining.com/about/>
<https://www.facebook.com/caninecampustraining>



KATIE COSTELLO

THE BEAUTY WITHIN

I think all too often we over complicate life. At its very core, it truly is about love. Love breeds kindness. Kindness gives way to wanting to help other beings. Soon, the energy we put out into the universe comes back to us ten-fold. It is yet another concentric circle that proves how much we all need each other. How we are all interconnected in an amazing web called life.

At age six I learned that certain foods my parents had been feeding me were animals. I ran out of my first-grade classroom crying hysterically when we were learning about the 4 food groups. I still remember the moment. I asked Mrs. Sox "What do you mean meat comes from animals? Like they give us something?" I can still see her face trying to think of how to answer this when she replied "No, it IS the animal." I asked a few more questions because I truly couldn't comprehend this answer or that this was happening. I went to the nurse's office and demanded to go home. To me nothing could be further from okay. At six I became vegetarian and I never touched meat again, and thirty-four years later I vowed to take that one step further to become vegan.

On my grandparents farm I would spend endless hours playing with the cows, the chickens, gathering eggs with my grandmother, playing with piglets, all had names. All were my friends.

Animals provided a knowledge and experience that meant more to me than anything. I trusted them impeccably. It is so simple. Love with a whole heart. Harm no one or anything intentionally. That foundation that I had led me into a career with animals. It started with working at a shelter, and then going to college to become a veterinary technician, and finally owning my own business, The Canine Campus Training and Wellness Center which provides animal training and behavior work. My husband, Sam, is a veterinarian and also a vegan. Our entire lives are devoted to animals.

As I grew, I found a deeper understanding of the world and my commitment to thinking in a larger way with broader strokes and understanding that the labels we place on everything only create divisions, and divisions create more divisions, unrest and wars.

Jebbe came over to me by the fence where I started to pet him and hear the rest of his story... “he lost an ear in the fight, partial hearing, and has injuries to his rear legs.” In his eyes I saw his soul. The inhumanities that people had done to him, and yet, he was pure love. I stood by him for a long time. His energy was healing.

One day my husband wanted to go to a farm animal sanctuary about an hour away from our home and the course of my life was changed forever because of that trip. I stopped at each barn to learn each inspirational story of the animals that survived against all of the odds. Some came from neglect situations, others had fallen off of meat trucks, others victims of cockfighting. Each story fed my soul.

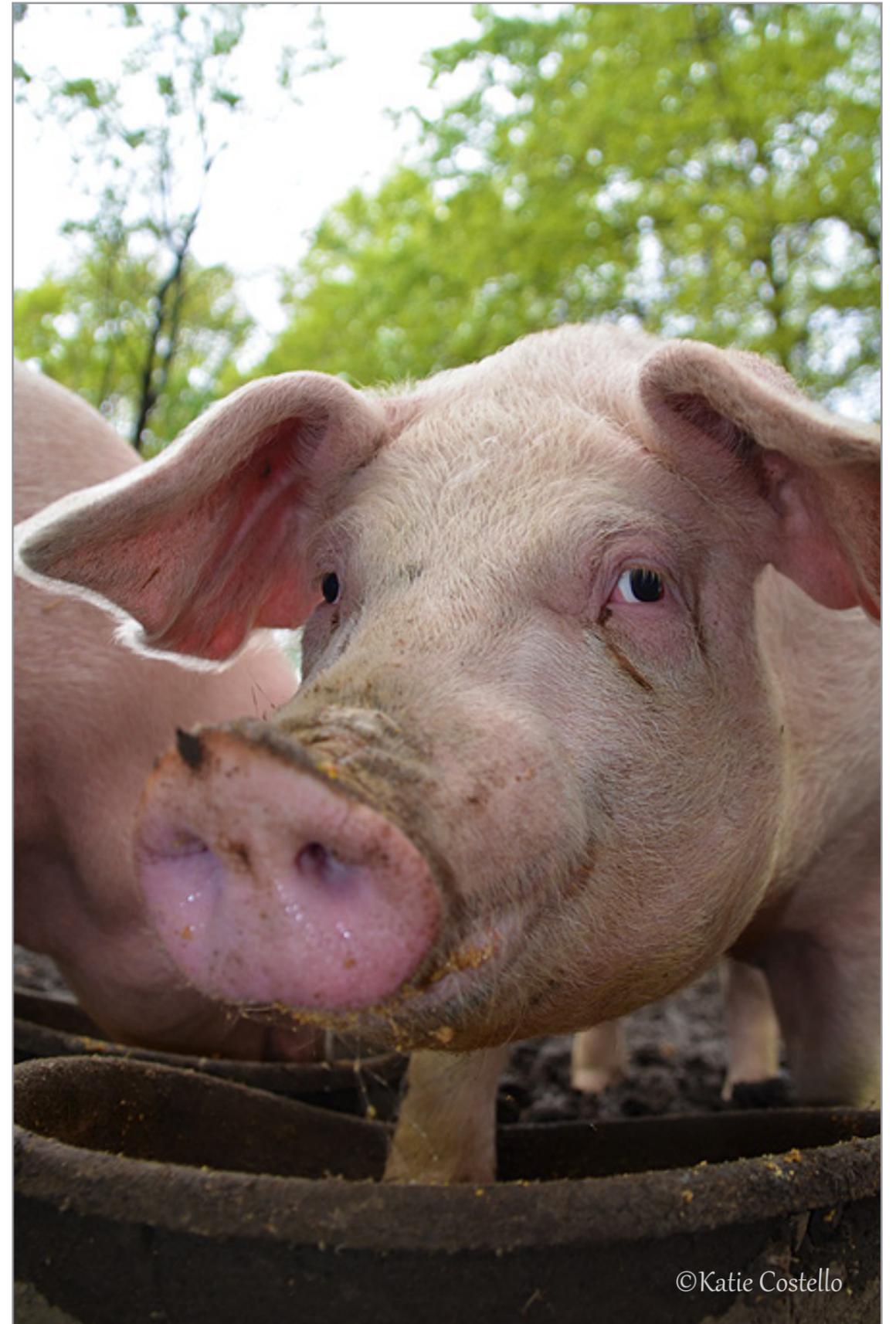
I walked over to a volunteer to hear the story of the animals at one barn, when all of a sudden a pig came squawking down over a hill. The volunteer, said “Oh, that is Jebbe Boye. He is partially deaf, so he is louder than the other pigs.” And the story continued. He had been used in hog-dog fighting in Kentucky and was picked up by an anonymous person and taken to a veterinary clinic. A contact at the veterinary clinic arranged the transportation and Jebbe rode in a cab from Kentucky to Columbus with an Ethiopian cab driver who called him Jebbe Boye, meaning Little pig. The name stuck!

Jebbe came over to me by the fence where I started to pet him and hear the rest of his story... “he lost an ear in the fight, partial hearing, and has injuries to his rear legs.” In his eyes I saw his soul. The inhumanities that people had done to him, and yet, he was pure love. I stood by him for a long time. His energy was healing.

Our trip home from the sanctuary that evening revolved around conversation of pigs. While Sam was in veterinary college, he lived on a pig farm. He loved the pigs and being in their presence, but like me, the reality of what happens to them was so much to handle.

The next morning, I talked to Sam about how I couldn’t stop thinking about Jebbe. WE decided we had to adopt him and his barn mates; Anselmo and Tadita. I would go to the sanctuary weekly to take Jebbe and Company fruits and vegetables and to sit by this huge and lovely creature. I would read to him, and he would sit, looking out of the barn with his awesome energy so full of wisdom. To think we knew much else about being a pig farmers was laughable. Jebbe would teach us a few things quickly though!

Moving day was so exciting! I had my camera in hand and went to help load them into the trailer. Tadita and Anselmo created no problems whatsoever. Within minutes they were in the trailer. Jebbe, however, had other ideas. He decided first that there was a green pasture to stop in, and all of the coaxing in the world wasn’t going to change things. Volunteers who had come to help were getting annoyed, and it was at least 2 hours later before Jebbe was standing in front of the truck, determined to NEVER step foot on. It was a waiting game. Meanwhile, Tadita and Anselmo were happy as could be in the trailer eating. The term “Pig headed” was meaning more and more to me.



©Katie Costello

Louise.



©Katie Costello

Jebbe and company.

