

ARI *news*

A newsletter of the **Asia Research Institute**, National University of Singapore

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HIGHLIGHTS



SPECIAL FEATURE

Two Shiny Cities
and the Slums of Hope



NUS
Long Service
Awards



ARI Asian
Graduate Students

Writing the City

ARI Researchers on the Inspirations of City Life

Photo credit: DR MICHELLE MILLER



**Professor
Prasenjit Duara**

Word from the Director

The news from the Director's office this quarter is that ARI will be launching a meta-cluster in July 2011 called Historical Sociology of Asian Connections. The goal of exploring Asian Connections derives from current research that shows that East, Southeast and more recently, South Asia are becoming increasingly interconnected and interdependent. These countries are beginning to derive benefits and to face challenges from this emergent or re-emergent region which needs to be grasped by a new paradigm that goes beyond "methodological nationalism" and area studies.

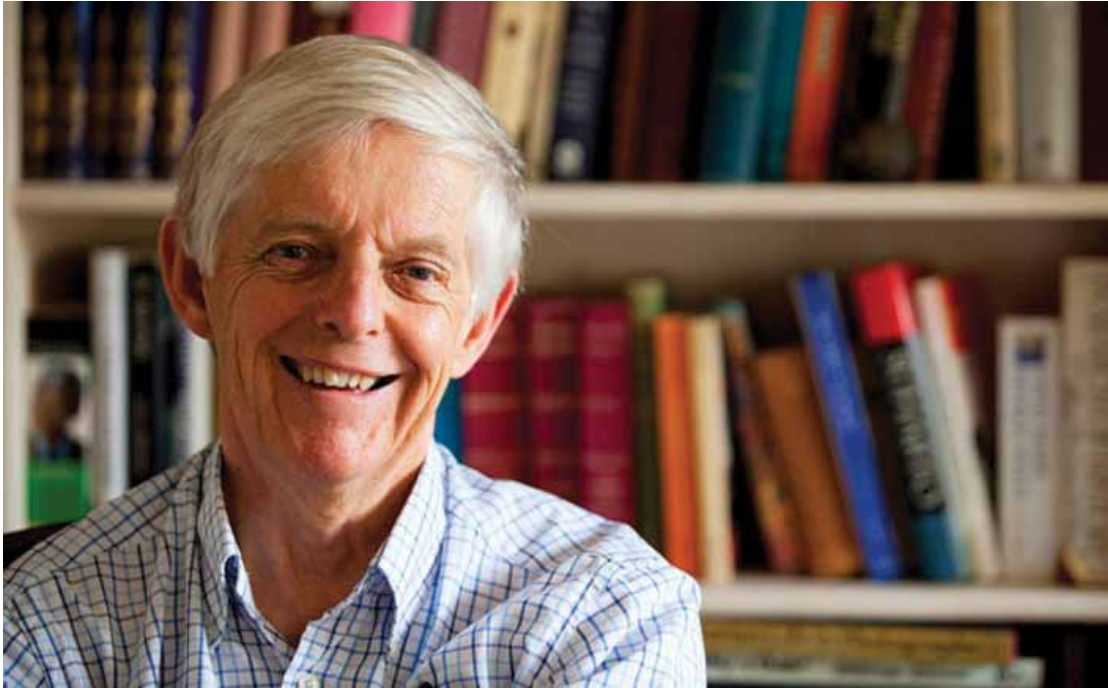
Many of these ties are actually resurgent since they had also flourished in earlier periods of history. Can we see patterns of integration, interdependence and conflicts over the long term? What are the large scale global forces and trends which Asia initiates and responds to? What are the implications of the longer-term comparative and historical perspective for the contemporary world? In several historical periods, China's

economic power – especially in the coastal region – was significantly driven by its role as lynchpin of an Asian maritime trade nexus that funnelled vast quantities of silver into the interior. What are the points of similarity and difference this time around? What are the changing patterns of Islamic networks in the region? To what extent does the contemporary revival of Asian Buddhism seek to re-integrate the old Buddhist links in the region?

We are a meta-cluster because we do not yet see a need to make independent appointments. There is considerable interest in projects of historical sociology among researchers in the existing clusters in ARI and FASS (including the Open Cluster), especially among historians and sociologists. We will conduct a reading group and launch a first workshop on *Global Modernity and Asian Urban History* on 12-13 September 2011.

As with the other clusters, you can follow developments in the meta-cluster on our website.

FEATURE ARTICLES



Two Shiny Cities and the Slums of Hope

BY **PROFESSOR ROBIN JEFFREY**

India's people are rushing to the city. The census conducted early in 2011 found a population of 1,210 million of whom about 30 percent lived in towns and cities – about 370 million people. In the next 10 years, that proportion will reach 40 percent, and India's townsfolk will grow by close to 200 million. With port cities like Mumbai bound by their geography, and continental cities like Delhi oozing in all directions like mutinous fried eggs, how will people live?

India's national capital, New Delhi, has experienced two attempts at urban planning. New Delhi represented the efforts of the British to build a capital for an empire in the 1920s and 1930s.

