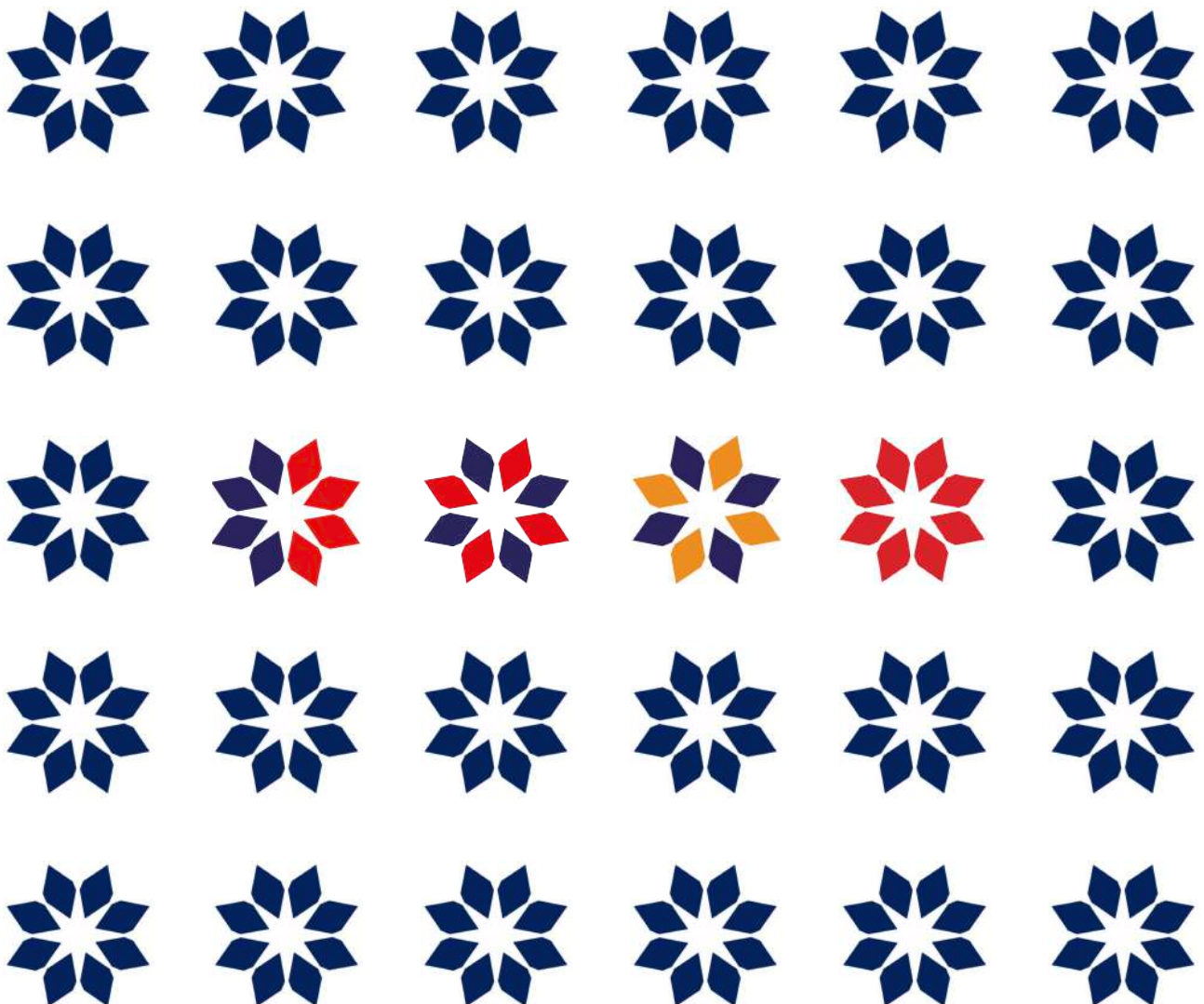




FONDATION  
FRANCE-ASIE

Fonds de préfiguration

# NOUVEAUX REGARDS SUR L'ASIE



A new perspective on Asia and the diversity of its issues and cultures,  
combining the views of experts and high-level players.

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## AGENDA

April 24

France India Foundation Event  
in Paris

May 29 - June 1

Young Leaders Seminar  
France-China 2026

June 17

Gala Dinner of the  
Fondation France-Asie

Bibliothèque Richelieu (BnF)  
5 rue Vivienne, 75002 Paris

July 2 - 5

Young Leaders Seminar  
France-India 2026

November 5 - 8

Young Leaders Seminar  
France-Japan 2026

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Fondation France-Asie website  
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To participate in events, please write to  
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THE FONDATION FRANCE-ASIE  
*is pleased to announce its*  
GALA DINNER

Wednesday, June 17, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

Bibliothèque Richelieu (BnF)  
5 rue Vivienne, 75002 Paris

RESERVATION

A highlight of the Fondation France-Asie's annual calendar, our Gala Dinner brings together leading figures and the Young Leaders community in one of Paris's most emblematic venues.

Honouring internationally renowned guests, this convivial evening strengthens ties between France and the major countries of Asia, while fostering reflection on today's most pressing global challenges.

For further information, please write to: [gala@fondationfranceasie.org](mailto:gala@fondationfranceasie.org)



## Jean-Raphaël Peytregnet

### Editorial Director and former diplomat

## EDITORIAL

**F**our years after the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, it must be acknowledged that the war is stalling. To date, it has neither turned into a rapid victory for Moscow (as Putin had hoped), nor been resolved through fast-paced negotiations (as Trump had boasted).

No one today can say whether the conflict will find a military or diplomatic outcome, or whether it will freeze into a lasting front line (the most likely outcome?). One thing is certain, however: this prolonged war (as well as the current one with Iran, now extending across the entire Middle East) is profoundly reshaping global balances, including on the Asian continent, which is also fully feeling its repercussions.

In 2022, the invasion launched by Moscow caused a shockwave that was both moral and strategic. In 2026, the invasion has become a structural turning point in global geopolitics. This shift has deeply influenced how Asian countries position themselves today.

*Over the years, the prolongation of the conflict has confirmed to Asian capitals that it is not an isolated episode, but rather symptomatic of a reconfiguration of the international order.*

For many Asian states, the priority is no longer to react to an event, but to manage a durably unstable environment. Energy, supply chains, agricultural markets, and financial flows have been reconfigured: liquefied natural gas from Qatar, Australia, and the United States; oil from the Middle East and Africa; development of

strategic reserves and import infrastructures (LNG terminals, pipelines); acceleration of investments in renewable energy (solar, offshore wind, and civilian nuclear power for Japan and South Korea in particular); mitigation strategies (relocation and diversification of suppliers); payments in alternative currencies or through bilateral mechanisms with China and Russia.

Russia, under Western sanctions, has redirected an increasing share of its energy exports toward Asia (81% of total Russian crude oil exports, compared to around 41% in 2021).

This reorientation has thus created economic opportunities for certain countries. As it drags on, this war has also reinforced a central reflex in Asia, namely that of not locking oneself into bloc-based logic.

The People's Republic of China remains the key actor in this equation. Four years after the beginning of the conflict, Beijing observes a Russia that is militarily weakened and isolated from much of the West, even if the Russian capital still retains strategic disruptive capacity.

For China, the current situation presents a double advantage: having before it a quasi-allied Russia that is more dependent and therefore more malleable, while at the same time benefiting from a lasting distraction for the United States and Europe, which can only serve its aspiration to global hegemony.

However, a Russia that becomes unstable or too weakened would not be without unpredictable consequences on China's northern borders. This still-possible scenario forces Beijing to continue along the line it adopted from the beginning of



the conflict, which is based on measured political support for its “ally of circumstance,” through strengthened economic as well as military cooperation (exports of dual-use goods), while remaining cautious to avoid Western secondary sanctions.

At the same time, the war offers China a full-scale observatory of modern conflicts, illustrated by unexpected Ukrainian resilience, made possible notably by the effectiveness of Western financial and military support and by the role of emerging technologies (AI, drones, robots, integrated networks and big data, etc.). These are lessons that go beyond the Ukrainian theater and are likely to influence its strategic choices, for example regarding Taiwan, in its ambitions of conquest.

It should be noted that Beijing has reacted very weakly to American actions against its partner countries (Venezuela, Iran), likely so as not to compromise the official visit to Beijing by President Trump announced for March 31 to April 2.

For India, the stalemate of the conflict has confirmed the relevance of its strategy of autonomy.

While New Delhi stated in 2026 that it wishes to develop and strengthen its ties with Russia, particularly in economic, energy, and diplomatic matters, some observers note that the relationship is experiencing a relative decline, becoming less exclusive than before, while repositioning itself toward other partners (so-called “multi-alignment” or balancing policy), through the deepening of strategic partnerships with Western powers in the Indo-Pacific (Pax Silica initiative securing critical technology supply chains, Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology or iCET with the United States; high-level dialogues with the European Union on green growth, digital technologies, investments, connectivity, and security; consolidation of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with Australia, QUAD or Quadrilateral Security Dialogue with the United States, Japan, and Australia, etc.).

Added to this are the India-European Union free trade agreement (FTA), the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with the United Kingdom, the “provisional” India-United States trade deal, and many others.

These four years of war have shown that no international pressure has truly forced India to change its line. On the contrary, the

fragmentation of the international system has strengthened its room for maneuver, making India appear today as one of the indirect beneficiaries of a world less structured by a single hegemony.

India, fearing being deprived of Middle Eastern oil due to the blockage of the Strait of Hormuz, has begun to take in Russian oil cargoes, benefiting from a temporary waiver from the Trump administration.

Japan and South Korea, which had quickly condemned the Russian invasion and adopted sanctions against Moscow, maintain their alignment with Western powers, of which they are fully part.

However, the prolongation of the conflict, and its still possible extension, is fostering in both countries a broader reflection: preparing for a world in which high-intensity conflicts are no longer unthinkable. This was confirmed by the election of the Japanese Prime Minister and her statements committing her country alongside the island of Taiwan in the event it were to be attacked by its large neighbor.

The debate on increasing defense budgets, on deterrence capabilities (nuclear weapons), and on the integration of alliances (Japan/South Korea/Philippines/United States) has intensified. The war in Ukraine, having become a war of attrition, acts as a strategic warning. This conflict reminds everyone that stability is never permanently guaranteed, with the war involving Iran and its extension across the Middle East providing further proof.

In Southeast Asia, the prolonged war has continued to fuel tensions in energy and food markets. For the now 11 ASEAN countries (+ Timor-Leste), the priority objective remains economic stability and diplomatic neutrality.

***The conflict reinforces their determination to avoid excessive dependence on any major power.***

Diversification of partners, multiplication of trade agreements, caution in political statements—Southeast Asia seeks to pursue a methodical balancing diplomacy in line with the “pragmatism practice theory” to which it adheres, and based on concepts such as the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN).