Sadly, there really aren't statistics of how long pigs live. Most are slaughtered by the time they are one. I had known two that were thirteen years old that lived at the farm animal sanctuary. More than one billion pigs are slaughtered a year for food consumption worldwide. Just let that number settle in.

Once home they fell into their routine and learned to love Happy Hog Haven as we named our farm. I would frequently read to Jebbe, we would do color differentiation games, we made big "Kong's" for them out of blue barrels and would fill with food, we tried all sorts of environmental enrichment ideas. Pigs are the 4th smartest mammals on the planet. These guys need things to do! Pigs love to decorate. If you hand them branches, they will take them from one place to another decorating. They will take items you put in their pasture to do the same. They will keep moving them until they find the perfect location.

Sadly, there really aren't statistics of how long pigs live. Most are slaughtered by the time they are one. I had known two that were thirteen years old that lived at the farm animal sanctuary. More than one billion pigs are slaughtered a year for food consumption worldwide. Just let that number settle in.

So, what do you do when you feel something so passionately, and need to counteract some of that negative-yet don't have the ability to stop it entirely? You do what you can. You educate. So, word started to get around about our pigs. Because most don't make it to a year, people aren't used to seeing pigs as big as pigs are! We threw them a party, where we raised money for the farm animal sanctuary. We invited EVERYONE. People came from afar! And we let people pet them, feed them, and take pictures with them. And things started to happen! I started to get questions about more visits, so we adopted an open barn policy. People would make weekly journeys to our house to feed them and hang out with the pigs. And stories started to be told about how they couldn't eat pork anymore, and that oftentimes spread to other meat as well! As someone who has been vegetarian/vegan and trying to convince people for 41 years to take the leap, I was amazed at how effortless it was for Jebbe.

Jebbe found himself stuck in the mud in Spring of 2016. His rear legs were weak from his injuries when he was a baby. We formed a save Jebbe party and dug and dug and used ropes until we freed him. From that day forward, he never walked again. He enjoyed one more Summer before passing away at the age of nine. Half of my heart left with that pig. He taught me about loving with your entire heart, and not holding grudges. Listening is everything. And mostly, always eat what is on your plate. I have had 2 artists draw Jebbe pictures. He touched so many. The day he died was devastating, and as life does you start to figure out how you are going to go on. One of my dearest friends sent me a picture of a cloud from when she was driving that day. She too loved Jebbe, and this was proof to us that he was okay.

All beings have worth and value. All beings are sentient and will attempt, in a way that makes sense to them, to save their lives. All animals feel pain. We need to extend concern and care to all humans and all beings. I am a huge believer in meeting people where they are. There are always things you can do. If giving up meat isn't an option, give up meat on Monday. Then try giving it up on Monday and Tuesday.... take 1 step in the direction of kindness. One step has a way of turning into two steps, into three and into a journey. Take a moment to learn something about another being. Study them and appreciate them. We are all connected. Support local farm animal sanctuaries. Volunteer. Adopt a pig.... open your heart and what is given back will amaze you!

One morning about 4 months later I was heading to work when I heard that a livestock truck carrying pigs had overturned on the freeway by my house and pigs were loose. I turned my car around and went straight to the scene of the accident. This was on route 80, a very busy interstate. After a short while I saw 2 pigs that I assumed had been killed as they were lying lifeless in the median strip. I walked over to them and one picked up her head. Because they could easily cause another serious accident I stayed on the side of the road and I started calling Sam, friends and a neighbor with a livestock trailer. One of those friends was my dear friend Annette, founder of that awesome farm animal sanctuary. Once everyone arrived, we came up with our plan to save these.

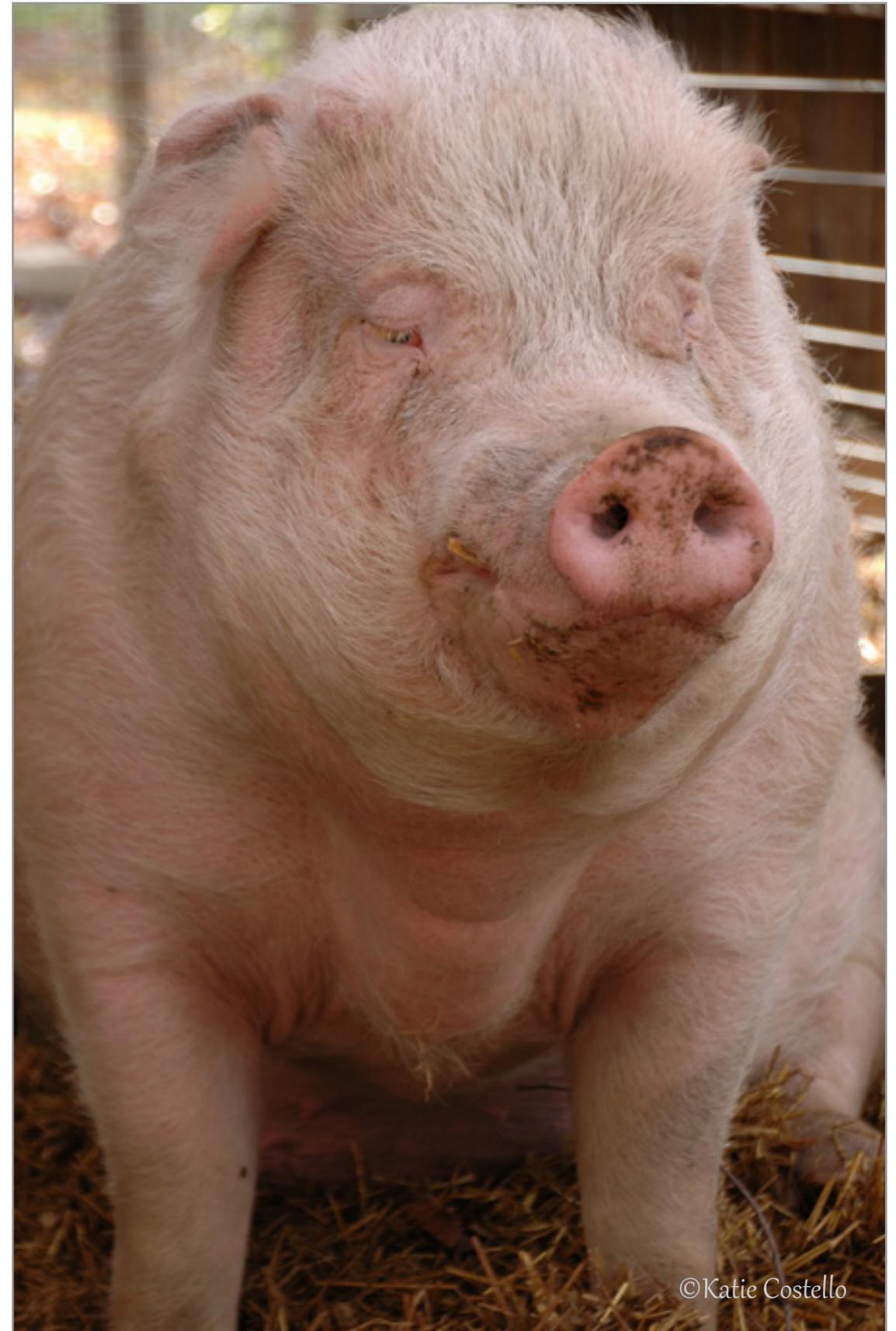
After about 1.5 hours the 2 pigs that had been thrown from the truck were on the trailer headed to safety. The news had footage of us trying to get the pigs on the truck, and a community rallied around again for the news that those pigs had made it to safety and would never be slaughtered. While this should have felt like a huge victory, my heart was so heavy from the ones we couldn't help.

And so, Thelma and Louise are now in our barn, and the stories they can tell! It took them about a week to come near us, they were very afraid. Their only support system at that point was each other. We would sit in the pasture watching them, they were always laying touching each other. Once, Thelma stood up and walked 5 feet away and Louise realized she wasn't next to her she stood up and went into full flight. Day by day they started trusting us, and now the fear is gone. The girls have a FB page, just as Jebbe does. They will be 3 years old this November. Those girls have no idea how an accident that threw them out of a moving truck was the single best thing that could have happened to them. (See picture 11 Louisewater)

So, the take away. All beings have worth and value. All beings are sentient and will attempt, in a way that makes sense to them, to save their lives. All animals feel pain. We need to extend concern and care to all humans and all beings. I am a huge believer in meeting people where they are. There are always things you can do. If giving up meat isn't an option, give up meat on Monday. Then try giving it up on Monday and Tuesday.... take 1 step in the direction of kindness. One step has a way of turning into two steps, into three and into a journey. Take a moment to learn something about another being, Study them and appreciate them. We are all connected. Support local farm animal sanctuaries. Volunteer. Adopt a pig.... open your heart and what is given back will amaze you!