Independent India in the 1950s aimed to create a capital for a free people, an effort recently examined in Ravi Sundaram's *Pirate Modernity: Media Urbanism in Delhi* (Routledge, 2009).

India's other recent urban-planning experience is Chandigarh, the Union Territory that acts as the capital of Punjab and Haryana states. Designed by Le Corbusier, Chandigarh grew out of the plains of eastern Punjab from 1952 as a replacement for the great city of Lahore, Punjab's old capital, which had gone to Pakistan at the partition of 1947.

“Most Australians treat Canberra like a theme park – somewhere you go to see the sights and where exotic creatures called politicians prowl a cavernous reserve called Parliament and occasionally at dusk can be spotted at public watering holes.”

I taught school in Chandigarh from 1967-9 and lived in a single-story house in a street of sand, bricks and building workers. Today, the street is built solid, every building is three-storeys, and Chandigarh has a million people.

In the 1960s, Chandigarh's broad streets and huge rectangular “sectors” were barren and wind-swept in winter and summer. Today, however, the city is remarkably green and treed, partly attributable to the work of the first chief commissioner of the Union Territory, M. S. Randhawa, an Indian Civil Servant of colonial vintage who was an agriculturalist, naturalist and art collector.

The other planned city of the English-knowing world is Canberra, Australia's capital. Like Chandigarh, Canberra looks out to mountains and has a lake. Unlike Chandigarh, Canberra's suburbs swirl; rectangles are hard to find. Its population of 300,000 benefits from national institutions like a library and art gallery. The Australian Capital Territory covers an area about 2,000 square kilometres, 2.5 times larger than Singapore. The Union Territory of Chandigarh occupies a mere 114 square kilometres.

Most Australians treat Canberra like a theme park – somewhere you go to see the sights and where exotic creatures called politicians prowl a cavernous reserve called Parliament and occasionally at dusk can be spotted at public watering holes. Chandigarh, as the capital of two states, is also dense with politicians.

Middle-class cities built to house bureaucrats, educators and cultural leaders, Canberra and Chandigarh offer few lessons about how to



The former teacher and his former principal, 1983

employ and house the vast numbers lured to bright urban lights and shiny stories of paid work and prosperity.

How will India's cities develop in the generation of the so-called “demographic dividend”? At the bleak end of the spectrum is the Mogadishu Possibility – zero out of 10. A 3-out-of-10 future might look like today's Karachi; a 5-out-of-10 result (a bare pass?), like today's Mumbai. But however they develop, the “slums of hope”, as Peter Lloyd described seam-busting tropical cities forty years ago, will continue to suck people into them, while places like Chandigarh (and Canberra), if they are lucky, will grow gently and demurely next door.

Traversing Banda Aceh

BY DR MICHELLE MILLER

Indonesia's westernmost city of Banda Aceh on the island of Sumatra has been the site of tremendous recent upheaval. Its skyline and surrounding coastline were battered and instantly reconfigured by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and undersea earthquake. Until 2005, Banda Aceh was also a site of the protracted armed separatist conflict between Free Aceh Movement guerrillas and Indonesian security forces. In just one decade, the city has oscillated between authoritarianism and democratisation, and between war and the currently successful Aceh peace process.

It was in 2000 as a visiting scholar at the Ar-Raniry Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) – Banda Aceh's principal Islamic university – that my journey of intellectual and personal discovery through this city began. Back then, Banda Aceh was so inured to fear and mayhem that its commuters negotiated their daily movements by necessity. After dusk, or on the sporadic "mass strike" days declared by Aceh's rebel leadership, the city resembled a ghost town. Public service delivery stagnated as blackouts became commonplace and a growing mountain of solid waste in the central market near the great mosque bore testimony to the pervasive climate of hopelessness and spiralling neglect.

My original purpose in Banda Aceh was to study the role of local Islamic organisations in the conflict. As the political middle ground was increasingly lost to the warring parties, however, this became difficult amidst the escalating kidnappings, torture, killings and imprisonment of moderate voices. My own supervisor, Professor Safwan Idris, was one such moderate advocate for a negotiated settlement who was assassinated by unknown gunmen outside his home on the edge of the IAIN campus on 16 September 2000.



Disillusioned by the fighting and myopic debates around irreconcilable nationalist ideologies, I began to develop a passion for decentralisation, or the devolution of central state powers and resources, as a compromise solution to territorial disputes. This normative emphasis on decentralisation as a tool for conflict management became the central theme of my doctoral dissertation and post-doctoral book, *Rebellion and Reform in Indonesia*. It is also the subject of my forthcoming edited book, *Autonomy and Armed Separatism in South and Southeast Asia*. Fortunately, my faith in decentralisation was borne out by the resolution in August 2005 of the Aceh conflict via the conferral of broad autonomy in the form of "self-government" to the province of Aceh. Yet most other Asian countries plagued by armed separatist movements have not been so lucky, and remain explosive laboratories for experimentation in the search for peace.