Four years on, the war in Ukraine acts as a revealer of a world that has entered an era of



structural instability. Faced with this reality, Asia seems to move forward with the conviction that, in an uncertain international system, survival and influence belong to those who know how to preserve their options.

And perhaps it is there, even more than on the European battlefields, that a decisive part of the 21st century is being played.

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### Jean-Raphaël Peytregnet

A career diplomat who studied Chinese studies in France and then worked in development aid as an international expert for UNESCO in Laos (1988-1991), Jean-Raphaël PEYTREGNET has held positions including Consul General of France in Guangzhou (2007-2011) and Beijing (2015-2018), as well as in Mumbai/Bombay from 2011 to 2015. He was responsible for Asia at the Center for Analysis, Forecasting, and Strategy (CAPS) attached to the office of the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs (2018-2021) and finally Special Advisor to the Director for Asia-Oceania (2021-2023).



## Pierre Haski Journalist

### Asian news

# Géopolitique, a podcast offering a perspective on international affairs.

By Pierre Haski on France Inter

#### February 27 – Afghanistan, a graveyard for women’s rights

As a new conflict begins between Pakistan and Afghanistan, another form of war is creeping into the private sphere of Afghan households. A new penal code is further eroding women’s rights.

▶ [Listen to the podcast](#)

#### March 16 – Trump’s trap invitation to France and China to secure the Strait of Hormuz

In a social media post, Donald Trump called on France, China, and the United Kingdom to send naval forces to secure the blocked Strait of Hormuz. However, these countries are unwilling to join the United States in a poorly conceived war

lacking a legal framework, even though they want to see the strait reopened.

▶ [Listen to the podcast](#)

#### March 19 – As at the start of the century, the United States wages war while China works

The United States is becoming bogged down in a new conflict in the Middle East, mobilizing its resources and weakening its position. Meanwhile, China is moving forward more discreetly, focusing on the economy, technology, and artificial intelligence, notably through tools such as OpenClaw. This contrast illustrates a shift in global power, where innovation now takes precedence over warfare.

▶ [Listen to the podcast](#)

### Pierre Haski

French journalist, former correspondent in South Africa, the Middle East, and China for Agence France Presse (AFP) and then for the newspaper *Libération*, co-founder of the news website *Rue89*, Pierre HASKI has been president of Reporters Without Borders since 2017. Since 2018, he has been providing insight into international politics through his morning show “Géopolitique” broadcast on France Inter.



## Alexis Bonhomme, CEO of Trinity Asia Young Leader France-China 2024

### Analysis Nouveaux Regards

# Luxury in Asia: the age of augmented storytelling?

By Alexis Bonhomme

Drones in the skies of Shenzhen, ephemeral hotels in Bangkok, artisanal workshops in Tokyo: in 2026, luxury in Asia no longer merely seduces, it stages. Driven by a growing demand for experience and meaning, brands are deploying spectacular and culturally anchored activations, revealing a new grammar of desire.

### The best of China

In China, luxury confirms its role as a strategic laboratory for international brands. On the occasion of Lunar New Year 2026, these brands deployed activations combining cultural anchoring, technological innovation, and immersive experiences, reflecting an increasingly refined understanding of local expectations and generational dynamics.

#### Ralph Lauren | "In Pursuit of Dreams" Show in Shenzhen

*"Last February, the sky of Shenzhen became our canvas as we celebrated the Year of the Horse with a spectacular drone show. Bringing the Polo Pony, the most enduring and iconic symbol of our brand, to life as a moving artwork through thousands of synchronized drones was a beautiful way to unite tradition, innovation, and storytelling, while creating a connection with*

*audiences around the world."* David Lauren, Chief Branding and Innovation Officer, Ralph Lauren Corporation



© Ralph Lauren

#### Overview:

In February 2026, Ralph Lauren illuminated the Shenzhen skyline with a large-scale drone show titled "In Pursuit of Dreams," blending technology and equestrian storytelling to celebrate the Year of the Horse.



© Ralph Lauren

### The sky as a narrative canvas:

More than 5,000 drones formed aerial scenes, including a horse by the water, a galloping horse, and a polo rider, translating Ralph Lauren's equestrian DNA into monumental imagery.

### When technology meets heritage:

The Polo Pony appeared as a dynamic artwork in the sky, bringing Ralph Lauren's most iconic symbol to life through immersive technological staging.

### Amplification through celebrities:

Chinese celebrities Li Bingbing and Li Naiwen attended the show and shared it online, expanding the reach of the activation on social media.

### Aspirational message:

The show concluded with a quote from Ralph Lauren: "I create dreams for today and for tomorrow," transforming the skyline into a statement of aspiration and imagination.

### Moon Boot | Lunar New Year Campaign and Activations

#### Overview :

For Lunar New Year 2026, Moon Boot launched a dedicated campaign celebrating the Year of the Horse, extending a series of activations that strengthened the brand's visibility in China. Leveraging pop-ups, collaborations, and storytelling, the initiative combined immersive retail concepts and culturally adapted design to position Moon Boot at the crossroads of winter sports, streetwear, and lifestyle fashion among Chinese Gen Z.

### Lunar New Year campaign rooted in local storytelling:

The initiative integrated horse symbolism and winter visuals, connecting Moon Boot's alpine identity to local cultural storytelling while reinforcing the brand's growing resonance in the Chinese fashion landscape.



© Moon Boot



© Moon Boot

**Pop-ups and experiential activations with ENG:**

Recent installations, such as the temporary “踏雪逐马” space in Shanghai, recreated immersive snowy environments, translating Moon Boot’s alpine aesthetic into retail experiences for Chinese consumers.

**Strategic collaborations and limited editions:**

Partnerships with Chinese multi-brand retailer ENG and limited-edition accessories tied to the Year of the Horse created a sense of localized exclusivity, blending Italian design heritage with contemporary Chinese cultural references.

**Digital momentum among Gen Z:**

Supported by consistent storytelling on social media and a growing presence on Xiaohongshu, Moon Boot developed strong engagement among young fashion audiences, reinforcing its repositioning from functional snow gear to a lifestyle piece.

**Bottega Veneta | “Sweet Honey” Campaign and Floral Activations**



© Bottega Veneta

**Overview:**

For Lunar New Year 2026, Bottega Veneta launched the “Sweet Honey” campaign, driven by a cinematic film celebrating reunions and everyday rituals through the nostalgic song Sweet Honey. Extending this narrative offline, the brand partnered with selected florists in Shanghai and Beijing, inviting consumers to

welcome the new year through floral symbolism while discovering the Lunar New Year collection.



© Bottega Veneta

**Emotion-centered campaign film:**

Directed by Dorothy Zhang, the film features personalities such as Sylvia Chang, Zhang Kang Le, Fan Zhanle, and Qu Yuyu in intimate scenes of cooking, cycling, karaoke, and family gatherings, evoking nostalgia through the iconic melody Sweet Honey.

**Cultural storytelling through everyday rituals:**

Rather than relying on obvious festive imagery, the film focuses on ordinary moments such as buying flowers, preparing meals, or putting on new clothes, creating an emotional and relatable portrait of Chinese New Year traditions.

**Floral collaborations in major cities:**

From January 31 to February 8, Bottega Veneta partnered with independent florists such as Wilde Flower and UNIFLORIST in Shanghai, as well as Rolling Rose and Mizu Flos in Beijing, transforming flower shops into true campaign touchpoints.

**Adidas | “Premium Lux” VIP Lounge Activation, China**

**Overview:**

Adidas hosted an exclusive VIP event to launch its Premium Lux “柔自贵” collection, co-created with Chinese designer brand Samuel Gui Yang. Presented as a Lunar New Year gathering, the



activation brought together influencers, media, and guests in an intimate lounge blending sport, fashion, and contemporary Chinese aesthetics, positioning Adidas within the fast-growing premium athleisure segment in China.



© Adidas

**A VIP Lounge conceived as a cultural gathering:**

The activation recreated an elegant “New Year salon” where influencers and guests gathered for discussions, presentations, and product discovery, embedding the collection within a lifestyle and cultural storytelling universe.

**Chinese aesthetic narrative:**

The event revolved around the symbolic color red, linking the collection to Lunar New Year codes while highlighting modern interpretations of Eastern elegance and contemporary Chinese femininity.

**Digital amplification driven by influencers:**

Invited creators shared the experience on social media, turning the event into an editorial activation and extending the visibility of the Premium Lux collection beyond the physical space.

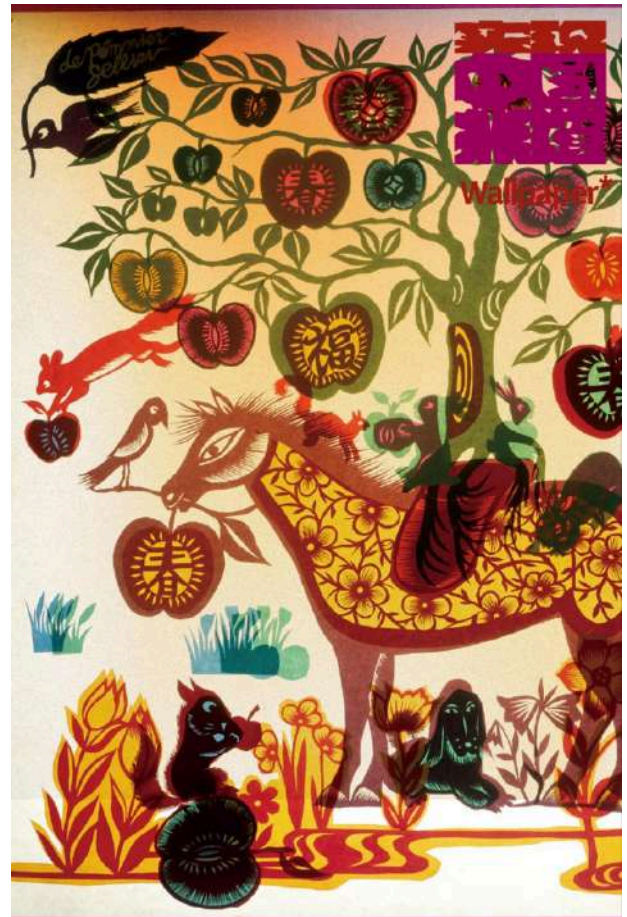


© Adidas

**Designer collaboration to elevate sportswear:**

The collection was developed with Chinese designer brand Samuel Gui Yang, combining Adidas’ sporting heritage with the contemporary aesthetic of “New Chinese Style,” reinforcing the brand’s evolution toward a more premium fashion territory.