You can go to Jebbe's FB page search *Jebbe Boye Costello*

You can go to Thelma and Louise FB page search *Thelma and Louise saving the world 1 pig at a time*



©Katie Costello

Jebbe onward.



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DR PARAMA SINHA PALIT 'ALTERNATE VOICES' AND INDIAN POLITICS

Since politics involves conflict among those with differing preferences and clashing interests, it is important that all are heard, and all views considered, making political voice a key element of functioning democracies. While mainstream political voices are imperative, it is the alternate voices which actually define 'free' nation states. These alternate voices of discursive participation¹ try to counter possibilities of domination while communicating people's expectations and concerns to authorities both in power and outside. Alternate voices assume great importance in modern political milieus like that in India shaped by the new media, and where many social media users are likely to get politically involved and act politically (<http://assets.press.princeton.edu/chapters/s9685.pdf>).

With the Indian elections underway for constituting the 17th Lok Sabha (Lower House of the Parliament) and four State Assemblies (Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha and Sikkim), the interplay of contrasting and distinct alternate voices through social media platforms is prominently visible. Democracy and elections have been an important part of the Indian state since 1947 when India became independent and embraced adult suffrage -- the 'biggest gamble in history' (<https://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/mag/2002/02/03/stories/2002020300120200.htm>). India's participatory political system, since inception, has moved center-stage as an exemplar of and a worldwide advocate of democracy. With 900 million Indian citizens casting votes in the elections that are being held in seven phases over six weeks, the robustness of the world's largest democracy is truly visible. However, such visibility should not undermine the challenges Indian democracy faces from the emergence of digital technologies and a digitally empowered population heavily engaged in social media.

Social media platforms like YouTube, Facebook (FB), its messenger WhatsApp, Instagram and Twitter have expanded public political space, compelling leaders to move closer to people and making them more accountable. The same technology that has led to the growth of these social media platforms in India has bestowed more power to India's civil society that now has an enlarged role in the political

landscape. While analysts like Putnam argue this form of civic engagement is on the decline with individualism becoming the predominant culture in modern societies², India appears to be an exception. Earlier in the decade, in 2011, new technology enabled civil activist Anna Hazare to successfully lead a nationwide active anti-corruption campaign highlighting the reach of social media. Both Twitter and FB were responsible for translating online support into offline action (e.g. street protests) during the time underscoring the role of social media platforms in empowering India's civil society and social activists. Subsequently, social media has become a major tool for communication for both political leaders and individuals.

The last general elections in India in 2014 witnessed an overpowering role of new technology³ with social media shaping the election discourse and transforming current Prime Minister Narendra Modi's public image from a Hindu chauvinist to a transformative leader. Modi was also arguably the first social media Prime Minister in India. Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has since extensively employed social media platforms in political conversation, followed by other national and regional parties like Congress, Aam Admi Party (AAP), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Trinamool Congress (TMC), Shiv Sena, YSR Congress and Communist Party of India (Marxist). Active use of social media by political parties and actors for engaging with the electorate has also produced its inevitable downsides.

Fake news, disinformation and misinformation – integral parts of the social media landscape – have become all pervasive. The influence fake news can exert on an electorate comprising several first-time smartphone users accessing myriad social media platforms courtesy data priced at remarkably low rates, is a serious concern.

The current Indian elections have noted a substantive civil society response to disinformation propagating one-sided political discourse. The civil society actors are providing an *alternate* perspective on Indian politics, including social, communal and religious issues and are also debunking fake news.

Similarly, the homegrown ShareChat available in 14 different Indian languages is another app that aims to offer *alternate* political views mostly to non-English speaking audiences in smaller Indian towns and cities. In a country with around 600 million young people, online portals like Youth ki Awaaz (Voice of the Youth) - claiming to be a 'social justice media platform' and resonating concerns and perceptions of a young India - are extremely popular.

Alternate voices comprise quite a few digital start-ups. Start-ups like Neta enable voters to rate local leaders and politicians and even revise votes, if they so wished, based on their performance. Piloted during the by-polls in the northern Indian state of Rajasthan's Ajmer and Alwar constituencies in February 2018, it uses a combination of Artificial Intelligence (AI), one-time password (OTP) and Aadhaar numbers (a 12-digit unique identity number for individuals with biometric details) to ensure voters rating leaders are bonafide.

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Social media's increasing traction in India's political landscape has seen start-ups and homegrown apps being complemented by digital journalism initiatives. While BOOM and AltNews are committed to bringing verified facts - as opposed to opinions to readers - *Jan ki Baat* (Conversation of the People) shapes opinions and connects people on public issues, highlighting achievements (or lack of it) of political leaderships. IndiaSpend is another initiative utilising open data for analyzing political developments and providing the 'true story' to citizens for assessing leaders. Factchecker.in, launched by IndiaSpend, is another dedicated fact checking initiative examining statements and assertions made by those in public life for both accuracy and context for public consumption.

A study by Oxford University in July 2018 mentioned India as one of the 48 countries where political parties engage in "social media manipulation campaigns" (<https://www.outlookindia.com/magazine/story/how-is-the-fake-news-factory-structured/300965>) and fake news dominates the political discourse. The finding points to the great salience of responsible alternate voices, such as the initiatives mentioned, for apprising citizens with *alternate* views on political and religious issues in a country divided deep on sectarian and religious lines. With fake news found responsible for unfortunate incidents like mob-lynching in India due to religious intolerance, objective and balanced communication on religious issues is critical. Hopefully, this will be effectively performed by the fact checking websites fighting fake news.

Many other independent voices exist in India's large political space. YouTube, which is the most popular social media platform in India with around 250 million subscribers, has been employed by Dhruv Rathee, a solo operator 'to educate people' on political developments and fight fake news.

In this backdrop, where political parties and their leaders are incessantly and unabashedly using social media for electoral gains, the presence of alternate voices in shaping an objective discourse is essential. They are pivotal to maintaining the robust and unbiased character of Indian democracy for enabling informed choice of candidates by citizens - something which several political parties, leaders and interest groups seem determined to disrupt through circulation of fake news and false information.

Other blogs like *Politicalbaaba*, *The East India Comedy Company* and *Wah Sarkar*, are efforts by individuals and groups to offer online voices on Indian politics, including elections. Interestingly, both *The East Indian Comedy Company* and the *Wah Sarkar* uses satire to comment on India's political system. While the former is a group of stand-up comedians maintaining a dedicated YouTube channel for their acts and performances on various political issues, *Wah Sarkar* is an apolitical blog attempting to provide balanced insights.

India's new media landscape has become remarkably alive with the ongoing General Elections and the tussle between genuine and fake voices to influence the political discourse. Social media is being vigorously employed by political parties for wooing voters, particularly the 84 million 1st time voters in India. According to a survey conducted by the Twitter ahead of the elections, over 80% of the first time voters in India surveyed rely on social media for domestic and international political news (<https://www.hindustantimes.com/lok-sabha-elections/lok-sabha-elections-2019-for-first-time-voters-social-media-main-source-of-news-finds-survey/story-Uy3NPscGLYgZ34nfc5S3RJ.html>). In this backdrop, where political parties and their leaders are incessantly and unabashedly using social media for electoral gains, the presence of alternate voices in shaping an objective discourse is essential. They are pivotal to maintaining the robust and unbiased character of Indian democracy for enabling informed choice of candidates by citizens - something which several political parties, leaders and interest groups seem determined to disrupt through circulation of fake news and false information.

Foot Notes

1. Discursive participation happens when citizens come together with others in formal or informal settings—face-to-face or via the telephone or the Internet—to discuss local, national, or international issues.
2. Putnam, Robert D. 2000. *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon & Schuster
3. Hologram technology and GPS were extensively employed in election campaigns for political outreach.