Banda Aceh

In Banda Aceh, peace through decentralisation has brought about a palpable sense of renewal. Whereas walking through the city at night would once have been perilous, it is now a cause for celebration with crowded cafes, bustling night markets and outdoor activities. In daylight, too, Banda Aceh is a city transformed. The massive influx of funding and humanitarian assistance following the 2004 tsunami and subsequent peace process produced a flurry of reconstruction and local entrepreneurship, with the result that despite its recent history of social trauma Banda Aceh now looks almost (but not quite) like any other Indonesian city.

As peace continues to gain ground, new questions emerge about the possibilities available through decentralisation for Banda Aceh's residents to manage their own lives and livelihoods in more effective and innovative ways. Local government officials are looking outwards to forge collaborative city networks within and beyond Asia, and to reposition Banda Aceh as a globally connected city that is a safe repository for investment and a tourist destination. At the street level, these innovations are manifesting in improvements to public services and facilities, in technological developments, and in new forms of cultural competitiveness such as city branding. Swept along by these changes, my interest in decentralisation finds new expression in its relationship with the urban.

“Disillusioned by the fighting and myopic debates around irreconcilable nationalist ideologies, I began to develop a passion for decentralisation, or the devolution of central state powers and resources, as a compromise solution to territorial disputes.”

Asian Urban History and Global Modernity

12 – 13 September 2011

Contact person for
further details:

A/P Tim Bunnell:
aritgb@nus.edu.sg

This workshop is the first of a series dealing with the role of Asian Cities as Centers of Global Modernity. The goal of the workshop is to bring together eminent scholars with an active interest in Asian urban history in order to explore recent major transformations of Asian cities from a larger world-historical perspective. We aim to juxtapose a general understanding of large-scale global changes in the last twenty or thirty years, captured by the idea of global modernity, with case histories of Asian metropolises – including Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Singapore – as well as with comparative and regional urban histories.

Asia's Civil Spheres: New Media, Urban Public Space, Social Movements

29 – 30 September 2011

Contact person for
further details:

Dr Peter Marolt:
marolt@nus.edu.sg

This workshop aims to revisit the ever-shifting spatialities and connections between political participation and social change in urban Asia and to explore re-imaginings of what "political action", "public space", "place-making", and "social movements" mean in our globally networked societies. The workshop brings together young scholars and leading experts working on empirical urban realities, in different cultural and national contexts, to discuss how political transformation is initiated, negotiated, and resisted, in order to advance our understanding of the challenges that precede and follow highly visible insurgencies and the ways in which new media are deployed by various actors to either strengthen or stifle these processes.

Film and Cinema in Singapore

6 – 7 October 2011

Contact persons for
further details:

Dr Liew Kai Khiun:
kkliw@ntu.edu.sg

Dr Stephen Teo:
STEO@ntu.edu.sg

From the first recorded public screening in the early 1900s to local feature films in multiplexes of the 21st century, the motion picture has been present in Singapore for more than a century. Even as it occupies a highly intimate aspect of daily living, the cinematic text and experience have been accorded greater legitimacy and scholarly attention in the recent decade as part of the critical recognition of the broader significance of screen cultures. This conference will serve as a platform for both scholars and practitioners to review existing paradigms in addition to charting new approaches and directions into the study of film and cinema in Singapore. Suggested themes include, but are not limited to: Historical Evolution; Geographies of Cinema; Audience Reception; Archiving Film; Cultural and Media Policies and Politics; Cultural Economy.

Crossing Borders, Traversing Boundaries: Bridging the Gap between International and Internal Migration Research and Theory

13 – 14 October 2011

Contact persons for
further details:

Dr Maureen Hickey:
arimhh@nus.edu.sg

Dr Melody Lu Chia-Wen:
arilcw@nus.edu.sg

It is undeniable that a distinction between internal and international migration is important in a world in which national sovereignty is determined both by a state's ability to determine who might enter and leave, as well as by the ability to enact and enforce the laws that regulate those within its geographic boundaries. Given this complexity and the growing importance of migration in the contemporary world, this conference will provide an important forum for bridging the persistent academic "gap" between these two migration literatures and for working towards more nuanced and theoretically rich research of migration that crosses disciplinary and categorical boundaries.

Law and Religious Pluralism in Contemporary Asia

17 – 18 November 2011

Contact persons for further details:

A/P Gary F. Bell:
lawbellg@nus.edu.sg

A/P Tan Sor Hoon:
aritansh@nus.edu.sg

This workshop looks at how the law deals with religious pluralism in Asia. Is there a place for legal pluralism in the law – i.e. does the state apply different laws to different people depending on their religious affiliation and how does this relate to the nature of the state (secular or not)? What are the justifications for legal pluralism in state law and in religious law? Furthermore, how does state law deal with religious groups – does it treat all religions equally, does it forbid some religions, does it facilitate/regulate/control religious activities? Are there spheres of religious law beyond the reach of the state or other informal religious laws that is widely followed without being sanctioned by the state?