**Hermès | Collaboration Around Intangible Cultural Heritage**



© Hermès

**Overview :**

In February 2026, Hermès partnered with Wallpaper China to launch an initiative around intangible cultural heritage, reinterpreting the brand’s equestrian imagery through traditional



Chinese craftsmanship. Bringing together artisans from disciplines such as paper cutting, shadow puppetry, and ceramics, the project transformed Hermès silk scarf horse motifs into new artistic expressions, illustrating the dialogue between heritage craftsmanship and contemporary luxury storytelling in China.



© Hermès

### Equestrian heritage reinterpreted through craftsmanship:

Artisans were invited to reinterpret Hermès' iconic horse motifs through their own know-how rather than reproducing existing designs, transforming the brand's equestrian DNA into contemporary works rooted in traditional Chinese techniques.

### Valorization of intangible cultural heritage:

Practitioners such as paper-cutting artist He Xia, shadow theater master Li Jian, and ceramists from Jingdezhen integrated their regional craft traditions into the project, positioning intangible heritage as a living and evolving cultural system.

### Dialogue between luxury and traditional craftsmanship:

The initiative connects Hermès' heritage as a saddler to Chinese artisanal traditions, showing how international luxury houses can engage

local cultural know-how while reinforcing authenticity and cultural depth.

### Continuity of artistic engagement in China:

Following previous collaborations and projects at Maison Hermès Shanghai, the initiative extends the brand's strategy of fostering artistic exchange and cultural creativity in China.

### Burberry | Alpine Pop-up Boutique in Chongli / Zhangjiakou

#### Overview:

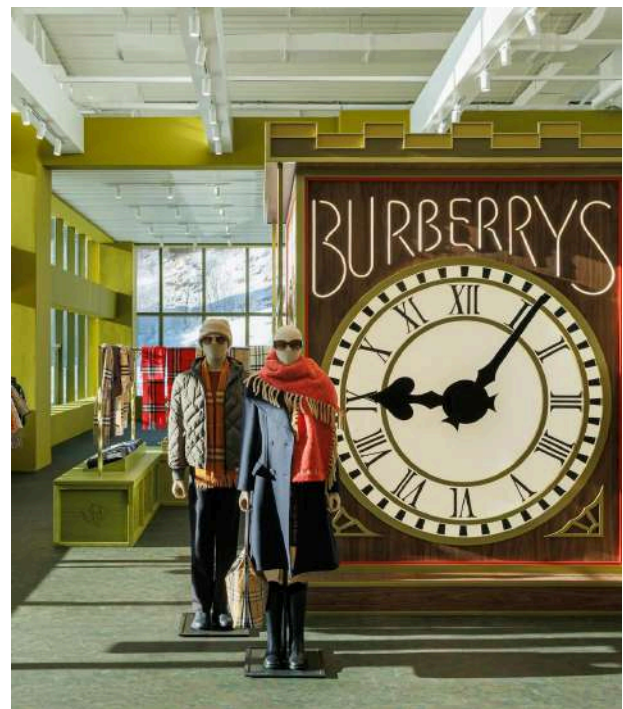
Burberry opened a winter pop-up boutique in Chongli, one of China's main alpine destinations, reinforcing its heritage in outerwear and exploration. Designed as a refuge against the mountain climate, the space featured iconic coats, scarves, and the Lunar New Year 2026 collection, while embedding the brand in China's growing ski and winter lifestyle culture.

#### Reinterpreted heritage symbol:

The pop-up revolves around a restored version of Burberry's historic clock, originally installed on the façade of the London Haymarket flagship. This emblematic artifact anchors the installation by linking the brand's British heritage to a contemporary alpine setting.

#### When luxury meets ski culture:

Located in Chongli, a major winter sports hub that has been rapidly developing since the Beijing Winter Olympics, the activation connects Burberry's outerwear expertise with the expanding ecosystem of ski tourism and winter lifestyle in China.



© Burberry



© Burberry

**Outerwear at the heart of the brand narrative:**

The space highlights Burberry's iconic coats alongside scarves and seasonal collections, reinforcing the House's identity as a pioneer of functional luxury dedicated to exploration and protection against the elements.

**COS | Year of the Horse Capsule and New Year Pop-up**



© COS



© COS

**Overview:**

COS a lancé une capsule en édition limitée pour l'Année COS launched a limited-edition capsule for the Year of the Horse accompanied by an immersive Lunar New Year pop-up at the historic Tianhou Palace in Shanghai. Blending contemporary minimalism with subtle festive symbolism, the activation invited celebrities and influencers to discover the collection in a calm experiential space inspired by traditional Chinese tea house culture, combining fashion presentation, cultural activities, and interactive storytelling.

**Minimalist interpretation of Lunar New Year codes:**

Rather than bold aesthetics, COS approached the season with restraint. Signature red tones appeared alongside cream and black palettes, while fluid horse motifs evoked the zodiac through subtle details and accessories.

**A historic venue serving contemporary design:**

The launch transformed Tianhou Palace into an immersive showroom where historic architecture framed COS's modern silhouettes, creating a dialogue between traditional cultural spaces and contemporary fashion design.

**Experiential cultural programming:**

Visitors participated in tea workshops, handcrafted scented sachet making, and a wishing tree installation, reinforcing a slow and

contemplative atmosphere aligned with COS's philosophy of quiet luxury and thoughtful design.

**Social amplification driven by influencers:**

Chinese influencers and tastemakers were invited to explore the space and present the collection, generating organic content on social media and positioning the capsule as a modern and refined interpretation of Lunar New Year style.

**CRAFT | Opening of the First Concept Flagship in Shanghai**



© CRAFT



© CRAFT

**Overview:**

CRAFT officially opened its first concept flagship in mainland China at HKRI Taikoo Hui in Shanghai, following a one-year trial phase at Zhangyuan. Marking a strategic transition from market testing to a permanent retail presence, the Swedish endurance brand introduces a "360° endurance experience" concept while asserting its ambitions within China's rapidly growing sportswear and athleisure landscape.

**From testing to flagship:**

After testing consumer response with a temporary space in Zhangyuan, CRAFT transformed insights on fit, climate adaptation, and product mix into a permanent concept store, signaling its confidence in local demand for performance-driven sportswear.

**Positioning around endurance:**

The flagship integrates running, cycling, training, and skiing within a minimalist Scandinavian space, positioning CRAFT not as a niche technical brand but as a complete ecosystem dedicated to endurance, aligned with the rise of athleisure culture in China.

**Localization of a global heritage:**

While remaining rooted in its Swedish performance heritage, the brand develops fits adapted to the Asian market and adjusts its materials to local climate conditions, illustrating a pragmatic localization strategy as it expands its retail network in China.

**Borsalino | Strategic Expansion in China Overview:**

Italian hatmaker Borsalino announced its official entry into the Chinese market through a long-term partnership with Shanghai-based Essence Group, accompanied by a five-year development plan combining retail and e-commerce. The strategy will begin with the first mainland China boutique in Shanghai, which will serve as a model for future openings across Greater China while building a structured omnichannel presence.



© Borsalino

**Structured market entry through a local partnership:**

Rather than aiming for rapid expansion, Borsalino is entering the market through a strategic alliance with Essence Group, leveraging its expertise in luxury brand management to ensure controlled retail deployment and culturally relevant positioning.

**Shanghai as the gateway to the market:**

The first directly operated boutique in Shanghai will serve as a reference store, defining standards for future mono-brand locations in mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan, as the brand develops its physical presence in the region.

**An omnichannel growth strategy:**

Alongside physical retail, the partnership includes the launch of a Chinese online flagship and digital storytelling on RED, Douyin, and WeChat, creating a coordinated ecosystem to introduce the historic Italian house to a new generation of consumers.

**The best of Asia**

Across Asia, luxury is deploying increasingly nuanced strategies, balancing global consistency with local adaptations. From cultural activations in Japan to retail experiences in Southeast Asia, brands are navigating markets with strong identities, making the region a privileged ground of expression for a form of luxury that is both global and deeply contextualized.

**Asia | Hennessy Campaign “Gallop Towards Bright Perspectives”  
Overview:**

For Lunar New Year 2026, Hennessy activated the theme of the Year of the Fire Horse through a coordinated strategy spanning mainland China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, and key travel retail hubs across Asia-Pacific. Between limited-edition zodiac packaging, monumental installations, digital activations with celebrities, and musical cultural programming, the House reinforced its positioning in premium gifting while embedding itself in festive rituals.

**The Fire Horse as an experiential anchor:**

The sculptural zodiac motif structured the campaign both visually and spatially, from immersive pop-ups at Singapore Changi Airport and the House of Hennessy in Hainan to limited editions of V.S.O.P, X.O, and Paradis designed for collection and festive display.



© Hennessy



© Hennessy

**Travel retail as a celebration platform:**

In Singapore, Hong Kong, and Macau, tastings, cocktail-on-tap formats, food and spirits pairings, and gamified experiences transformed duty-free spaces into cultural stages, making gifting a ritualized experience during travel periods.

**Celebrities and music for cultural resonance:**

In mainland China, Jackson Wang and Dylan Wang drove social engagement and brand collaborations, while Malaysia launched an original Lunar New Year single, extending Hennessy’s historical link with music into a festive and youth-oriented expression.

**Pan-Asian consistency, local nuances:**

While unified under the Fire Horse narrative, each market expressed its own cultural codes, from Michelin-starred gastronomic experiences in Hong Kong to spectacular travel retail activations in Singapore.

## Hong Kong | Miu Miu Launches “Manifeste” and Expands Its Flagship



© Miu Miu



© Miu Miu

### Overview:

In February 2026, Miu Miu deployed its “Manifeste” pop-up concept in Hong Kong and Hangzhou, presenting the SS26 collection through immersive retail environments combining playful scenography and product discovery. Alongside these temporary activations, the brand also expanded and reopened its flagship boutique at Landmark Atrium in Hong Kong, reaffirming its long-term commitment to the city as a major luxury hub in Asia.

### “Manifeste” pop-up concept in Asia:

The series of pop-ups began in Hong Kong before moving to Hangzhou, offering a carefully curated SS26 wardrobe in immersive spaces designed to express Miu Miu’s codes of feminine irreverence, elegance, and freedom of expression.

### Playful spatial design and immersive retail:

The installations featured pale blue environments punctuated by pink curtains, creating intimate spaces where mannequins and product displays interact, transforming the space into an exploratory journey composed of multiple rooms.

### Amplification through celebrities and influencers:

Opening events in Hong Kong welcomed personalities such as Cantopop star Joey Yung and actor Will Or, while local celebrities and influencers generated strong visibility on platforms such as Weibo and Xiaohongshu.

### Flagship expansion in Hong Kong:

Miu Miu a simultanément rouvert sa boutique du global Miu Miu simultaneously reopened its Landmark Atrium boutique as a two-story, 220 m<sup>2</sup> flagship, introducing the brand’s new global concept along with a private VIP lounge dedicated to personalized appointments.