Dr. Bibhu Prasad Routray held the position of Visiting Professor and Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) chair, India Studies at Murdoch University, Perth between July-December 2017. He served as a Deputy Director in the National Security Council Secretariat, Government of India and Director of the Institute for Conflict Management (ICM)'s Database & Documentation Centre, Guwahati, Assam. He was a Visiting Fellow at the South Asia programme of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore between 2010 and 2012. Routray specialises in decision-making, governance, counter-terrorism, force modernisation, intelligence reforms, foreign policy and dissent articulation issues in South and South East Asia. His writings, based on his projects and extensive field based research in Indian conflict theatres of the Northeastern states and the left-wing extremism affected areas, have appeared in a wide range of academic as well as policy journals, websites, and magazines. This article republished by permission of www.mantraya.org

DR BIBHU PRASAD ROURTRAY PATRON-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP: PAKISTANI DEEP STATE AND THE JAISH-E-MOHAMMAD



The hijacked Indian Airlines flight IC814 on the tarmac of Kandahar airport, Afghanistan.
Photo Courtesy: The Quint

Abstract

In the complex jihadi landscape of South Asia, Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), since its origin in 2000, has served as an instrument of Pakistani military's policy vis-à-vis India and Afghanistan. The deep state within Pakistan nurtured it in the initial years and used it as an instrument of foreign policy against the neighbouring countries. Barring few years when President Musharraf tried to curb JeM's activities, such incessant logistical support contributed to the group's rising profile. Buried in the debate, however, are two important trends that continue to receive less attention. Firstly, the JeM continues to share a symbiotic relationship with the Taliban and al Qaeda; and secondly, Pakistan military continues to adopt a dual strategy of switching between the JeM and the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), to deflect international criticism. A policy to neutralise these groups in Pakistan must factor in ways and means to break this patron-client relationship.

State of Denial

It was on a cold wintry evening of 31 December 1999, 31-year-old Masood Azhar walked few steps as a free man on the tarmac of Kandahar airport with a cautious glee, before being whisked away in a jeep by the Taliban. He had spent his last five years in the Kot Balwal prison in Kashmir, since his arrest in 1994. His previous attempt to escape the prison had failed. But the hijacking of the Indian Airlines flight IC814 by a group of Pakistanis who sought to exchange four prisoners in Indian jails, including Azhar, for 155 passengers in the plane, changed his fate. Indian government decided to give in to the demands of the hijackers and Azhar was now free to return to the mujahideen's career he had chosen in 1989, after passing out of the Binori mosque in Karachi.[2] In less than a year, Azhar, the secretary general of the terrorist group Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM), went on to establish the JeM[3], a formidable terror formation which is believed to share the closest link with the Pakistani military.

After being released, Azhar's connections with the Pakistan military, the Afghan Taliban, & al Qaeda combine ensured that the JeM emerged as one of the important Jihadi outfits in Pakistan in quick time. Azhar toured Kandahar to secure the blessings of the Taliban leadership for launching JeM. The HuM was flabbergasted by the formation of the new group and called Azhar "a greedy Indian agent who is out to damage the Kashmiri Jihad". Azhar delivered speeches in various Pakistani cities and towns and said that his group would eliminate Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, who he termed as Abu Jahal (one of the key enemies of Prophet Mohammad).

Although the JeM, in comparison to other Kashmir-centric and Pakistan based terror formations, is a relatively new outfit, this analysis attempts to provide its contemporary history, focusing on its relations with the Pakistani military establishment. The Pakistani military underplays JeM's existence and has even denied Masood Azhar's presence in the country. This paper extrapolates primarily from literature from both Pakistan and India. Indian analysts, over the years, have depended on their unnamed Pakistani sources and inputs by India's own intelligence agencies to construct their narrative on Indian centric terror formations operating from Pakistan. Very few Pakistanis have been able to visit any of the JeM establishments in the country. So, the dependence of this analysis on unverifiable data and information is higher. This is not an uncommon trend in research on terrorism. Attempt, however, has been made to keep any consequent bias to the minimum by making intelligent choice of sources and cross verification of information derived from them.

Origin, expansion, and network formation

After being released, Azhar's connections with the Pakistan military, the Afghan Taliban, & al Qaeda combine ensured that the JeM emerged as one of the important Jihadi outfits in Pakistan in quick time. Azhar toured Kandahar to secure the blessings of the Taliban leadership for launching JeM. The HuM was flabbergasted by the formation of the new group and called Azhar "a greedy Indian agent who is out to damage the Kashmiri Jihad". Azhar delivered speeches in various Pakistani cities and towns and said that his group would eliminate Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, who he termed as Abu Jahal (one of the key enemies of Prophet Mohammad).[4] Prior to the 9/11 attacks, the JeM was reckoned as one of the two primary jihadi organisations in the country, the other being the LeT. A number of Pakistani media reports narrated the linkages between the JeM and the talked about the help Azhar got from the establishment. For instance, Amir Mir writes, Azhar's spymasters in Pakistan managed his career well. On one occasion, "he was allowed to travel to Lahore with scores of Kalashnikov-bearing guards"[5].

The outfit set up a training camp in Balakot as well as Bahawalpur sometime in 2000. Initially set up as a facility to churn out Jihadis to fight the United States in Afghanistan, Balakot became a crucial training centre for JeM's recruits focused on Kashmir. By early 2001, the camp was providing 'both basic and advanced terrorist training on explosives and artillery'. A secret US Department of Defence cable, released by *Wikileaks*, mentions a Pakistani national Hafez K Rahman who fought against the US in Afghanistan, had received training from the JeM facility at Balakot. Rahman is a Guantanamo Bay detainee.[6] Another Pakistani national and Guantanamo detainee Mohammed Arshad Raza, a member of Tabligh-e-Jamaat, too had trained at Balakot and claimed to have knowledge

Activities of the JeM were focused not just on Kashmir, but on mainland India. Not surprisingly, within two years of its establishment, it carried out the spectacular attack on the Indian parliament on 13 December 2001. Two months before, on 1 October, the JeM had carried out a suicide bombing of the Jammu and Kashmir legislative assembly building in Srinagar killing more than 30 persons.

of the recruitment practices of the JeM.[7] Khan had been arrested in December 2001 in Afghanistan and released from Guantanamo in September 2004. Similarly, Rashid Rauf, who attempted to bomb a transatlantic flight, passed out from the Bahawalpur camp of the JeM. In 2006, Rauf confessed to his Pakistani interrogators that he arrived in Bahawalpur in early 2002, got in touch with a senior JeM operative Amjad Hussein Farooqi, trained in the Bahawalpur camp and went Afghanistan with Farooqi in mid-2002, before establishing close connections with the al Qaeda.[8] One the perpetrators of the London underground attacks in July 2005, Shehzad Tanweer, had met a JeM leader Osama Nazir during his visit to Pakistan in 2003 and might have undergone training in one of the JeM's facilities.

Masood Azhar, because of his body weight, was never cut out to be an active fighter. The HuM had used him as a propagandist and fundraiser, and had even sent him to Africa and Europe.[9] However, such oratory skills of Masood Azhar and his standing as a religious scholar came handy and was a key factor in attracting and enlisting recruits from Indian Kashmir and the PoK. Ayesha Siddiqi attributes the recruitment successes of the JeM to failing agricultural system, absentee landlords who used to solve the financial problems of the poor, poor education and limited job opportunities in Punjab (Pakistan).[10] Siddiqi claimed to have seen open recruitment for JeM during her research visits to Bahawalpur. According to her, the fact that JeM could do so in an area, which also houses the Pakistan Army's 31st Corps Command, points at an inevitable link between the two.[11]

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The Assassination Bids

Azhar was arrested on 29 December 2001. According to Pakistan's National Counter-Terrorism Authority, the JeM too was proscribed on 14 January 2002. Although the arrest and the ban came after pressure from the international community and India, in the wake of the 13 December 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament and the 9/11 attacks, Pakistan insisted that the ban had nothing to do with the Indian demand and was purely related to the sectarian activities of the JeM which included 'suicide attacks on churches and missionary institutes in Islamabad, Murree and Taxila'[12]. Azhar was released after a three-member Review Board of the Lahore High Court ordered his release on 14 December 2002. The JeM, however, was re-banned in November 2003.