Muslim Religious Authority in Contemporary Asia

24 – 25 November 2011

Contact persons for further details:

Dr Jeremy Kingsley:
arijjk@nus.edu.sg

A/P Michael Feener:
arifm@nus.edu.sg

Contemporary Muslim leaders across Asia confront major changes in their diverse socio-political environments, experiencing varying degrees of democratization, the rise of populist religious movements, and the (re-) assertion of autocratic rule. Within these contexts, Muslim religious leaders face complex questions regarding how to exercise authority in the public sphere. This workshop will develop a nuanced assessment of the developing roles of Muslim religious leaders (ulama) in modern Asia, pursued through contextualized studies of social, legal and political dynamics of Islamic religious leadership in diverse Asian contexts.

Chinese Thought as Global Social Theory

8 – 9 December 2011

Contact person for further details:

A/P Michael Feener:
arifm@nus.edu.sg

This workshop attends to how, and under what conditions, so-called “non-Western” traditions of thought can serve to inspire and structure more generally applicable social and political theory, with a particular focus on Chinese thought. Noting how recent scholarship has persuasively deconstructed prefigured and monolithic notions of Chineseness, “Chinese thought” here does not name a hermetically sealed, internally homogenous entity, so much as it marks off a set of historically variegated, deeply hybridised yet highly literate and often internally self-referential discourses. This workshop explores the tenability of Chinese thought as generalisable social theory by recognizing that theoretical mobility is underwritten by comparative judgements that identify equivalences and differences between communities of argument, and which determine their relevance or adequacy.

History as Controversy: Writing and Teaching Contentious Topics in Asian Histories

14 – 15 December 2011

Contact persons for further details:

Dr Khairudin Aljunied:
mlsasmk@nus.edu.sg

Dr Mark Baildon:
mark.baildon@nie.edu.sg

In an increasingly digitised and globalised world, there is a need for professional historians, students of history and educators to confront rather than ignore or sidestep historical themes and topics that may be viewed as “controversial” or “sensitive”. Young people especially need to learn how to adjudicate competing accounts and deal with the range of controversies they are likely to encounter in public life. The teaching of historical controversies can help foster active citizenry and widen our understanding of the past; it can help open up new possibilities for the creation of a knowledge-driven, cosmopolitan and mature society. Bringing together students, teachers and scholars of history, this conference aims to shed light on philosophical, methodological and practical questions concerning the teaching and writing of historical controversies in Asia.



MR VO SY BAC

has commenced a 1-year appointment as Research Assistant with effect from 24 March 2011. Mr Vo Sy Bac received his Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science from University of Science, Ho Chi Minh City,

Vietnam. Bac will be supporting an ARI research project "Mapping the Technological and Cultural Landscape of Scientific Development in Asia". His research interests include information retrieval and object tracking.



DR JONATHAN BENNEY

has commenced a 1-year appointment as a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Open Cluster with effect from 11 April 2011. He received his PhD from Asia Institute, University of Melbourne in 2010, and obtained his BA (First

Class Honours, majoring in Chinese), LLB (Honours) and Diploma in Modern Languages from the University of Melbourne in 2005. He has worked as a lecturer, tutor, and researcher at several Australian universities. While at the Institute, he intends to research legal and rights activism in China, in particular the rise and fall of the "rights defence" (weiquan) movement, the changing role of the lawyer in China, the party-state's response to legal activism, and the use of new media in activism. He also plans to convert his doctoral thesis, which provides a survey of rights defence movements in China, into a book.



DR MARTIN SAXER

has commenced a 1-year appointment as a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Open Cluster with effect from 9 May 2011. He received his MA from Zurich University in 2005 and his PhD from the University of Oxford in

2010. He worked as a junior lecturer for Visual Anthropology at Zurich University and directed two feature length documentary films, including one on the history of Tibetan medicine in Buryatia and European Russia (see www.anyma.ch/journeys). For his doctoral thesis he studied the recent creation of an industry of Tibetan pharmaceuticals in Tibet. While at ARI, he seeks to address what China's rise means for its immediate neighbours and to research the effects of China's rapid economic growth, its strategic decisions to secure influence and natural resources in adjacent countries, and its efforts to prevent unrest.



DR KIKUE HAMAYOTSU

has commenced a 3-month appointment as a Visiting Research Fellow in the Religion and Globalisation Cluster with effect from 16 May 2011. Dr Hamayotsu is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Northern Illinois

University, DeKalb, USA. She received her PhD (Political Science) from the Australian National University. She has conducted research on Islam and Politics in both Indonesia and Malaysia. Her current research projects include religious parties and electoral politics in democratic Indonesia. Her recent publications include "Beyond Doctrine and Dogma: Religion and Politics in Southeast Asia" in *Southeast Asia in Political Science: Theory, Region and Qualitative Analysis*, edited by Erik Kuhonta, Dan Slater and Tuong Vu (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008). While at ARI, she will be completing a few manuscripts on religious parties and changing relations between state and Islam in democratic Indonesia while continuing to work on a book project, "Demobilizing Islam: Institutionalized Religion and the Politics of Co-optation."