## Japan | Exhibition “The Magic of Cartier’s Artisans” in Tokyo



© The Magic of Cartier’s Artisans



© The Magic of Cartier’s Artisans

### Overview:

From February 7 to 23, 2026, Cartier transformed its Ginza 2-chome boutique in Tokyo into an immersive exhibition titled “The Magic of Cartier’s Artisans.” Conceived as the final chapter of the Maison de Panthère series, the experience revealed the craftsmanship behind Cartier’s high jewelry through photography, live demonstrations, and workshops, bringing the House’s artisanal excellence into the heart of the retail space.



**Craftsmanship as experiential storytelling:**

The exhibition highlighted the artisans behind Cartier’s creations rather than the finished products, shifting attention from luxury objects to the technical mastery and craftsmanship that define the House.

**A three-story immersive journey:**

Visitors explored scenographed spaces featuring photographs by Japanese artist Rinko Kawauchi, installations celebrating female artisans, and live demonstrations by master jewelers from different disciplines.

**Live demonstrations and craft workshops:**

Seven guest artisans presented their techniques on-site, while workshops led by the Cartier Jewellery Institute allowed visitors to explore processes such as wax carving and metal sawing.

**Retail as a cultural platform:**

Hosted within the Maison de Panthère boutique, the exhibition positioned the store as a cultural venue dedicated to artistic exchange and heritage transmission.

**Thaïlande | Louis Vuitton “Hotel Bangkok” Pop-up Overview :**

In February 2026, Louis Vuitton deployed its LV Hotel concept in Bangkok as part of the global celebrations of the Monogram’s 130th anniversary. Following previous stops such as the hotel-inspired activation on Wukang Road in Shanghai, the Bangkok edition transformed a historic residence into a four-story experiential space. Conceived as a symbolic hotel rather than a retail space, the pop-up invites visitors to explore the Monogram’s cultural heritage through immersive storytelling.

**The hotel narrative as travel storytelling:**

The “hotel” format echoes Louis Vuitton’s historical link to travel. Each space functions as a chapter in the Monogram’s story, guiding visitors through scenographed rooms where heritage and design unfold progressively.

**A four-story experiential journey:**

Installed in the century-old Baan Trok Tua Ngork residence, the activation features multiple immersive spaces including the Keepall Lobby, the Neverfull Gym, the Noé Bar, and the Speedy Room 1930, each dedicated to a major Monogram icon.

**Celebration of the Monogram “Fab Five”:**

Five legendary Louis Vuitton bags—Keepall, Speedy, Alma, Neverfull, and Noé—are presented as cultural artifacts within the experience, illustrating their evolution from

functional luggage to enduring symbols of luxury.

**A strategic destination in Southeast Asia:**

As the only stop in Southeast Asia for the LV Hotel series, the Bangkok activation anchors the Monogram celebrations in one of the region’s fastest-growing luxury tourism hubs.



© Hotel Bangkok Louis Vuitton



© Hotel Bangkok Louis Vuitton

**South Korea | South Korea | Seoul Fashion Week Fall/Winter 2026**

**Overview:**

iHeld from February 3 to 8, 2026 at Dongdaemun Design Plaza (DDP), the Fall/Winter edition of Seoul Fashion Week highlighted the evolution of K-fashion identity through runway shows, presentations, and professional forums. Bringing together 15 designers and dozens of participating brands, the event showcased the Korean creative scene while reinforcing Seoul’s growing influence in global fashion.

**Asserting the global voice of K-fashion:**

Through their collections, designers explored the tension between avant-garde experimentation and functional fashion. Brands such as Munn and MMAM demonstrated how conceptual tailoring, layered silhouettes, and innovative materials can translate into wearable contemporary wardrobes.



© Seoul Fashion Week Automne/Hiver 2026



© Seoul Fashion Week Automne/Hiver 2026

### A platform for emerging designers:

Over six days, the event featured 15 runway shows as well as presentations and off-calendar events, offering Korean labels an international

stage while attracting media and industry players to Seoul's creative scene.

### Innovation, sustainability, and material experimentation:

Collections highlighted unconventional constructions and sustainable materials, including garments made from recycled banners, paper knits, and experimental textile techniques, reflecting the growing importance of responsible design in K-fashion.

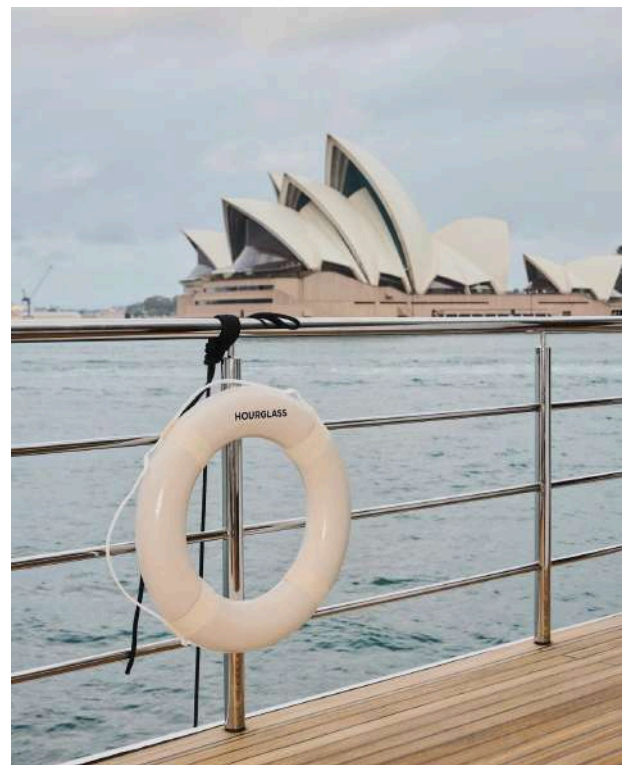
### Fashion Week as a cultural ecosystem:

Beyond runway shows, the Seoul Fashion Forum and the street-style culture surrounding the DDP positioned the event as both an industry platform and a creative meeting place, underscoring Seoul's growing role as a global fashion hub.

### Australia | First Hourglass Pop-up in Australia



© Hourglass



© Hourglass



### Overview :

At the end of February 2026, Hourglass launched its first brand experience in Australia with a four-day pop-up in Sydney, alongside its direct-to-consumer launch and upcoming arrival at Sephora Australia. Set in a heritage sandstone building, the activation translated the brand's design positioning into an immersive space centered on complexion expertise, personalization, and early access to new products, reinforcing its premium image and appeal among collectors.

### Market re-entry driven by DTC and Sephora:

The pop-up marked Hourglass's official return via its own online store before rollout at Sephora, positioning the activation as a signal of renewed commitment to the Australian market.

### A service-led luxury centered on consultation:

One-on-one shade matching, masterclasses led by makeup artists, and dedicated complexion discovery journeys structured the experience around expertise and precision, transforming

product trials into an appointment-based clienteling approach.

### VIP yacht activation for talents and influencers:

To celebrate the relaunch, Hourglass hosted an exclusive event aboard a luxury yacht in Sydney Harbour, bringing together models, makeup artists, content creators, and celebrities around product experiences, consultations, and activations.

### Personalization and early access to drive engagement:

Sydney hosted the Ambient Lighting Edit personalization experience as well as early access to the Unreal Liquid Highlighter, creating a sense of exclusivity and encouraging engagement both online and in-store.

Written by Alexis Bonhomme, this article is drawn from the monitoring and analysis work of Trinity Asia, an agency specialized in digital strategies for luxury in Asia. With a strong presence in China, Japan, and Korea, the agency supports leading brands in their development across Asia.

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### Alexis Bonhomme

Alexis Bonhomme is a C-level executive and entrepreneur at the intersection of luxury, strategy, and technology. After starting his career at Tencent in 2011, Alexis founded CuriosityChina in 2013 and successfully sold the company to Farfetch in 2018. Until 2024, he served as Farfetch Global Vice President of Industry Partnerships, also leading the company's growth across China and Asia Pacific, where he managed a business turnover exceeding USD 1 billion and a team of 700 talents. Returning to his entrepreneurial journey in 2024, Alexis is now the Founder & CEO of Trinity Asia, a digital and data company supporting international brands in scaling across China and Asia. Trinity's 50-strong team partners with leading houses in fashion, hard luxury, and beauty. Based in Shanghai, Alexis is also a guest lecturer at Institut Français de la Mode (IFM), France Asia Fondation member, YPO member and an INSEAD & Tsinghua University alumnus. INFOS: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/alexisbonhomme/>.



## Nicolas Boin Principato, Ph.D. in Hindi Language and Literature and Lecturer in Indian Civilization

### Analysis Nouveaux Regards

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# Toward a 21st-century humanism, through the study of “oriental” languages.

By Nicolas Boin Principato

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In his recent work *The Art of Peace*, Bertrand Badie, a specialist in International Relations, reminds us that peace has long been thought of as the simple “non-war,” as a negative state, defined by default, by the absence of conflict rather than by the cultivation of lasting human relationships. Why, ultimately, have we so often reduced peace to this void between two confrontations, to this fragile parenthesis in the history of nations and of humankind?

And above all, how can we build a lasting peace? What is this art—or this science—that would finally allow us to move beyond the logic of force and enter into that of relationship? Without claiming to summarize Badie’s work in this way, part of the answer lies in learning “respect for the other.” Respecting the other is an art: it is learned and cultivated; today, we have all the means to do so. We simply need to accept making it a priority.

So, how can we achieve this? No doubt by beginning with a simple gesture: rediscovering a bit of curiosity. Daring to cross that first threshold which consists in overcoming the instinctive fear

of the other, in taking an interest in them, whether they are our neighbor, a new colleague, or that “foreign” person encountered in the course of an evening, an event, a conversation...

At the heart of this art of peace lies the patient construction of a relationship that no longer considers differences as threats, but as resources, as mirrors capable of shedding light on ourselves.

*For it is indeed through the languages, literatures, philosophies, histories, and imaginaries of the other that we learn to better understand our own way of inhabiting the world. Cultivating this openness is already a step toward peace.*

We have forgotten it, but culture plays a considerable role in the way we enter into relation with others. It shapes our perspective, broadens our horizon, teaches us to recognize the dignity of what is foreign to us. Yet this tradition of studying the other, which was long



one of the strengths of French culture, now seems to be eroding. In the frantic race of the modern world in which we are all caught, what are we running toward, and for what purpose? The contemporary norm would have success measured in terms of income, status, social visibility. But does all this truly make us more human, more attentive, or more capable of empathy toward others? Or quite the opposite? What type of world-society have we helped shape by elevating efficiency and performance to supreme values? And above all, what are we willing to sacrifice, of our sensitivity, sometimes even of our humanity, to achieve these goals?

This observation does not stop there: our universities, our schools, our entire educational system are today suffering the consequences. We no longer study, or very little, to become more human, more aware of the world, more capable of understanding and transforming it.