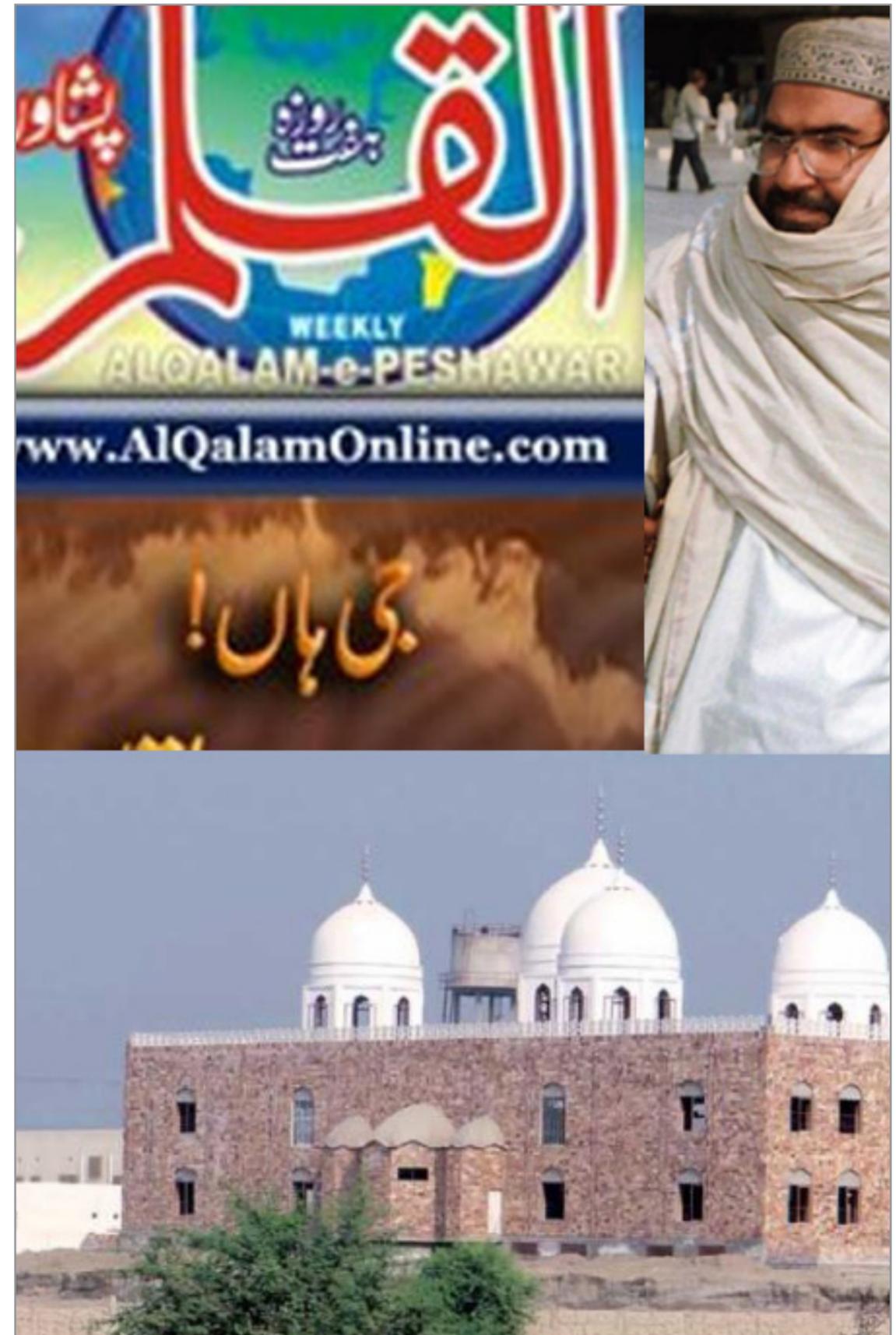
Between 2003 and 2008, it not only operated openly in parts of Pakistan, it conducted a series of high-profile attacks. In July 2004, Pakistani authorities arrested a JeM member wanted in connection with the 2002 abduction and murder of US journalist Daniel Pearl. In 2006, JeM claimed responsibility for a number of attacks, including the killing of several Indian police officials in Srinagar.

In December 2003, the JeM carried out a two assassination attempts on then President Parvez Musharraf. On the 14th, his car was targeted as it crossed the Jhanda Chichi bridge near the 10 corps headquarters in Rawalpindi. The bridge 'had been wired with an estimated 250 kilograms of C4 explosives'[13]. On the 25th, 'two suicide bombers tried to ram cars packed with explosives into the presidential convoy, not far from the venue of the first attack'. The 14 December attack killed none, whereas 14 persons including the two suicide bombers were killed in the second attack. The attacks led to a massive overhaul of the President's security arrangement. Additionally, the intelligence failure that had led to the attack cost director-general of military intelligence Major General Tariq Majeed his position. He was replaced with Musharraf's military secretary Major General Nadeem Taj.

Suspicion fell on the al Qaeda, since few months back the group's then deputy chief Ayman al-Zawahiri had called upon the Pakistani security forces to topple General Musharraf for "betraying Islam". The investigations also pointed at the possible role of the Brigade 313 alliance consisting of five militant organisations including the JeM, Harkatul Jihad al-Islami, LeT, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Harkatul Mujahideen al-Alami. Brigade 313 had come into being shortly after the US started its operations in Afghanistan in October 2001. The militant leaders had pledged to target key Pakistani leaders who, were 'damaging the cause of jihad' in order to 'further the American agenda in Pakistan'. Subsequently, two suicide bombers responsible for the 25 December were identified as Mohammad Jamil, a 23-year-old JeM recruit from Poonch district of Kashmir and Hazir Sultan, a HuJI cadre Afghanistan.

These attacks led to a series of steps by the government against the JeM. On 26 December, Azhar's younger brother and the JeM deputy chief, Mufti Abdul Rauf, was arrested from Rawalpindi. A manhunt was also launched for Azhar who reportedly had gone into hiding. Azhar was subsequently arrested and lodged in Bahawalpur Central jail, before being put under house arrest. Azhar wrote afterwards, "While I was lodged in Bahawalpur Central jail, the jail administration feared that my friends and companions may attack them. So I was shifted to Dera Gazi Khan." [14] Subsequently, his own home was declared a sub-jail and he was put under house arrest.

This seemed to have minimal impact on the JeM's operational ability. Between 2003 and 2008, it not only operated openly in parts of Pakistan, it conducted a series of high-profile attacks. In July 2004, Pakistani authorities arrested a JeM member wanted in connection with the 2002 abduction and murder of US journalist Daniel Pearl. In 2006, JeM claimed responsibility for a number of attacks, including the killing of several Indian police officials in Srinagar.



Al-Qalam, Masood Azhar and JeM headquarters.

A US Department of Defense document of November 2008 reveals the presence of a newly built madrassa on the outskirts of Bahawalpur city headed by a devotee of Maulana Masood Azhar identified only as Maulana Al-Hajii.[17] Locals told the US embassy officials that ‘these sites were primarily used for indoctrination and very limited military/terrorist tactic training. They claimed that following several months of indoctrination at these centres youth were generally sent on to more established training camps in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and then on to jihad either in FATA, NWFP, or as suicide bombers in settled areas.’[18]

JeM was also involved in the 2007 Red Mosque uprising in Islamabad. Masood Azhar, who had been released from house arrest and was openly preaching in mosques all over the country, went underground that year. The fact that JeM was involved in the assassination attempts on Musharraf, the attack on the Indian parliament and killing of journalist Daniel Pearl was admitted by former chief of the ISI, Lt. Gen. Qazi, who was a cabinet minister in Musharraf’s government. He said in the Pakistani Senate on 6 March 2004, “We must not be afraid of admitting that the JeM was involved in the deaths of thousands of innocent Kashmiris, bombing the Indian Parliament, Daniel Pearl’s murder and attempts on President Musharraf’s life.”[15] Qazi, however, asserted that ISI had nothing to do with the extremist and sectarian outfits in Pakistan and there was no truth in the allegations that they were patronized by the establishment.

Remarriage of Convenience

In 2008, however, the estranged JeM started finding favours with the Pakistan military. In June that year, the outfit’s leadership was reportedly working to resolve its differences with other Pakistani extremist groups and began shifting its focus from Kashmir to Afghanistan in order to step up attacks against US and coalition forces. Over the next few years, the relationship was cemented. In return for the Pakistan military providing the JeM freedom to organise its activities in the country, the JeM begun expunging anti-Pakistani elements from the organisation. The 2008 Mumbai attacks in which the LeT was involved brought in lot of attention on the group and its sponsors within the Pakistan military. Indian intelligence agencies believe that the latter was in lookout for a group that would continue the LeT’s work in Kashmir. The JeM perfectly fitted the role. Ayesha Siddiqi notes, the outfit was “back in full force with offices in every neighborhood”[16].