DR YUKO KIKUCHI

has commenced a 3-month appointment as Visiting Senior Research Fellow in the Cultural Studies Cluster with effect from 26 April 2011. She received her PhD in History of Art and Design from the University of the Arts

London-Chelsea College of Art & Design. Dr Yuko Kikuchi is Reader in the History of Art and Design at TrAIN (Research Centre for Transnational Art Identity and Nation), University of the Arts, London. Her works include *Mingei Theory and Japanese Modernisation: Cultural Nationalism and 'Oriental Orientalism'* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004) and *Refracted Modernity: Visual Culture and Identity in Colonial Taiwan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007). She is currently working on a book about Russel Wright and American intervention in Asian design during the Cold War. She is also leading a joint international project "Oriental Modernity: Modern Design Development in East Asia, 1920-1990" together with design historians in Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Canada and the UK to promote studies on transnational design histories within this region.


PROF CHENGYINGHONG

has commenced a 6-month appointment as a Visiting Senior Research Fellow in the Cultural Studies Cluster from 19 May 2011. He teaches world history and Asian history at Delaware University, USA. He obtained his

BA (History) from Suzhou University, MA (World History) from the Chinese Academy of Social Science in 1988 and his PhD (World/Asian history) from Northeastern University in 2001. His research focuses on relationships between China and the world since 1949. His publications include a book titled *Creating the New Man: From Enlightenment Ideals to Socialist Realities*, as well as three books and numerous articles and essays in Chinese. While at ARI, he will conduct research on the relations between the discourse of race and Chinese nationalism since the 1980s.


DR ACHMAD NURMANDI

has commenced a 3-month appointment as a Visiting Research Fellow in the Asian Urbanisms Cluster with effect from 6 June 2011. He is currently Dean of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas

Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia. He received his PhD in Administrative Science/Public Administration from the University of Indonesia in 2008 and his areas of interests are urban politics and urban planning, urban services management, and strategic and knowledge management in the local government. His geographical areas of research are Java Island, Sumatera Island and Maluku. At ARI, he will research on managing urban planning implementation in multi-party system of Indonesian cities.


DR LEVI MCLAUGHLIN

has commenced a 3-month appointment as a Visiting Research Fellow in the Religion and Globalisation Cluster with effect from 6 June 2011. He is currently Assistant Professor in the Department of Religion,

Wofford College. He received his PhD in Religion from Princeton University in 2009 and his research focuses on the rise of new religious movements in the modern era. To date, he has primarily researched Soka Gakkai, Japan's largest active religion. His study has blended archival investigations with ethnography, including interviews with hundreds of members in Japan and participant-observation as a non-member researcher. While at ARI, he will work on transforming his 2009 dissertation, "Soka Gakkai in Japan," into a book manuscript.


MS LI HONGYAN

has commenced a 1-year appointment as a Research Assistant with effect from 9 June 2011. Ms Li graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in European Studies from the National University of Singapore in 2007

and a Master of Science in International Relations from the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University. Prior to joining ARI, she was an Associate Research Fellow at the Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies at RSIS, where she was part of the Global Health and Human Security, and the Food Security Programmes.


DR STEVEN MCKAY

has commenced a 3-month appointment as a Visiting Senior Research Fellow in the Asian Migration Cluster with effect from 17 June 2011. Dr McKay is an Associate Professor of Sociology and Director of the Center for

Labor Studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz, USA. He received both his PhD in Sociology and MA in Southeast Asian Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His teaching and research interests include work and labour markets, transnationalism and migration, masculinity, race, the Philippines and the Filipino labour diaspora. At ARI, Dr McKay will be working on a book manuscript, tentatively titled, *Born to Sail? Racial Formation, Masculinity and the Making of Filipino Migrant Seafarers* which focuses on the emergence and reproduction of the Filipino niche in contemporary merchant shipping.


DR TRIPTA CHANDOLA

has commenced a 1-year appointment as a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Asian Urbanisms Cluster with effect from 25 April 2011. Dr Chandola completed her PhD in media and cultural studies at Queensland University of

Technology. Her doctoral thesis is an ethnographic exploration of everyday life in a prominent slum settlement in Delhi. It sensually examines the social, cultural and political materiality of slums, and the relationship of slums with the middle class. Her research interests include processes and politics of marginalisation and othering in an urban context. While at ARI, Dr Chandola will work on journal articles and a book manuscript based on her doctoral research. She also intends to extend her research on sensorial politics in the city to highlight the processes and practices of marginalisation, construction of otherness, and extension citizenship in the city.

Professor Prasenjit Duara gave a keynote address titled "Liberalizing Reforms and Rural Society: Comparing China and India" at the conference on *Rural China and its Global Connections ECARDC X*, at Aarhus, Denmark, 7 April 2011.

Professor Gavin Jones presented the findings of a study he coordinated for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) to an audience including Thailand's then Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva, in Bangkok on 27 April 2011. The report was entitled "Impact of Demographic Change in Thailand" and can be downloaded from the UNFPA website at <http://thailand.unfpa.org/documents/symposium/Impact%20Full%20Report%20Eng%20UNFPA%20Web.pdf>

Dr Maznah Mohamad gave a plenary address titled "The Masculinist Protection Logic and Disjunctures of Contemporary Syariah" at the conference on *Spirited Voices from the Muslim World: Islam, Democracy and Gender Rights*, University of Sydney, Australia, 28-30 April 2011.