We study to climb a social ladder, secure a high income, belong to an elite that, too often, abstracts itself from collective issues. Let there be no misunderstanding: money is not an evil, it is necessary. But making it the sole horizon of an existence amounts to reducing human life to an accounting logic, to an accumulation of outward signs of success that say nothing about the quality of our relationships, our sensitivity, or our capacity to live together.

It is nevertheless urgent to recall how vital knowledge of the other is if we wish to hope for a lasting peace. Seeking to know the other, to understand what distinguishes us from them, is already to extend a hand. It is to signal that we have taken a step toward them, that we accept them as they are, and that our differences can become sources of mutual enrichment rather than reasons for mistrust or withdrawal. Peace is not decreed: it is built in these small gestures, in this willingness to understand before judging, in this capacity to welcome what “disorients” us.

France was a pioneer in this awareness. The first “orientalists” paved the way for knowledge of the other by studying languages, texts, and civilizations that had until then been largely ignored in Europe. Certainly, this undertaking was not without bias, as Edward Said and, after him, postcolonial studies have shown [1].

But it also enabled an unprecedented discovery of the existence of an Other: other cultures, other philosophies, other ways of thinking and inhabiting the world, whose richness was immense for Europe and, more broadly, for the

West, as Raymond Schwab had already pointed out in the 1950s [2].

This interest in the other, often nourished by economic or geopolitical stakes, gave rise to an institution unique in Europe and probably in the world at the time of its creation: the *École spéciale des langues orientales*, founded in 1795 by the National Convention, heir to the *École des jeunes de langues* created in 1669 by Colbert, minister and principal administrator of Louis XIV. This school, now the Inalco (National Institute for Oriental Languages and Civilizations), embodies this conviction that peace, diplomacy, and understanding of the world pass through knowledge of the languages, cultures, and imaginaries of the other.

### Indian studies

Without claiming to provide here a complete history of the languages taught at Inalco, I would nevertheless like to say a word about the study of Hindi [3], which concerns me more directly.

The first official position dedicated to this language within the *École spéciale des langues orientales* was created in 1828 by its first director, Antoine-Isaac Silvestre de Sacy (1758–1838). A remarkable fact: France was then the first country in Europe to open a chair dedicated to the teaching of Hindi, even before the British Empire, which had nevertheless been present in India for more than a century.

At the time, it was referred to as a chair of Hindustani, as the word “Hindi” was not yet in use; Hindustani was the more common term to designate the language of northern India [4], encompassing both what we now call Hindi and Urdu [5].

The first holder of this chair was Joseph Héliodore Sagesse Vertu Garcin de Tassy (1794–1875). His singular name, laden with symbolism, reflects the revolutionary era in which he was born. A particularly esteemed student of Silvestre de Sacy, he was chosen by the latter to found a department entirely devoted to the languages of India. Although de Sacy was above all a great specialist of Arabic and Persian, he had a deep interest in Indian cultures, an interest strong enough for him to decide to open this new chair, despite resistance.

For this project aroused strong opposition in the scholarly landscape of the time. Some claimed that Hindustani –or khari boli– [6] was not a



“real” language, that Urdu literature had little importance (even though major poets such as Mir, Soz, or Sauda had already produced considerable works), and that Hindi literature simply did not exist. The objections were numerous, sometimes virulent, but Silvestre de Sacy stood firm, and Garcin de Tassy was able to begin his teaching.

In the decades that followed, Garcin de Tassy produced an immense body of work: thirty-five books, including a Hindi grammar, a learning method, and two major collections of Hindustani texts. His *Rudiments of the Hindustani Language*, published in 1829, were reissued several times. In the second part, published in 1833, he added real letters—some handwritten, others printed—presented in both scripts, accompanied by their translations.

His practical method included useful vocabulary and exercises, written in Urdu. By contrast, his collection of Hindi poetry and prose [7], published in 1849, was entirely in Devanagari [8], already reflecting the cultural realities that would, a century later, lead to the formation of modern Hindi and Urdu literatures.

Garcin de Tassy also carried out several translations, mainly of Urdu literature. Among them is the first French translation of the *Bāgh o Bahār* (The Garden and the Spring) by Mir Amman (1748–1806), a foundational text of modern Urdu prose. The most surprising fact is that Garcin de Tassy never went to India. He had neither the means nor the time, at a time when such a journey required months. He read everything he could get his hands on, exchanged with scholars passing through Paris, and worked tirelessly. Without ever having set foot on Indian soil, he managed to accomplish a pioneering work that remains one of the foundations of Hindustani studies in France.

Since then, Inalco and, through it, France have never ceased working to improve the teaching of Hindi and, more broadly, to deepen knowledge of the languages and cultures of India. The list of names that have contributed to this effort would be long; but in the field of cultural studies carried out by French scholars, some deserve special mention insofar as their legacy continues to nourish our understanding of the Indian world.

Among them, Charlotte Vaudeville (1918–2006) occupies an essential place. A specialist of bhakti literature, she devoted her life to the study of Tulsidas (c. 1532–1623) [9], Kabir (c. 1440–1518) [10], Surdas (c. 1478–1583) [11], and numerous

devotional traditions of northern India. Her work profoundly renewed the understanding of these corpora, long considered “popular” or “minor” by classical orientalist (rather Sanskritist).

In terms of pedagogy, several modern methods for learning Hindi have been developed in French: those of Nicole Balbir and Raj Bhan Singh first, then those of Annie Montaut, who still remains a central figure in the field today. With other teachers and in collaboration with Indian colleagues, she contributed to developing learning tools better adapted to contemporary needs.

Over the past twenty years, French publishing has also played a decisive role in the dissemination of Hindi literatures. Important translations have been published: the major novels of Nirmal Verma, Premchand, Jainendra Kumar, Alka Saraogi, Vinod Kumar Shukla, Krishna Baldev Vaid, Geetanjali Shree, as well as major essays by Anupam Mishra, Gandhi, and many other authors. Several publishing houses have contributed to this effort: Les Belles Lettres, L’Asiathèque, Actes Sud, Albin Michel, Banyan, but also other publishers that have enabled rare texts to be translated.

Nevertheless, a paradox remains: the more translations multiply, the more they seem to fade. In bookstores, they are rarely highlighted. In literary fairs, if one asks a reader or a literature enthusiast to name a Hindi author, they will most often mention an anglophone writer such as Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, or others. Translated works from Hindi, for their part, remain on the margins, relegated to specialized shelves or catalogs consulted only by insiders.

Why does this situation persist? Is it because the French publishing market favors so-called “dominant” languages? Because non-anglophone literatures suffer from a structural lack of visibility? Because India itself is too often perceived through the prism of English, the language of elites and globalization? Or because our collective imagination still struggles to recognize the linguistic and cultural plurality of this subcontinent?

Whatever the reasons, this paradox reveals something that has not changed much for decades: even though France has a long and prestigious tradition of Indian studies, literary voices from Hindi (and other Indian languages) still struggle to find their place in the public sphere. This is a challenge, but also a responsibility: to continue to translate, to teach, to transmit so that these works, these languages, and these imaginaries cease to be



invisible and can finally fully engage in dialogue with the French-speaking world, because it is by knowing the worldview conveyed by the authors who have written in these languages that we will gain deeper access to their culture, and that we will ultimately be able to better understand them.

## Conclusion

*We live in a globalized world, and yet our knowledge of other cultures remains surprisingly fragmented. It is therefore hardly surprising that we still struggle to find a true common ground to continue the work initiated by our predecessors.*

The example of Indian studies in France, from the enthusiasm of researchers to the constant efforts of translation, through the real but fragile interest of the public, reveals a broader trend, which concerns China, Iran, the Arab world, or Africa just as much: despite the intensification of exchanges, otherness is still often perceived at a distance.

To say that culture allows us to meet the other, to understand their imaginaries, to defuse fears, and to forge a more lasting peace may seem extremely banal, but transforming this obvious fact into action, into public policy, into educational choices, into personal commitment, is much less so. Peace is not built only in diplomatic chancelleries or in trade agreements: it is woven in libraries, in classrooms, in patient translations, in gestures of curiosity and attention that connect us to what is foreign to us.

If we truly want to build a more peaceful world, we will have to relearn to look at the other not as a threat or an abstraction, but as a partner in thought, a holder of knowledge, a mirror that helps us better understand our own humanity. This is an immense challenge, but also an opportunity: that of reconnecting with what France has done best when it was faithful to its humanist vocation, to open paths toward the other, and thereby open paths toward ourselves.

In this regard, in my thesis devoted to an approach to humanism in India, I undertook to explore what the intellectual, philosophical, and spiritual traditions of this country could teach us about the meaning of life and about the conditions for building a more just globalized society. India, through the plurality of its languages, its cultures, and therefore the

diversity of its worldviews, offers a unique laboratory for rethinking what it means to “live together” on a planetary scale. I sought to understand how this plural culture could nourish a contemporary reflection on our way of being in the world, on our relationship to the other, on the responsibility we have toward one another.

In other words, my approach aimed to understand what it means to be a “citizen of the world” in the 21st century. How can we ignore today the issues that run through all peoples, whether ecological, social, cultural, spiritual, and how can we respond to them with lucidity, empathy, and discernment? It seems quite evident today that the peace of tomorrow will no longer be able to depend solely on the decisions of statesmen or major international institutions. It will also depend, and perhaps above all, on the involvement of each and every one of us: on our capacity to inform ourselves, to decenter ourselves, to listen, to understand, to build connections where others erect borders.

To my modest extent, I have sought to contribute to this dynamic: to show that knowledge of the other is not a simple exercise in erudition, but a vital necessity; that humanism is not a fixed heritage, but a task to be pursued; and that peace, to be lasting, must become everyone’s business, in the quiet constancy of our commitments, our readings, our encounters, and our daily choices.

[1] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*. The Orient Created by the West, trans. Catherine Malamoud, foreword by Tzvetan Todorov, Paris, Le Seuil, 1980; expanded ed., 2002.

[2] Raymond Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance*, Paris, Payot, 1950; reprint, 2014; reprint, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, “Classiques favoris” collection, introd. Thibaut Matrat, 464 p., 2024.

[3] Official language of India (alongside English), Hindi—which belongs to the Indo-Aryan language family—is spoken by more than 400 million speakers in India; it is also present on other continents thanks to numerous immigrant communities of varying duration. It has a rich and ancient literature in various dialects and, in a standardized form from the second half of the 19th century onward, it has been enriched by a very diverse modern literature in both genres and themes, serves as a language of instruction in many schools or as a language of communication in the media and cinema (sources: Inalco).

[4] Hindustani is a standardized form of the dialects of northern India, derived from medieval Hindvi, characterized by a common grammatical base, but which can be written in two systems (Devanagari for Hindi and the Perso-Arabic alphabet for Urdu) and incorporate different vocabularies depending on the cultural context.