It is this time that the JeM felt the need to expand its real estate and set up its permanent headquarters. A US Department of Defense document of November 2008 reveals the presence of a newly built madrassa on the outskirts of Bahawalpur city headed by a devotee of Maulana Masood Azhar identified only as Maulana Al-Hajii.[17] Locals told the US embassy officials that ‘these sites were primarily used for indoctrination and very limited military/terrorist tactic training. They claimed that following several months of indoctrination at these centres youth were generally sent on to more established training camps in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and then on to jihad either in FATA, NWFP, or as suicide bombers in settled areas.’[18] They also said that their repeated complain to the government regarding the rise of extremism in the area through these indoctrination centres have been ignored. Ayesha Siddiqi observes that without the tacit support from the military and the ISI, dismantling such centres would have been a simple police action.[19]

In January 2014, Masood Azhar addressed supporters gathered in Muzaffarabad from an undisclosed location and said the time had come to resume jihad, or holy war, against India. A journalist from Reuters who attended the gathering reported that a telephone was held next to a microphone which broadcast his comments to loudspeakers. JeM flags, inscribed with the word “jihad”, fluttered in and around the venue.[23]

An Indian investigative report made a similar observation. “In 2009, just months after the Mumbai attacks of 26 November, 2008, Rauf arrived at a small government office in Bahawalpur to register the purchase of nine acres and one kanal of farmland off the Bahawalpur-Karachi highway. For a stated value of 1.5 million Pakistani rupees, a local, Ahmad Nayeem, sold the property to Rauf and his partner, Rashid Ahmed, on 23 March of that year.”[20] The Sunday Telegraph reported in 2009 that the facility even had a ‘fully-tiled swimming pool, stabling for over a dozen horses, an ornamental fountain and even swings and a slide for children’[21]. Both the JeM and the Pakistani officials maintained that the facility is simply a small farm to keep cattle. In the next few years, this property grew into a sprawling JeM facility on the outskirts of the city, which the organisation’s propaganda material says, has space for 12,000 students, sports facilities and prayer areas.

The public activity of the proscribed JeM increased noticeably. With the tacit approval of the military and the ISI, open meetings were organised in Dera Ismail Khan and Muzaffarabad among other places. One such public meeting for militants was organised in mid-January 2010 in Muzaffarabad by the militant alliance, the United Jihad Council (UJC) of which the JeM is a member. The meeting was chaired by, among others, former chief of the ISI, Lt Gen Hamid Gul. It was concluded with a call ‘for a reinvigorated jihad(holy war) until Kashmir was free of “Indian occupation”’.[22] In January 2014, Masood Azhar addressed supporters gathered in Muzaffarabad from an undisclosed location and said the time had come to resume jihad, or holy war, against India. A journalist from Reuters who attended the gathering reported that a telephone was held next to a microphone which broadcast his comments to loudspeakers. JeM flags, inscribed with the word “jihad”, fluttered in and around the venue.[23] It appeared that while the continuing proscription of JeM and his health issues discouraged its chief from making public appearances, but it had no impact on the groups’ mobilisation activities. It is also during this period that the JeM successfully sought funds within and abroad to build mosques and madrassas. ‘In 2010, a JeM-affiliated publication said the trust was paying pensions to the families of at least 850 jihadists killed or imprisoned in India, as well as in other countries.’[24] In addition, Pakistan’s government had issued legal permissions for JeM-related publications to print, and to solicit advertisements.

Rising Profile & Growing Clout

By 2016, the JeM was showing signs of growing too big even for its mentors. Following the attack on the Indian Air Force base in Pathankot, Azhar (under the pseudo name Saidi) wrote in the group’s online journal al Qalam warning the Pakistan government against cracking down on the group, as it may become ‘very dangerous’ for the country.[25] Azhar ridiculed Pakistan for being overtly India

The same situation prevails even today. There are reasons to believe that the deep state in Pakistan is unwilling to take steps to curb the activities of the JeM and other terrorist groups. Two recent instances are indicators of this trend. After India carried out air strike on the JeM camp in Balakot on 26 February, Pakistan's foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi admitted that Azhar is in his country. His statement, however, was quickly dismissed by the military spokesperson who feigned ignorance about Azhar's whereabouts.

friendly. "...There is a lot of noise coming from India regarding us — arrest, kill, arrest, kill — and here our rulers are in anguish because, perhaps, we have disturbed their intimacy and friendship (because) they want that on the day of judgment, they should stand as friends of Modi and Vajpayee"[26], he wrote.

Explaining JeM's stand vis a vis the Pakistani government, he wrote: "Our thinking regarding Pakistan has always been based on wishing it well and peace...not to save our life and skin but for the interests of Muslim Umma(nation) and in the interest of jihad. I am sorry that the rulers here (in Pakistan) have no respect for that. They (have) continued to be guided by those who are not our own — and they (rulers) continue to turn their own country into a heap of explosives and fire. Each one of them comes and puts their own country on fire and then they flee."

This was a significant indicator of the JeM asserting its utility for the Pakistan state, going even to the extent of warning it against any policy shift. It carefully targeted Pakistan's (civilian) government's inclination to start a peace process with India. It is, however, possible that the statement had been issued at the military's behest, who professes a similar anti-India world view.

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Some analysts in India believe that generational change within the JeM may bring about significant power equation transformations with its patrons. Such speculations have based themselves on the reports that Masood Azhar has serious health issues and may not survive for very long, giving rise to leadership contestations and even a split within the organization. Such assumptions are not completely unfounded. JeM's establishment did undermine the HuM and its leadership. However, historically many terror organisations like the JeM have demonstrated a unique vitality that enables them to withstand losses of important leaders which include even their founders.

Strategy to neutralize JeM

The suicide attack carried out at Pulwama by a JeM cadre on 14 February 2019 has brought renewed attention on the group and is serving as a *raison d'être* for the call for declaring Masood Azhar a global terrorist. The group's linkages with the Afghan Taliban and the al Qaeda, however, has been less talked about. At a time when Afghanistan is witnessing important developments on peace negotiations with prospects of future power sharing arrangement with the Taliban, such nexus cannot be overlooked. The JeM's connections with Taliban/ al Qaeda would serve as a much-needed instrument of influence in the near as well as in the long-term for the deep state. Strengthening of the JeM in Kashmir is another wherewithal for calibrating violence that the military in Pakistan would like to exploit.

Some analysts in India believe that generational change within the JeM may bring about significant power equation transformations with its patrons. Such speculations have based themselves on the reports that Masood Azhar has serious health issues and may not survive for very long, giving rise to leadership contestations and even a split within the organization. Such assumptions are not completely unfounded. JeM's establishment did undermine the HuM and its leadership. However, historically many terror organisations like the JeM have demonstrated a unique vitality that enables them to withstand losses of important leaders which include even their founders. That is the reason why eliminating terrorist leaders is not considered a full proof counter-terrorism strategy. The environment which sustains them must be curated, if not transformed. A strategy that imposes huge costs to the patrons of JeM is more important than neutralizing the outfit alone.

It is in this context that the strategy of the Pakistan military to switch between the two predominant terror groups, the JeM and the LeT, must be taken note of. When international attention focuses on one, usually following a terror attack, that group is kept at a low profile and the other one is propped up. What remains constant, however, is the symbolic official measures against the JeM and the LeT within Pakistan, directed mostly at managing international criticism. Pakistan counts on the support from China to keep the JeM safe and is unlikely to give up on this instrument of choice in near future. The JeM is deeply entrenched within Pakistan. Its primary source of strength is mostly within Pakistan and partly in Kashmir. The skewed civil military relationship and the collapse of the Pakistani state's ability to effect socio-economic regeneration in Punjab and Sindh accentuates the problem. Thus, India's actions targeting the JeM within Kashmir or through strikes on Pakistan would have only limited value. Pakistan needs to change its course and there is no other alternative than to building consistent pressure on it through an array of mechanisms.