Professor Jean Yeung's paper, co-authored with John F. Sandberg, Pamela E. Davis-Kean and Sandra L. Hofferth, *Children's Time with Fathers in Intact Families*, has been listed as the fifth most highly cited article of the decade (2001-2010) in the most prominent journal in the field of family studies, *Journal of Marriage and Family*. This journal also belongs to Tier 1 of NUS's Journal Tierings. Her Research Accolade interview may be read at <http://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/research/jeanyeunginterview.html>

ARI Staff Receive NUS Long Service Awards



Verene Koh Hwee Kiang,
Institute Manager, 10 years of service

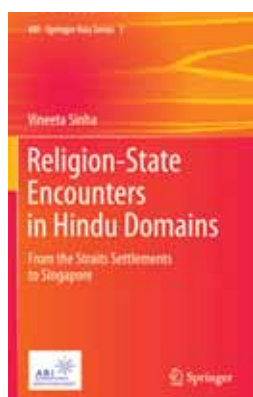


Tan Sor Hoon,
Deputy Director, 10 years of service



Kalaichelvi Sitharthan,
Management Assistant Officer, 20 years of service

New Books



The First Book in the ARI-Springer Asia Series

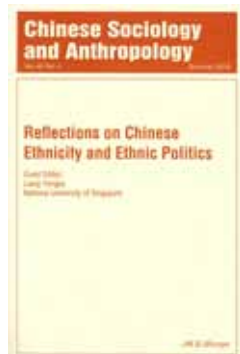
*Religion-State Encounters in Hindu Domains:
From the Straits Settlements to Singapore*

Vineeta Sinha
2011



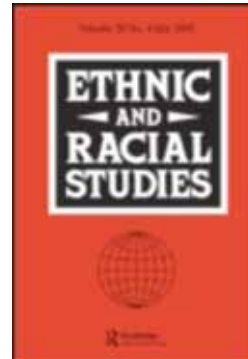
*Conserving the Past,
Creating the Future:
Urban Heritage in
Singapore*

Lily Kong
Urban Redevelopment
Authority, Singapore,
2011



*Reflections on
Chinese Ethnicity
and Ethnic Politics,
Chinese Sociology and
Anthropology 42 (4), 2010*

Liang Yongjia
(guest ed)



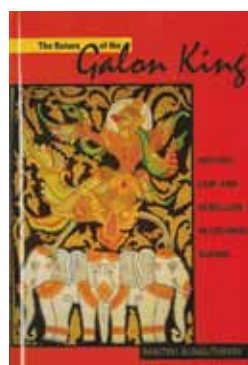
*Ethnic and Racial
Minorities in Asia:
Inclusion or Exclusion?
Special Issue of Ethnic
and Racial Studies 34 (5),
2011*

Michelle Ann Miller
(guest ed)



*In and Out of Asia:
The Cultural Politics of
Talent Migration,
Special Issue of Journal
of Ethnic and Migration
Studies 37 (5), 2011*

**Brenda S.A. Yeoh
and Shirlena Huang**
(guest eds)



*The Return of the Galon
King: History, Law and
Rebellion in Colonial
Burma*

Maitrii Aung-Thwin
NUS Press, Singapore,
2011

ASIA TRENDS 2011

April - May 2011

As part of the continuing effort to open the scholarly resources of ARI to the general public, the Asia Trends 2011, the 9th lecture series, was held in April and May 2011 in collaboration with the National Museum of Singapore. Each evening lecture is sponsored by a research cluster from within ARI. A distinguished speaker from overseas is invited to present on an ongoing research work while a discussant, usually from the NUS community, offers a response relevant to research developments in Singapore.

This year's series was inaugurated by a lecture organized by the Science, Technology, and Society Research Cluster on one of the most colourful controversies in the history of science. Dr John van Wyhe revisited the controversy of Darwin's receipt of an essay by Alfred Russel Wallace in 1858. The incident led to Darwin being suspected of stealing the ideas of Wallace's essay – that of the origin of the species. By utilising multi-archival sources and charting the dates, sea and land routes through which Wallace's letters could have reached Darwin, Dr Wyhe offered a new reading of the controversy to contradict many of the conspiracy theories that have emerged from it.

The subsequent lecture featured the noted Chinese anthropologist, Wang Mingming, who inquired into the contemporary situation of religion in China. At the outset, he narrowed his exploration of the topic by framing his talk as an ethnographic account of his observations of a conference on "folk beliefs" to which he was invited as a speaker. The strategy effectively led to an interesting foregrounding between the "sacred and the secular," the governmental policies to regulate religion and the resistance that they have elicited.