[5] Urdu is the national language of Pakistan (around 109 million speakers) and is also one of the 22 official languages of the Indian Union. It is mainly spoken in northern India but also in certain Indian states such as Telangana and Maharashtra. It enjoys the status of official or co-official language in five Indian states and in the territory of Delhi. In India, Urdu is spoken by approximately 50 million



inhabitants. According to Ethnologue 2018, there are 163 million Urdu speakers worldwide (sources: Inalco).

[6] Khari boli, also called Dehlavi, Kauravi, and “vernacular Hindustani,” is a Hindi dialect originating from the Delhi region. It is spoken mainly in rural areas of Delhi, in western Uttar Pradesh, and in southern Uttarakhand. This dialect constitutes the modern linguistic basis of standard Hindi and standard Urdu, providing their grammatical structure and a large part of their common vocabulary.

[7] Hindvi is a medieval generic term used by Persian-speaking and Indo-Muslim speakers to designate the local language of northern India, derived from Sanskrit and its evolutions (Prakrits and Apabhramsha), without corresponding to a single standardized language.

[8] Devanagari, from Sanskrit (devanāgarī), is an alphasyllabary writing system used for Sanskrit, Prakrit, Hindi, Nepali, Marathi, and several other Indian languages. It is one of the most widely used scripts in northern India and Nepal.

[9] Tulsidas (1532–1623) is a major Hindu poet and saint, famous for having composed in the vernacular Awadhi an accessible version of the Rāmāyaṇa, the Rāmcaritmānas. His work profoundly influenced devotional practices in Hinduism and contributed to spreading sacred narratives among non-Sanskritized populations.

[10] Kabir (15th century) is a mystical poet and religious reformer, a central figure of the bhakti tradition. His poems, often critical of rituals and religious elites, advocate a direct, inner, and universal spirituality. He is venerated by Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs alike, making him one of the most powerful symbols of Indian spiritual pluralism.

[11] Surdas (15th–16th century) is a mystical poet and Hindu saint, renowned for his devotional songs dedicated to Krishna, particularly to the divine child (Bālakṛṣṇa). The presumed author of the Sūrsāgar, he is one of the great voices of bhakti in northern India, and his compositions played an essential role in the spread of Krishna devotion in the vernacular language.

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### Nicolas Boin Principato

Nicolas Boin Principato is a specialist of the Indian world, trained at Inalco where he defended in 2026 a thesis devoted to modern humanism in India through the work of the poet Kunwar Narain and the aesthetic concept of sahrīdayatā. His academic path, marked by a double master's degree between Paris and Mahatma Gandhi University in Wardha (where Sevagram, Mahatma Gandhi's ashram, is located), led him to explore Hindi literature, the philosophical traditions of India, as well as Sanskrit aesthetic theories and their contemporary reinterpretations.

His current research focuses on: Indian humanism, the vernacularization of socialist thought through the work of Narendra Deva, modern reinterpretations of Indian aesthetic theories, as well as contemporary forms of bhakti in popular culture, in collaboration with researchers from Cambridge and Kathmandu. At the same time, he teaches Indian civilization, the history of religions, and the Hindi language at Inalco and at the Institut Catholique de Paris, while continuing active work in literary translation, notably of Kunwar Narain and Jaishankar Prasad. His approach articulates literature, philosophy, intellectual history, and aesthetics to shed light on Indian forms of intercultural dialogue and humanist thought.



**Yves Carmona**  
Former diplomat

## Analysis Nouveaux Regards

# Nepal, the elections have taken place.

By Yves Carmona

NB: Thanks to Nepali friends who helped us write this article as accurately as possible, in particular Sujeev Shakya, Kunda Dixit, founder and editorialist of the weekly Nepali Times, and press review at the French Embassy.

Elections have taken place, isn't that usual?

The author of these lines would like to remind those with short memories that in the week of 8 September, Nepal was, in the press, nothing but fire and blood, with Generation Z taking power and every revolution breaking out around the world, from Madagascar to Sri Lanka, marked by the same seal. The police did indeed kill dozens of demonstrators, but were they able to maintain order with weapons dating from the Second World War and troops recruited through cronyism, without training?

However, the woman who became Prime Minister in agreement with representatives of this generation, which some considered unconstitutional, Ms Sushila Karki, was 73 years old, a far cry from the age of this 'Generation Z', which is nevertheless representative of a country where the median age is around 25.

But the difference between her and the other elders who organised their turn to succeed each other in power, of whom the most dangerous, the ferocious Prachanda, who is the only one

from the traditional leaders' club who won the first past the post elections (scrutiny uninominal) is that Ms Karki will step down because she agreed from the outset to be interim leader.

*The elections that have just taken place – because they did indeed take place, firmly supervised by the Electoral Commission, with ballot papers transported by the army when necessary and the results still subject to review by the Supreme Court – were closely watched by the international community.*

The international community helped Nepal to organize them, with India providing over 300 vehicles, Japan granting a subsidy, and the UNDP working to combat electoral disinformation and cyber threats.

These were elections for young people, with 800,000 new voters registering and voting en masse. A mother whose son was killed by the police on 8 September stood as a candidate for the RSP, which she believed was the only party capable of continuing the fight for which he died: honest governance rather than demagogic promises.

**However, there were countless obstacles, but they were overcome:**

The 'peaceful' national movement (whose leader was responsible for the deaths of two people in March) launched a civil disobedience campaign that was supposed to begin on 23 November, but nothing more was ever heard about it.

'Communist' parties united under the leadership of Prachanda 'the Fierce' on the pretext that the elections were unconstitutional, but the Supreme Court ruled that they were necessary.

Some wanted to see the hand of foreign powers, either India or China, with the former supposedly supporting the former king's efforts to regain power and rebuild a Hindu state, which is the dream of some Nepali. The elections removed this threat; in reality, the two major powers were careful not to interfere in Nepal's highly volatile domestic politics.

However, India's dominance over certain hydroelectric dams, one of the country's main resources, was confirmed after former Prime Minister Oli unsuccessfully attempted to play the 'China card'.

Other sensitive issues highlighted by the press since late October: how to ensure that Nepali citizens abroad can vote? The Supreme Court had ordered the government to do so in 2018. However, at least 5 million people, a quarter of the electorate, were deprived of their right to vote. The interruption of air traffic in the Gulf, where at least 2 million people have emigrated, further added to the practical impossibility of voting, even though their remittances to the country represent more than a quarter of its GDP. Unlike Bangladesh, postal voting is not possible in Nepal.

One of these former emigrants is attracting particular attention because she has just stood for election to the legislature. Against her parents' wishes, she learned Korean, worked for a while in South Korea and set up her own business on her return home. Now she is a candidate.

On the other hand, how can the security of polling stations be ensured when many prisoners are still on the run with stolen weapons? 'There can be no democracy without security,' some newspapers pointed out. A task force was formed with representative from the army, the police, the armed police and the judicial police, totalling 314,000 security

personnel, including temporary staff recruited by the police without delay. The elections took place without violence.

Mr Kulman Ghising, revered as a saint for restoring electricity that had been confiscated by corrupt officials, served as Energy Minister under Ms Karki until 8 January, when he resigned to stand for election. It was thought that he would join forces with other very popular figures, such as rapper and Kathmandu Mayor Balendra Shah, whose slogan is 'talk less, do more', and TV presenter Rabi Lamichhane, but this did not happen. The latter is accused of embezzlement, while Balendra Shah is unblemished: he is therefore the one who best embodies change.

At the same time, the Labour Party, the champion of the fight against absolute monarchy and the largest and oldest party in Nepal, has undergone the necessary generational change, with Gagan Thapa (49) succeeding former Prime Minister (five times!) Sher Bahadur Deuba, 79. With the fall of his contemporary Oli, a new era in Nepali political life has begun.

**The debate has also raged over more structural issues.**

Until now, the Prime Minister has been appointed indirectly: Parliament votes, while some would prefer him or her to be elected directly by the citizens – but others see this as a risk of authoritarianism. We are still a long way from this, as 'in just over fifteen years, the country has seen at least fourteen successive governments, none of which has managed to complete its term of office,' notes Ms Steinmann, an anthropologist.

Federalism, enshrined in the Constitution, does not work to everyone's satisfaction, so much so that some extremists advocate autonomy or even independence for Madesh, the southernmost region, which has long felt discriminated against by the capital, especially since former Prime Minister Oli has again expressed what is considered a racist opinion about its citizens.

In January, the upper house was renewed and the old Labour and UML parties shared 17 of the 18 seats. However, the RSP, which won the elections, will have to work with them to get the law passed.

Ms Karki, for her part, took care to consult the political parties in order to organise the elections at all costs.



120 partis registered for the 165 majority constituencies, with 3,406 candidates (only 11% of whom were women), and 64 parties nominated 3,210 candidates for proportional representation.

The turnout rate was high at 59%, although slightly lower than in the previous legislative elections (2022), due to the fact that voters sometimes had to walk several kilometres through snow-covered mountains to cast their ballots. In 2022, it took three weeks to count the votes, but this time it should be quicker.

The author of this article witnessed the first normal parliamentary elections since 1999 in 2017; a joyful crowd, dressed in their finest clothes, flocked to the polls, such was the importance of the implementation of the right to vote in this country.

*The most spectacular result was Balendra Shah's victory over former Prime Minister Oli in the constituency that Oli had long held in Jhapa. The 35-year-old mayor of Kathmandu is a more complex figure than the media portray him as a 'rapper'... Originally from Madhesh, he will be the first Buddhist prime minister in a predominantly Hindu country, which does not prevent him from being very popular, a fine example of tolerance.*

In fact, the Madhesi parties that played on this image to consolidate their power were eliminated.

#### **The RSP ran an exemplary campaign in terms of its effectiveness:**

Shah gave an important speech every eight days, leaving enough time for a team of 660 people in charge of social media to amplify each rally.

The RSP also organised presentation tours in five to seven districts every day, accompanied by brief daily appearances in one of Nepal's seven provinces, where Shah met voters and forged links with them.

'If you keep giving speeches, people end up confused,' said a party official, who asked to remain anonymous. 'We let the opposition parties raise certain issues, then we respond to

them once. That way, our message remains clear.'

The centralised campaign system and large events were funded directly by the party, which received significant donations from Nepali living abroad, particularly in the United States, according to two officials.

The RSP thus took the place, social-democratic, of the Labour Party and eliminated the 'communist' UML.

Even more promising is the end of a political system based on unshakeable cadres in favour of meritocracy.

Finally, the 2015 Constitution was upheld despite being contested, as it allows the government to exercise full authority, if necessary with a two-thirds majority.

#### **Conclusion**

At the time of writing, it is not known, even though the Western media have already announced the result, whether the victory of the RSP (138 votes are needed in the Assembly to govern) will quickly lead to the formation of a government led by Prime Minister Balendra Shah, despite the rivalry of Rabi Lamichhane, who is also popular, who the ministers will be and, above all, what policies will be implemented.