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FROM THE STREETS OF SINGAPORE

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHS BY
JILL GOCHER

Singapore's food is legendary and with good reason. While it once resided on the city's streets and laneways, hawked from teeny little food carts of doubtful sanitation, it was always full of flavour. Now it is off the streets and into hawker centres and food courts, where the enthusiastic government can keep an eye on the quality and cleanliness.

Singapore's food is diverse and delicious, made even more so by the fact that the cooks, mostly men, have been cooking and perfecting the same dishes for generations, with secrets they brought with them from China 100 years or more ago. Many food stalls sell just one dish or two and when it is good, it attracts patrons from all over the island, who are willing to stand in a long line to secure a portion.

The food is so good that one chicken rice restaurant in Chinatown has been awarded a Michelin star for its delectable dishes that see crazy queues every day after 12.

The list of specialities is endless, with dishes that have been brought from different parts of China, although the main cuisines are Hokkien and Cantonese, with some Indian and Arab influenced Malay dishes thrown in for good measure.

As the Singaporeans say "try try lah"! It's worth a trip to Singapore, just to eat!



Joo Chiat one of Singapore's most architecturally traditional streets, and now it is also home to great Vietnamese food and also sea food. It needs to be on everyone's itinerary.



In the incredible shrinking Arab Street quarter, dominated by the gold domed mosque, the late afternoon sun throws two coffee drinkers into sharp silhouette.



Around the corner, two famous shops, ZamZam and Victory, continue to battle it out selling the best murtabak in town. Thin pastry is stuffed with curried mutton or chicken, wrapped into a thin parcel and fried to crispy perfection.



In one of Singapore's many air conditioned food courts, glazed pork char siew and soya chicken hang, with the outside world reflected in the glass casing.



A serving of Singapore's chicken rice may look humble but this is truly food for the gods. Perfectly poached chicken with rice cooked in chicken stock accompanied by a tangy chili sauce and ginger puree. Each patron can mix to their own personal preference!



Food courts often have a mix of cuisines and here a Japanese chef prepares sushi while the store next door serves up Korean. Spoiled for choice.



A plate of perfectly prepared Sashimi maguro ready to delight the patron.



Yong tau fu is a dish where you choose the vegetable of your choice, add some noodles, they cook to perfection then you choose some flavour enhancing sauce.



Paper tofu is just that! as thin as paper and crispy until it hits the soup when it becomes soft and nutritious!



A line of perfectly cooked chickens hang dripping with luscious goodness waiting to be chopped and served in delectable portions .



Huge bags of Singapore treated coffee beans are brought in to serve the hundreds of diners who patronise the food court each day



STILL LIFES

ARTWORK BY

WOLFGANG WIDMOSER

<http://www.wolfgangjohanneswidmoser.com>
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 Photograph of Wolfgang Widmoser by Mark Ulyseas

You want to figure out the shape of the Universe.
The visible world is like a stage and every character evolves the drama.

The vortex and the galaxy describe the distinct movement of matter and energy.

You study the movement of nature and thought.

The Ying and Yang combines in distinct phases and sets the archetypal pictures. Forever seeking balance, always in motion.

You must observe without involvement and identification to give a true picture. Only then *your* hand will be guided by the omnipotent creative force and build unique structures.

The shapes are polar and therefore in motion – forever evolving.



Air Suci (Holy Water) - oil on canvas 150x180cm



Einstein on the beach - oil on canvas 180x150cm



The eagle's gift - oil on canvas 180x150cm



Warrior of the blue plate - oil on canvas 180x150cm



Warrior of the peacock - oil on canvas 180x150cm



Warrior of the reef - oil on canvas 180x150cm



Warrior of the sea - slug - oil on canvas 180x150cm



Rainbow warriors - oil on canvas 180x150cm

Vũ Tuấn Hưng is a professional photographer and tour guide based in Hồ Chí Minh city. He is a tour guide for mainly German speaking tourists. His photographs feature in numerous publications across the world. If you are visiting Vietnam and need his assistance please email - vietnaminfos@gmail.com



VIETNAM PERSPECTIVES

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHS BY
VŨ TUẤN HƯNG

This feature showcases a Vietnam many overlook when visiting this country. The enchanting rural aspects mesmerise all who encounter its sheer natural beauty. The numerous ethnic groups, colours of spring, terraced rice fields, white-sand beaches and azure seas await your presence. Perhaps in the near future you will visit this fascinating country .



Woman of the H'Mong tribe. 80 years old. She lives in a H'Mong village in Đồng Văn province, Ha Giang, north Vietnam.



Vietnamese girls gather lotus during YEN Spring, Hương Pagoda, Perfume Temple Complex, 50 km far from Hanoi.



Mù Cang Chải , Yên Bái Provinc, famous for terraced rice fields of the H'Mong tribe. Situated close to the Vietnam-China border.



Sisters, M'Nông tribe, one of 54 minorities of Vietnam. They live mainly in the Đắk Lắk province of the highlands of middle Vietnam.



Ban Gioc Waterfall is one of Vietnam's most impressive natural sights. Located in the northeastern province of Cao Bang, the falls are 30 metres high and 300 metres across, making Ban Gioc the widest (but not the highest) waterfall in the country .



Women preparing bamboo sticks for the production of the famous Vietnamese bamboo blinds. Suburbs of Hanoi.



Girl of the H'Mong tribe. Lai Châu province, north of Hanoi.



Lãng Cô village, white-sand Lãng Cô Beach, near the Hải Vân Pass between Huế and Đà Nẵng.



Hạ Long Bay.

Selwyn Rodda is an Australian based painter and draftsman. He trained at the renowned Victorian College of the Arts and has been exhibiting sporadically for three decades in Australia and the United States. He works in a loosely Romantic, Symbolist, Surrealist and Metaphysical vein. His oil paintings feature enigmatic 'biomorphic' lifeforms in dramatically lit landscapes, largely unencumbered by human cultivation, while his drawings are populated by closely interrelated humans and animals, or human/animal hybrids or therianthrope characters. His work has featured in many online publications and in Boston based magazine Art & Letters and he has designed and executed cover art for poets Thylas Moss and Daniel Corrie. His work is found in private and corporate collections in Australia, China and America. <http://www.selwynrodda.com/>



ABIDING LIFE: ENCOUNTERS WITH THE HUMAN AND NOT SO HUMAN

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHS BY
SELWYN RODDA

Rodda's work deals with ambiguous symbolic imagery drawn from his unconscious. The figures or scenes he draws or paints arise as he works, and his intention is to invest them with as much mysterious presence and life as possible. His figures and scenes don't so much evoke a sense of meaning or story as hint at elusive or oneiric experiences or quests, his work posing questions rather than answers. An awareness of how our political systems are broken, and our natural systems threatened, leads him to focus on living beings and forms, which he sees as doubly precious given the current ecological crisis. He depicts beings invested with an irreducible inner life, lost, or perhaps found, in reflection and meditation. As the artist states: "What I find moving is the abundance of life that has escaped or resisted commercial imperatives and historical contingency, inviolate yet not solipsistic, abiding in its own unconditioned consciousness. At its best art transcends difference, time and historical context and touches on the deepest aspects of existence that are shared by all conscious beings. At the same time, I want my work to be engaging, like a series of strange, unforgettable encounters, so the unplanned approach and an element of surprise in the creation of them is a large part of what I hope they communicate to a viewer."



Gathering at night, charcoal and pastel on paper, 2017, 150 x 95 cm.



Homo Sacer: Buffalo Gal, oil and pastel on paper, 2017, 150 x 200 cm



Moon and Wing, charcoal on paper, 2019, 42 x 59 cm.



We have always been ready, Oil on linen, 2019, 50 x 70 cm



New Forms for a New Day, oil on Masonite, 2015, 92 x 122 cm



Sentinel, oil on Masonite, 2012, 61 x 92 cm



Athwart, oil on Masonite, 2012, 92 x 122 cm.



Crater, oil on canvas, 2019, 50 x 70 cm.