Dr Chin-Chun Yi of Taiwan presented the findings of her 10-year old longitudinal "Taiwan Youth Project" that charts the changes among the Taiwanese youth as they go through the pressures, challenges and changes from adolescence to young adulthood. Dr Ravinder Sidhu of Australia, on the one hand, discussed the current developments in the phenomenon of student migration in Asia, both as source and destination. Particularly, the talk looked at the "inclusions and exclusions" experience by student migrations in local communities of their host countries. Relevant to the study are the governmental policies that could be more responsive to the plight of student migrants.

The series was concluded by a lecture of Prof Doobo Shim on the presence of Korean Wave in East Asia. It examined the various factors that paved the way for Korea to become the veritable powerhouse of pop culture in Asia.

Decentralisation and Urban Transformation in Asia

10-11 March 2011

This multidisciplinary conference explored the relationship between different forms and degrees of decentralisation and urban change in Asia. Recent regional trends toward the devolution of state power and resources have implications for the emergence

of city-regions as important actors within and beyond nation-states, and as sites of innovation in addressing challenges related to urban growth, public service delivery, community building, and the management of resources for livable and sustainable cities. The shift in responsibility from central governments to the local level also has import for internal migration flows from rural-to-urban areas (and vice versa) and for the changing material fabric of urban centres, both in their built environment and in the lived spaces of city residents.

Shifting Boundaries of Care Provision in Asia: Policy and Practice Changes

14-15 March 2011

Convened by Dr Zhang Yanxia and Prof Jean Yeung, and jointly organised by the Asia Research Institute, the Family, Children, and Youth Cluster, and the Health Cluster of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, this international conference featured two keynote speeches by Professors Mary Daly and Ito Peng and 14 presentations that examined the

conceptualisation of care, social norms for care, and the extent to which boundaries of care provision between the family, state, market, and voluntary sector have shifted over time and across different regions in Southeast and East Asia. The researchers considered both elderly care and childcare and explored the implications of these changes in policies and practices for the family institution, intergenerational dynamics, and social stratification by class and gender in Asia. A roundtable forum comparing care policies and practices in Europe, Japan, Korea, and Singapore was held on 16 March, after the conference.

CLUSTER NEWS

Asian Migration Cluster



The Asian Migration cluster is pleased to announce its involvement as a core partner of the newly established Migrating Out of Poverty Research Programme Consortium (RPC) headed by the University of Sussex in the UK, and funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID). With its focus on the relationship between migration and development, the Consortium aims to provide high-quality research evidence that will contribute to improving policies that impact the lives and well-being of migrants, their communities and countries through a programme of innovative research, capacity building, and policy engagement.

The cluster's RPC team (PI Prof Brenda Yeoh) will be responsible for coordinating and promoting the Consortium's agenda within the Southeast Asian region through a range of research, communications, and capacity-building strategies focused around four major themes: i) migration drivers in and from poor countries; ii) migration impacts on poverty reduction; iii) migration policies; and iv) migration data including poverty. The cluster will also host a regional workshop in February 2011 to introduce the RPC's work and explore partnerships with the region's network of migration scholars, international organisations, and NGOs.

The Consortium has four other core partners in Bangladesh, Ghana, Kenya, and South Africa: the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) at Dhaka University; the Centre for Migration Studies (CMS) at the University of Ghana; the African Migration and Development Policy Centre (AMADPOC); and the African Centre for Migration and Society (ACMS) at the University of the Witwatersrand. Further details about the RPC are available at: <http://www.migratingoutofpoverty.org/>

NOTICE OF NEW APPOINTMENTS

(SENIOR) RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS, VISITING (SENIOR) RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS AND POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS

Applications are invited for (Senior) Research Fellowships, Visiting (Senior) Research Fellowships and Postdoctoral Fellowships at the Asia Research Institute (ARI).

The positions are intended for outstanding active researchers from around the world, to work on an important piece of research in the social sciences and humanities. Interdisciplinary interests are encouraged.

A majority of the positions will be allocated to the more specific areas listed below. However, some will be reserved for outstanding projects in any area outside of those listed. Applicants should mention which category they are applying to or if none, indicate "open category". Applications which link more than one field are also welcome.

(SENIOR) RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

1. The appointment will commence between April 2012 and September 2012 and be tenable for a period of two years at the first instance, with the possibility of extension for another term of two years (i.e. up to a total of a four-year term).
2. Interested applicants should have at least a PhD with a few years of postdoctoral research experience.
3. The fellowship comes with a competitive remuneration and benefits package, depending on seniority, and support for research and fieldwork, and conference attendance (on application and subject to approval).

ONE-YEAR VISITING (SENIOR) RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

1. The appointment will commence between April 2012 and September 2012 and have a normative tenure of one year, though shorter periods may be negotiated. Interested applicants should have at least a PhD with a few years of postdoctoral research experience.
2. The fellowship comes with a competitive remuneration and benefits package depending on seniority.