At least we can hope that former Prime Minister Oli, reappointed by his party in an unreal atmosphere but severely defeated at the polls, will finally retire, cutting the ground from under those who would like to see him go to prison because of the 19 young people who died before he resigned.

Nepal deserves to see corruption no longer hinder its progress, and for its young people to be able to live and work in their own country rather than leaving for many years and sometimes dying – the press reports three or four deaths per day, and the author of this article saw one of these coffins at Kathmandu airport – on construction sites in the Gulf.

It is to be hoped that the winners will devote themselves to these issues. It is high time, given that the World Bank has revised its growth forecasts downwards (except for the trade deficit), that the rate of non-performing loans is rising and that debt, although still moderate, is increasing: the business climate needs to improve.



It is also necessary to continue the fight against money laundering initiated by Ms Karki's interim government and to leave the FATF grey list. The Minister of Finance has undertaken the necessary reforms and is aware that the relative weakness of foreign direct investment inflows reflects above all a lack of confidence in the national financial system. Priorities include strengthening investigations, prosecutions and sanctions in money laundering cases, with increased evidentiary requirements and rapid asset seizure mechanisms. Transparency issues concern both the financial system and the capital market.

The private sector, through various bodies, wants political stability and investment security: everything remains to be done in this area.

A particularly striking example is the 1,200 MW Budhi-Gandaki hydroelectric project, an essential resource for Nepal, which has been out of service for a quarter of a century. Tractebel proved its feasibility in 2011, but successive financing projects were decided and

then cancelled for political reasons until the National Planning Commission, whose vice-president Swarnim Wagle may be the next finance minister, recommended state financing.

The election campaign favoured behaviours that evoked the 'old' parties rather than the dedication required of Generation Z. In a highly balkanised country, each region's quest for identity, particularly that of Nepal's most populous region, Madhesh, will be a challenge for this new political leadership. One cannot help but share the Nepali Times' wish after the elections:

*"The addition of layers of bureaucracy, committees and partisan politics at the federal, provincial and local levels has led to resistance to the simple goal of making life easier for Nepali people."*

*Nepal is making a fresh start, and the coming months will show whether the country is on the right track with its new generation of government."*

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## Yves Carmona

A former student of the École Nationale d'Administration (ENA) and a career diplomat, Yves CARMONA spent most of his career in Asia: twice posted as Counsellor for Foreign Affairs in Japan, then as Deputy Chief of Mission in Singapore, and later as Ambassador to Laos and Nepal (2012–2018). In these positions, as well as in those he held in Paris, he focused—drawing also on his background as a student of Japanese—on the rapid transformations of Asian countries and their relations with France and Europe. Now retired, he is committed to sharing his experience with those who may benefit from it.



**Yves Carmona**  
Former diplomat

## Analysis Nouveaux Regards

# Hope in a small country: **Timor-Leste.**

By Yves Carmona

Why write about this remote little country, about which the author of these lines already said everything there was to say on 2 July 2023? Nothing happens there, no one goes there, there are few inhabitants on this remote piece of island closer to Australia than to Southeast Asia, of which it is the easternmost country, and then there are the whims of the President of the United States, whose commentators ponder learnedly what his next move will be. That's more interesting, isn't it?

Well, no, precisely because this is a country whose President has long been a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, while Mr. Trump is still waiting. President Horta received this distinction in 1996, not because he had resolved external conflicts, but for having valiantly resisted the invasion of his country by its greedy neighbour?

***What has just happened, unbeknownst to most of our readers, is the admission of Timor-Leste into ASEAN on 26 October 2025. It will be the 11th member country and probably the last.***

To the applause of the heads of state and government gathered as usual at a summit, this time in Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia, President José Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister

Xanana Gusmao welcomed the decision, especially since Timor-Leste had applied for membership in 2011.

Why such an unusually long delay? Because Indonesia and a few others had consistently opposed it, unable to accept that the country its big neighbour had invaded in 1975 and which had resisted at the cost of hundreds of thousands of lives had nevertheless gained independence in 2002.

**So Timor-Leste is finally a member of ASEAN, but what will this bring? More specifically:**

1. Who are the main donors and what do they do?
2. What markets will open up to it?
3. What will it gain in terms of international reputation?

The information available to answer these questions is fragmentary, but we can attempt to answer them.

### **1. Major lenders:**

Australia, the Asian Development Bank, the European Union and Japan are the main donors, with China increasing its contribution. However, it should be noted, especially in light of the United States' flip-flopping and the lack of interest from other wealthy countries, that this



government is doing its best to rely primarily on itself.

It is striving to build a more resilient economy in this monsoon-prone part of Asia and to reduce dependence on oil: first and foremost, to improve the lot of all.

Timor-Leste's development programme is based on its 2011-2030 Strategic Development Plan, which prioritises social capital (health, education, social protection), basic infrastructure and diversification beyond oil, while aligning spending with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Key investments made with development partners include climate-resilient roads, major projects in water, sanitation, energy, urban planning, education and health, and the expansion and modernisation of Dili Airport to improve the international connectivity needed for tourism and trade.

These efforts are also funded by the government through the Petroleum Fund, a sovereign wealth fund of approximately US\$19 billion that separates oil revenues from the budget and is intended to support both current development and future generations, although some warn that it could be depleted by 2038 without stronger non-oil growth and fiscal discipline.

With the Bayu-Undan fields now depleted, the government is seeking to advance new oil and gas projects, including the Tasi Mane project, the Greater Sunrise development and the Bayu-Undan transition, balancing their potential with the need to avoid excessive dependence on hydrocarbons.

## 2. Opening up markets:

It is undoubtedly in this area that this small country, one of the poorest in Southeast Asia, has the most to gain. Being part of ASEAN means access to an economy worth \$3.8 trillion and 680 million people, compared to its own GDP of just £1.9 billion, shared among 1,521,000 people. The centrality of ASEAN, an obsession for its members, means that membership provides an opportunity to rub shoulders not only with the 10 other members, even though it is located at its eastern end, closer to Australia than to Indonesia, by far the most populous member but whose capital Jakarta is 4,500 km from Dili.

This means:

More opportunities for local businesses to grow and export, particularly in agriculture (coffee, spices, horticulture), tourism and digital services.

More foreign investment and jobs.

ASEAN membership will help attract foreign investors who will bring capital, technology and know-how. This will create more jobs, particularly for young people, and contribute to the development of important sectors such as tourism, transport and digital services.

Improved infrastructure and connectivity. ASEAN membership will make it easier for Timor-Leste to improve its roads, ports, airports and internet access. This will help businesses operate more efficiently and make it easier for tourists and investors to visit the country.

Support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) will be improved through access to ASEAN programmes that offer training, digital skills and easier ways to trade with other countries. This support can help local entrepreneurs grow and compete regionally.

Marketing will be less expensive and faster thanks to ASEAN trade agreements and systems (such as the ASEAN Single Window): these will make importing and exporting goods simpler, less expensive and faster. This means that businesses will be able to save time and money when trading with other ASEAN countries.

Timorese professionals and students will have more opportunities to work, study and train in other ASEAN countries. This will allow them to gain skills and experience that they can then put to good use in Timor-Leste.

ASEAN membership will raise Timor-Leste's profile as a tourist destination, as experience shows that many trips include visits to other well-known tourist destinations in the region, such as Bali. Regional tourism campaigns and the facilitation of travel within ASEAN can attract more visitors, which will stimulate local businesses and create jobs in the hospitality and tourism sectors.

## 3. International reputation:

The President and Prime Minister, who do not often leave their country, took advantage of their trip to Kuala Lumpur to go to Delhi to meet once again with the President of 'the world's largest democracy'. And yet Mr Horta and Mr Gusmao are closely monitored by their domestic public opinion: it is not a question of spending public money recklessly.

Beyond this example, Timor-Leste will gain a stronger voice in regional and global discussions and international recognition. Let us



not forget that each of the now 11 rotating presidencies offers the country hosting the summit of heads of state and government the opportunity to welcome not only the other ASEAN members, but also an increasing number of other countries, including Japan, China and South Korea (ASEAN + 3), as well as Australia, China, New Zealand, Russia and the United States. As one of the few democracies in the region, Timor-Leste contributes to maintaining peace and stability.

**Conclusion:**

Small, poor and remote, this is a country that poses no threat to anyone and whose inclusion

in the international community offers a rare hope for progress at a time when the largest countries seem to favour authoritarianism.

It has become fashionable lately to blame globalisation for all evils. Doesn't Timor-Leste show, on the contrary, that it is preferable to tenaciously break out of isolation and integrate into a larger entity that respects identities, particularly numerous and diverse in ASEAN, which allows it both to better export its products and to diversify its opportunities for political dialogue?

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**Yves Carmona**

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**Olivier Arifon**  
Professor at the Université Côte d'Azur

## Analysis Nouveaux Regards

# Nomadisme in Kazakhstan, **between identity and tourism.**

By Olivier Arifon

This paper explores two facets of nomadism, which, for lack of a better term, we qualify as "traditional" and "neo-nomadic." Arising from nomadism and itinerancy, travel and the dreams associated with it contain as a founding element departure, one of the key words of this text.

The main values of this traditional nomadism include respect for nature, a sense of family and community, all organized around the ties between members of the community and structured by courage and endurance.

***The nomadic way of life implies constant movement, a means both to justify attachment to these values and to practice this way of life with flexibility.***

It is divided into three aspects: psychic, that is to say without expectation or stagnation, the nomad thus develops a fluidity of mind. Socio-economic, with the absence of State and nation and relationships based on an economy of exchange, gifts and counter-gifts. Finally, from an intellectual and artistic angle, it is analyzed as a language of pure forms, outside of fixed concepts [1].

The whole is even more complex when one looks at the links between sedentary people and nomads and the spatial logics of the latter:

*"Nomadism is not limited to the fact of moving: indeed, Western sedentary people travel annually in transport over much greater distances than nomadic herders and hunters [...] The specificity of the nomads' relationship to their territory lies in this tension between, on the one hand, a consubstantial link with inhabited places that are intimately known and, on the other hand, a will to withdraw from them regularly and to leave as few traces there as possible, an absence of individual appropriation of the environment. [2]"*

As they evolve towards more development and prosperity, societies would abandon certain practices, including nomadism. However, recent work shows the opposite with the return to nomadic practices and ways of life.

Brousse (2020) identifies and then explores three categories of new nomads: van travelers (vanlife), inhabitants of tiny houses and digital nomads, and underlines that "considering these forms as heirs of the first would of course make no sense. [3]" If all these actors share movement, this is rarely constrained by work or



the search for resources, as is the case for traditional nomads.