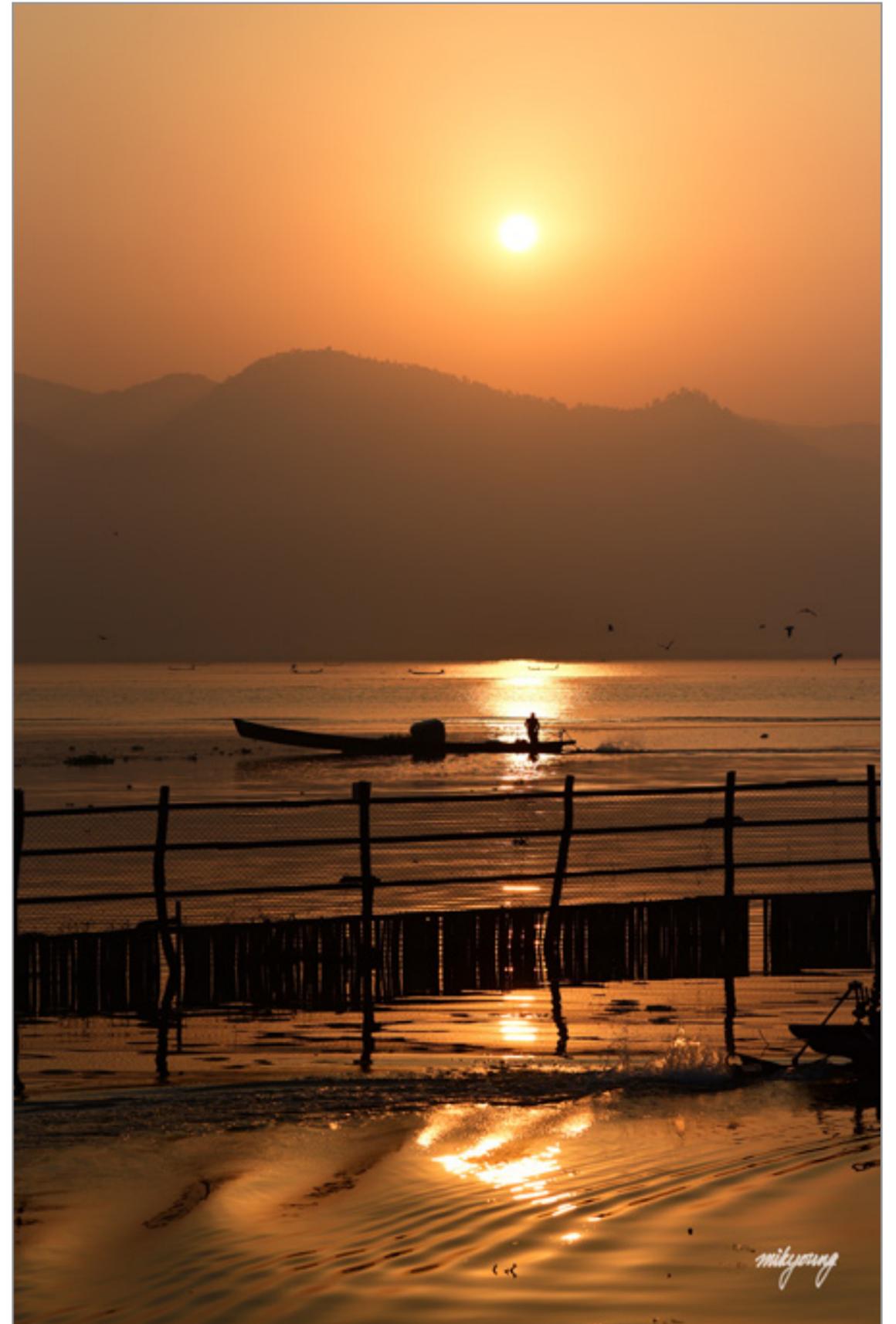
Mikyong Cha is a graduate in Oriental Painting from Hyosung Women's University, Daegu, South Korea. She has participated in a number of group art exhibitions in South Korea and Japan. In 2016 she took up photography – the camera becoming her paint brush. This globe trotting photographer is a regular contributor to *Live Encounters Magazine*.



MY DEAR ASIA

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHS BY
MIKYOUNG CHA

This photo feature coincides with my exhibition titled
My Dear Asia,
being held at Namhae Barae Road Small Museum
Namhae, Korea.
From – Tuesday, 23rd April – Sunday 26th May, 2019.



Mingalaba Myanmar.



Namaste Nepal.



Ayubowan Sri Lanka.



Kuzoo Zangpola Bhutan.



Namaste India.



Sabaidee Laos.

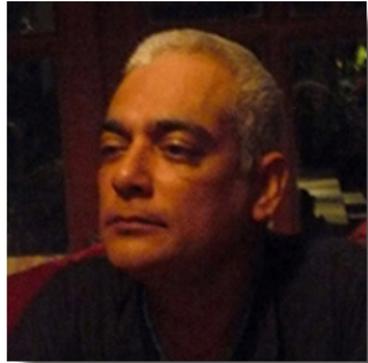


Sain Baina uu Mongolia.



Tah shi de leh Tibet.

Ulyseas has served time in advertising as copywriter and creative director selling people things they didn't need, a ghost writer for some years, columnist of a newspaper, a freelance journalist and photographer. In 2009 he created *Live Encounters Magazine*, in Bali, Indonesia. It is a not for profit (adfree) free online magazine featuring leading academics, writers, poets, activists of all hues etc. from around the world. March 2016 saw the launch of its sister publication *Live Encounters Poetry*, which was relaunched as *Live Encounters Poetry & Writing* in March 2017. He has edited, designed and produced all of Live Encounters' 154 publications till date (April 2019). Mark's philosophy is that knowledge must be free and shared freely to empower all towards enlightenment. He is the author of three books: *RAINY – My friend & Philosopher*, *Seductive Avatars of Maya* – *Anthology of Dystopian Lives* and *In Gethsemane: Transcripts of a Journey*. www.amazon.com/markulyseas



SAND SCULPTURES

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHS BY
MARK ULYSEAS

While on a stroll along the banks of the Mekong river in Vientiane, the capital of Laos PDR, I came across these huge sand sculptures. The artists were from different countries of the ASEAN. Sunset was not faraway so I quickly photographed some of the artwork and reluctantly left.



Lord Buddha.



Bull.



©Mark Ulyseas

Dragon in the process of being completed.

Dragon.



©Mark Ulyseas

Lion.



©Mark Ulyseas

Jayavarman VII, Cambodia?



©Mark Ulyseas



©Mark Ulyseas

Elephant in the process of being completed.

<https://ozlemsturkishtable.com/>



Signed copies of
Ozlem's Turkish Table; Recipes from My Homeland
by Ozlem Warren is available at
www.gbpublishing.co.uk/product-page/ozlem-s-turkish-table



SUCUKLU KURU FASULYE TURKISH CASSOULET SAUSAGE AND WHITE BEAN STEW

This delicious traditional stew is very popular at Turkish homes, and as well as in our traditional restaurants, lokantas. It is lovely when cooked with Pastirma, Turkish Pastrami, and dried cured beef with a special spicy coating too. This is the Turkish version of the French Cassoulet, the sausage, meat and white beans stew, though much lighter and easier to prepare. You can replace the sausage here with any other sausage (chorizo works well) or meat of your choice. For a vegetarian option, simply omit the meat.

You can cook this stew ahead of time, even a day in advance. It freezes very well too.

Afiyet Olsun,

Ozlem

**Serves: 4 to 6**

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 55 minutes (+ 20 minutes for partial cooking for the dried beans)

Ingredients:

- 2 cup / 340 gr Cannellini dried white beans or
- Pre-cooked Cannellini beans in can, drained
- 1 medium yellow onion, finely sliced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 8 oz / 225 gr Turkish sausage, sliced in quarters
- 14 oz / 400 gr Can of chopped tomatoes in tomato juice
- 1/2 tablespoon red pepper paste (optional)
- 6 cups / 3 pints of water
- 1 teaspoon Kosher salt/ Maldon sea salt flakes
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes

Instructions

Soak the dried beans in plenty of water overnight. Next day, drain the water and boil the dried beans in fresh water for about 20 minutes, covered. Drain the water and set the partially cooked white beans aside (If you are using precooked white beans, simply drain the juice and rinse the beans under cold water.)

Sauté the onion with the olive oil until soft. Add the sausages and sauté for another minute or so. Stir in the chopped tomatoes, (and the red pepper paste if using) and mix well. Then add the white beans and water, mixing gently so that the beans won't break. Season with salt, black pepper and red pepper flakes. Cover and cook in medium heat for about 50 minutes, or until the beans are cooked (cooking time should be about 20 minutes if precooked beans in can are used).

Serve hot with plain rice by the side.

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PHOTOGRAPH OF DHANU BY MARK ULYSEAS