3-MONTH VISITING (SENIOR) RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

1. The appointment may commence in April, July or October 2012.
2. The positions are intended for outstanding researchers whose work focus on Asia, with a balance anticipated between senior and junior scholars.
3. Interested applicants should have at least a PhD with a few years of postdoctoral research experience. Applicants are invited to indicate which of the ARI clusters they would like to be affiliated with (see information about clusters below). Interdisciplinary and intra-Asian interests are encouraged.
4. The position is essentially a writing fellowship, and at least one published outcome is expected. Applicants who do not normally publish in English will be encouraged and assisted to do so.

VISITING (SENIOR) FELLOWSHIPS UNDER THE ARI SABBATICAL LEAVE SCHEME

1. The appointment may commence in April, July or October 2012.
2. The positions are intended for researchers whose work focus on Asia and would like to devote the sabbatical term from their home institutions to conducting work in ARI, NUS.
3. Interested applicants should have at least a PhD with a few years of postdoctoral research experience. Applicants are invited to indicate which of the ARI clusters they would like to be affiliated with. Interdisciplinary interests are encouraged.
4. The position is essentially a writing fellowship, and at least one published outcome is expected. Applicants who do not normally publish in English will be encouraged and assisted to do so.

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS

1. The contract will commence between April 2012 and September 2012 and is tenable for a period of one year in the first instance with a possibility of extension to two years.
2. An all-inclusive and a fixed monthly salary of S\$4,000 and a monthly housing allowance of S\$500 will be provided (applicable to non-Singaporeans only).
3. Support for research and fieldwork, and conference attendance (on application and subject to approval).
4. Candidates must have fulfilled all requirements of the PhD within the last 2 years. If you are a PhD candidate at the point of application, you may also apply provided that you are confirmed for graduation between April to September 2012. A letter from your university will be required to confirm that you have successfully completed all degree requirements for the conferment of a PhD degree before your proposed start date.

The benefits that the University provides and other information about working in NUS and living in Singapore are available at <http://www.nus.edu.sg/careers/potentialhires/index.html>. Terms and conditions, according to university guidelines, are subject to changes without prior notice.

For areas of research focus and application procedures, please refer to Appointments/Scholarships announcements at http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/article_view.asp?id=6

The closing date for applications is 1 September 2011.

Address for submission of applications, reference letters and/or queries:

1. Email: joinari@nus.edu.sg
OR
2. Human Resources
Asia Research Institute,
National University of Singapore
469A Tower Block, Bukit Timah Road #10-01,
Singapore 259770

ARI Asian Graduate Student Fellowship Goes From Strength to Strength

BY **KAY MOHLMAN**

From the influence of the Oprah talk show on everyday religion in contemporary Indonesia, to the travel narratives of British colonialists writing on women in colonial Burma, the array of research topics represented by the 2011 Asian Graduate Fellows is as broad as one might expect from a group so culturally and academically diverse.

This year's contingent is the largest yet since the fellowship programme was first started. Although a full nine of the thirty-four participants come from universities in Thailand, these individuals are not all Thai; some originate from Cambodia, Vietnam and Bangladesh and are currently enrolled in degree programmes in Thailand. Indonesia likewise contributes a good share of participants, about half of whom are from academic institutions based in Yogyakarta. The remaining Southeast Asian core of the programme is made up of MA and PhD students from Malaysia, Vietnam and the Philippines, while two students from China and one from India are also working on various topics related to the Southeast Asian region.



Dr Kay Mohlman & the 2011 Asian graduate student fellows

Given the Asia Research Institute's own orientation towards the arts and social sciences, broadly defined, it's not surprising that a focus on culture is a prominent area of research for Graduate Fellows. Some of this year's cultural

investigations are on the material side: one project documents smoke-firing techniques in contemporary Thai ceramics, while two others look at the feasibility of green technology in Malaysian architecture and urban planning. Projects that address culture as symbol expression include those on language (code-switching and zero pronouns in the Black Tai language; how Indonesian students learning English use communication strategies), landscapes and travel routes (the use of public park space by Vietnamese migrants in Taiwan; a bodily experience of urban street protests in Manila; the living heritage of a local legend in the pilgrimage route from Phimai to Angkor), and religion (the response of an Islamic student organisation to natural disaster in East Java; a case study of a transvestite/transgender Islamic community in Yogyakarta).

Contemporary and historical research on social transformation is another common theme (local elites and identity dynamics in West Papua; how an indigenous Philippine tribe adapts to its island-resort home; the 1979-1991 Khmer Rouge propaganda offensive to rehabilitate its image).

While not a comprehensive list, the above sampling indicates the breadth and depth of student interests. In addition to the regular workshops on conference paper writing and presentations, this year's programme included some special sessions on literature review narratives and planning techniques for writing the thesis or dissertation. A highlight of 2011 was a presentation by Professor Dinah Sianturi, an Asian Graduate Fellow alumnus herself who is currently a visiting ARI researcher, on travel narratives and her own scholarly journeys. ARI research assistant Deborah Chua delivered an interactive session on abstract writing to the group and conducted individual editorial consultations. Overall, the opportunities provided for library research, skills training, and scholarly interaction at the Asia Research Institute through the Fellowship has once again added up to a very productive and inspirational three months.