Nomadism and neo-nomadism from a tourism perspective rely on identical logics: "This is what distinguishes digital nomadism from other professions: whereas lawyers or professors do not economically benefit from the romanticization of their profession, DNLPs (digital nomad lifestyle promoters) derive income from the monetization of their way of life and thus encourage the creation of an identity expected to be embodied and realized by aspiring digital nomads. [4]"

In this context, the examination of the World Nomad Games in 2024 in Astana, capital of Kazakhstan, represents a good example for reflecting on the evolution of forms of nomadism, of which three aspects are useful for our purpose. The first concerns identity for the country and the peoples of nomadic tradition in Central Asia.

The second lies in the narrative construction (communication and argumentation) of the games for the rest of the world in order, beyond Sovietism, to claim this heritage. The conscious articulation by the Kazakh government of nomadism between tradition and patrimonialization for tourism purposes forms the third aspect.

### **The World Nomad Games, sports, identity and neo-nomadism [5]**

Nomadism and the games associated with it reflect the traditions of nomadic culture in the vastness of the Great Steppe. Originating from the time of the Mongols and the Golden Horde, these games have evolved to become very recently the World Nomad Games, a global competition. They now form a sporting, cultural, and scientific project, first developed by Kyrgyzstan between 2014 and 2020, then organized in 2024 by Kazakhstan. In the region, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are the two main countries inheriting this way of life, along with Mongolia, which has Naadam, at once a family festival, fair, and nomadic Olympics.

Major international sporting events (MISE), Olympic Games, FIFA World Cup for the best known, are at the heart of a diplomacy of influence and image. Thierry Côme and Marc Falcoz argue that "by nature, the MISE is a moment of rupture in the regularity of sporting competitions. It stands out from the ordinary, the everyday, it brings crowds together and makes them share a common emotion conducive to strengthening a sense of belonging, in a quasi 'collective celebration' [...] which can have positive or negative economic and social

repercussions. [6]" Olympic Games, Asian Games or World Nomad Games clearly fall within this logic: temporal rupture, gathering and sharing. Another dimension is important: "there is also, for States or host cities, the will to access or remain in the club of nations capable of organizing such events. An unparalleled sounding board, these major global events are sources of interest and communication support for host countries to show their dynamism, highlight their know-how and politically consolidate their position [7]."

The World Nomad Games, under the patronage of UNESCO after their inscription as intangible cultural heritage by Kyrgyzstan in 2021, can offer international recognition and a potential tool for influence. The World Nomad Games are an international sporting competition centered on ethnic sports originating from the folkloric culture of the nomads of the Central Asian steppes in the broad sense. Unknown or little known to the rest of the world, they are rooted in steppe traditions.

The main sports are archery on foot and on horseback, horse racing, various forms of wrestling, eagle hunting or Kokpar (goat grabbing [8]). The organizers call them ethnosports and rely on their inclusion on the Intangible Cultural Heritage list of humanity. The Republic of Kazakhstan, the World Ethno Sports Confederation (founded by Turkey in 2015) and the Organization of Turkic States are responsible for organizing these games.

These games attracted 2,000 participants from more than 89 countries. Twenty-one sports were in competition and ten in demonstration, with delegations from France, Nigeria or Spain... These Games also included three days of academic sessions divided into "History and culture," "Sports science" and "Nutrition of the nomad in Central Asia."

An ethnovillage next to the Astana city hippodrome and the press center completed the whole. Faithful to the form of MISE, an opening ceremony and a closing ceremony with athletes in mostly traditional costumes framed the competitions.

The messages of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan and of the Minister of Foreign Affairs are centered on themes such as solidarity, mutual respect, the bridge between nations and the nomadic identity constitutive of Kazakhstan, more broadly of the countries of the region. During his speech at the opening ceremony, the President uses the term "Eurasia," which makes



Kazakhstan a country sharing both European and Asian values. Apart from these last points, the arguments presented are common to all events of this type. During his press conference, the Ministry of Tourism underlines its desire to attract more tourists according to tourism segmentations: ecotourism, nature sports, cuisine and neo-nomadism.

The effectiveness of the promotion of the World Nomad Games by Kazakhstan must be thought differently according to scales. In the countries of the region, the event is followed thanks to the popularity of the sports represented, as they are most often considered “national. [9]” Citizens of participating countries can recognize themselves in them, as these sports are part of their nomadic heritage and are a means of connecting the present with the past.

And if these sports remain traditional, they can evolve towards a more codified mode in order to be integrated and visible in competitions. Internationally, the observation is more mixed, because, although the number of participating countries increased during this fifth edition, the reception and representation of the event remain to be evaluated more finely.

Finally, digital media such as Instagram and X make it possible to develop discourses, often organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to reach different audiences. This process is today visible for Kazakhstan with its proactive discourse which shows that this country is working on its image, as indicated by the X account of the embassy in Brussels. Indeed, the latter actively promotes the World Nomad Games before and during the event with videos of the preparations.

These World Nomad Games are to be seen as a deliberate policy and an action decided by the government and the institutions capable of shaping these games, between international event and messages to nationals, more broadly to the world. Thomas Joly, the stage director of the opening and closing ceremonies of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, underlines an identical reflection and a clear intention during the writing of these ceremonies: “To grasp in each ceremony this great ‘we’ that constitutes us. To address the greatest number, without excluding anyone: my obsession since I have been doing theater. [10]”

The World Nomad Games illustrate the development of the public diplomacy of these Central Asian countries and this idea of uniting peoples of nomadic culture allows Kazakhstan

and Kyrgyzstan (and Mongolia) to highlight their cultural heritage.

Even if Western audiences know little about nomadic culture, it is visually appealing with unusual equestrian shows, archery, colorful outfits... And the more the World Nomad Games gain this “state” legitimacy, the more they will be broadcast in the international press as a major event of the region, which will greatly contribute to the media coverage of these countries.

Elements that follow one another in a homogeneous way, intangible values around a continuity of heritage traditions, show an emerging neo-nomadic culture. It is then a means of validating the cultural traditions of Kazakh populations whose ancestors are facing globalization. It is also a way of opening up to tourism, as this dimension remains present with its images, both cliché and reality. The imagery of steppes, horses, yurts, eagles and more marginally sports, speaks to Western tourists attracted by a way of life based on itinerancy.

***Kazakhstan communicates with a coherent narrative, beyond traditional diplomatic relations, which reinforces a tourism strategy, with a Kazakh Ministry of Tourism founded only in 2020. However, at the border between tourism communication and political communication, the effectiveness of these efforts remains difficult to evaluate [11].***

Nevertheless, these nomadic games can become a resource for communication both internally and externally with their achievements in infrastructure construction and cultural aspects serving international recognition. A voluntarist discourse, with the construction of an identity determined to extricate itself from a colonial past, constitutes the dominant axis of our observations.

However, ambiguities remain. According to Ms. Laruelle, nomadism and modernity still appear incompatible. She underlines to what extent the revalorization of nomadism in post-Soviet Kazakhstan is “partial, hesitant and problematic. [12]”

In this framework, the exhibition and heritage of nomadism remain anecdotal, purely symbolic, at the risk of becoming frozen in a museification. The second ambiguity concerns borders, a late

concept imposed by Russia during colonization, because the creation of the borders of Central Asian countries is the legacy of Russian and Soviet imperialism.

The area long had an imprecise form, as maps were completed at the end of the 19th century, marking the end of one of the last blank areas of the planet. If one asks Westerners to place these Central Asian countries on a map, a large majority is incapable of doing so.

The population is composed of a multitude of peoples with varied and changing names, most being nomadic or perceived as such. However, as a reduced list of elements is necessary for the birth of an imaginary place, a name, a form and a population, three principles well present.

The elements constituting nomadism in this region—yurts, shamans, camels, reindeer, wolves, eagles, nomads, sedentary people, natural environments, modes of sociability, minimized impact on nature... carry an imaginary that makes Westerners dream and on which tourism communication is based. The organization and communication of Kazakhstan around the World Nomad Games is indeed both a direct and indirect contribution to tourism, whose main angle is a nomadism, either reinvented or commodified. The truth seems to lie between the two. These games have indeed highlighted the traditions and imaginaries of nomadism and prove to be the result of a governmental will.

Faced with political destabilizations and ecological and economic changes, the sedentary-nomadic divide is evolving, the term “nomad” becomes metaphorical. It joins itinerancy. Then, linking nomadism with the need for freedom that the traveler has and carefully cultivates is interesting: “(to) arrange for oneself an inner and geographical space that favors long time: the only one that gives permission to clarify memories, to distinguish fragments of meaning, and everything that, in the absurdity that is life, matters or not. [13]”

[1] According to Jean Duvignaud, in Brousse (2020), p. 20.

[2] Roche, S. (2015). Stépanoff, Ferret, Lacaze and Thorez eds., *Nomadisms of Central and Northern Asia*, Paris, Armand Colin, 2013, 288 p. *Études Rurales*, 195, p. 5.

[3] Brousse, M. (2020), p. 21.

[4] “This is what distinguishes digital nomadism from other professions: while lawyers or professors do not benefit economically from the romanticisation of their professions, DNLs derive revenues from the monetisation of their lifestyle and thus foster the creation of an expected identity to be embodied and performed by aspiring digital nomads,”

Romanticisation and monetisation of the digital nomad lifestyle: The role played by online narratives in shaping professional identity work. *Organization*, 30(1), 65–88, p. 82 (our translation).

[5] This passage draws on a reflection on the World Nomad Games published in *La diplomatie par le récit*, Arifon, Éditions du Cygne, 2024. It is enriched by a reflection on the different aspects of nomadism, identity, and tourism.

[6] Côme T., Falcoz, M., “Major International Sporting Events, between consensual discourse and communicational reality,” in Peyre, N., Rouet, G. (2024). *Sport, communication and politics. Les essentiels d’Hermès*. Paris: CNRS Éditions, p. 115.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 118.

[8] “Kokpar (called kôkpar in Kazakh, or buzkashi), a kind of horseback rugby in which participants fiercely compete over a goat carcass, is practiced by Turkic peoples of Central Asia.” Source: Ferret, C. (2018). “Kôkpar, a serious game. Untangling a Central Asian equestrian mêlée.” *ethnographiques.org*, Issue 36.

[9] Google Alerts monitoring from September 1 to October 15, 2024, with the term World Nomad Games. The main results come from Kazakh and Uzbek media.

[10] *Télérama* No. 3896, September 2024, pp. 3–6.

[11] On previous editions, Maksüdünov A. (2020). *Economic and Socio-Cultural Impacts of the World Nomad Games*. *Ekonomika*.

[12] Laruelle, M. (2008), *Identity issues and nomadism*. *Le Courrier des pays de l’Est*, 1067, p. 14.

[13] Azéma, L. (2024), *We Need an Elsewhere That Does Not Exist: Re-enchanting Travel*. Paris, Allary Éditions, p. 173.

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## Olivier Arifon

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