



# ARI NEWS

A newsletter of the Asia Research Institute, NUS



## Naming in Asia: Local Identities and Global Change

The first international conference on naming practices in Asia was co-organized by Anthony Reid, Zheng Yangwen and Charles Macdonald, and held at the Asia Research Institute (ARI), National University of Singapore on 23 and 24 February 2006. Sixteen scholars from around the world – historians, anthropologists, sociologists, linguists and political scientists – presented papers on the naming practices of East, Southeast and South Asia. The conference was opened by Professor Reid, Director of ARI, and it was closed by James Scott, Sterling Professor of Political Science Anthropology and Director of Agrarian Studies at Yale University.

The cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary study of personal names is one of the most promising in the fields of history, anthropology, sociology, linguistics and political science. It holds the key to a number of important issues, including the definition of personal identity, the position of the individual in locality/society, religious and cosmological representations, socio-political change, gender and history. In Asia, a great variety of personal naming systems is present. Colonisation, state-making and globalization are all reflected in these various systems of naming, typically intended to combine some link with indigenous practice or traditional system, ethnic identification, legibility to government, upward social mobility, or utility in the society.

Chinese and Chinese-influenced naming systems include a sequence of two or three names; which can be called plurinominal. Whereas Austronesian local practices tend to prefer a system based on one name (uninominal), supplemented or replaced in a number of cases by a colonial-inspired binomial system whereby a person is known under a first or given name and a surname. The link between surnaming and modernisation in European history is beginning to be explored. In Asian and comparative terms the field remains largely unexplored with some recent publications just beginning the process of analysis. Much further ground has been covered during the conference towards establishing typologies and trends, and relating changes in naming to the larger socio-economic and political landscape in diverse and dynamic Asia.

Professor Charles Macdonald (CNRS, France) began the sessions by classifying naming systems in Asia. This was the first time any scholar had tried to systemize and theorise naming practices in Asia. His proposition was most original and it set the tone for the 2-day conference. The theme moved from “function and meaning” of names, to identity. Professor Joel Kuipers (George Washington

University) began with a dramatic account of the 1998 “bloody Thursday” in Sumba which was the result of a “naming” incident. His study placed the incident in its linguistic, cultural and historical context, and he argued that a central feature was competing ideologies about the meaning of linguistic representation of identity.

Surname practice in China, as Zheng Yangwen (ARI) reminded the audience, began more than 2,500 years ago whereas dynastic changes gave birth to new types of names. The Chinese diaspora and the spread of Islam produced fascinating Sinic adaptations and Muslim variations in Southeast Asia. Surnames were virtually unknown in Southeast Asia 200 years ago with the exception of the Chinese, Vietnamese and Europeans. Professor Reid gave a comprehensive account on the emergence of surnames in this region. The imposition of surnames had much to do with capitalism and state making. In South Asia, on the other hand, the association of family or clan names with caste lies behind much contemporary ambivalence about their use. Professor M. W. Amarasiri de Silva (University of Peradeniya) provided a Sri Lankan case of upward social mobility-modernity motivated name change in the island country.

Thirteen conference papers will appear in a book tentatively titled **“Name and Fame: East, Southeast and South Asian Naming Practices”**, edited by the three conveners. This path-breaking volume on Asian naming practices fills a blank page in the study of Asia. It examines the intimate relationship between naming practices and colonization-state formation-globalization in Asia. It is the first attempt at classifying and theorizing the systems and types of Asian names. It shows how intricately interwoven naming systems and practices are with the notion of personhood and the prevailing ethos of interpersonal relations. The historical and the socio-anthropological perspectives unveil the pageantry of names from small traditional societies to the modern and open cosmopolitan polities. This volume will demonstrate how peoples of Asia have invented some of the most sophisticated naming devices and fashioned new types of names and different ways of identifying themselves to suit the demands of a changing world.

Dr. Zheng Yangwen (Research Fellow), Asia Research Institute, NUS

## WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

### ARI'S REGIONAL BALANCE



The emphasis on revisiting Singapore's history in this issue of the ARI Newsletter (see following story and The ARI Interview) is timely, especially when taken together with last year's ARI-sponsored workshop, 'Paths Not Taken', on Singapore's 1950s. With much media interest in the passing of the first generation of leaders, and the History Museum's new and exciting display in the making, Singapore history is back to centre stage. For ARI, which may have shown an initial tendency to focus on the region rather than Singapore itself, this is also a sign of the times.

Although the balance suggested for ARI appointments at the outset was 25% Singapore and 25% region, the Singapore quotient was initially made up with existing NUS staff on secondment or shared appointments with ARI. Few Singaporeans applied to do their post-docs with ARI in its first two years. Cherian George (from Stanford) was our first, in 2003-4, followed by Francis Lim (from SOAS, and editor of this Newsletter) from January 2005, and Teo You Yenn (Berkeley) and Leong Chan Hoong (Wellington) from early this year. The last two also work primarily on Singapore, as do Professors Brenda Yeoh and Chua Beng Huat. Others who specialise elsewhere have taken a research interest in Singapore since arriving. Mizanur Rahman and Pattana Kitiarsa, for example, have in short order established themselves as authorities on Bangladeshi and Thai workers in Singapore, respectively.

Overall, ARI has 'normalised' to be rather more like NUS as a whole, with as much work being done on this country as on any other. The number of new appointments we can make is dropping, constrained by a flat budget and a now stable group of researchers. The composition has also changed to become more like NUS as a whole, with a slight Asian predominance and Singaporeans as the largest single element of a very cosmopolitan population.

ARI should continue to diverge from that NUS norm, however, in ensuring a good representation of Southeast Asians. With the exception of Singapore and Malaysia, and the "1.5 generation"

of Indochinese refugees who grew up in the West, Southeast Asian academics are very poorly represented outside their own countries, and few of their voices have joined the global discourse. As the ARI vision statement declares, "the Southeast Asian region needs centres of research and graduate training worthy of its place in the world and the diversity of its cultures." And the world needs "stronger voices and subtler demarcations" from this region. Last year's External Review endorsed this theme strongly, pointing to the ASEAN Research Fellows program's "important role in establishing NUS' centrality to the academic future of the region." That review also urged ARI to identify and recruit "rising stars" from Southeast Asia to a greater extent than we have.

Like the Southeast Asian Studies Program in FASS, we should be distinguished by our openness to such talent. Thus far, apart from the usual wealth of Malaysians (6, including 2 Research Fellows), the proportion has not been high. Only two Thais, two Indonesians and one each from Vietnam, Myanmar and the Philippines made it through the very competitive selection process for Post Doctoral Fellows and Visiting Fellows, and a further 3 Indonesians and one Vietnamese were invited for shorter terms of a few months. Last year ARI changed its procedure for Visiting Fellows, so that half of the eight FTEs devoted to this category are now divided into 3-month short Visiting Fellows. The hope is that this will attract outstanding researchers from the region, and enable them to produce one published article in English to enter the global discourse. We urge all to consider that option.

**Professor Anthony Reid**  
**April 2006**

## RECENT ARI EVENTS

### Roundtable Rethinking Singapore History

7 February 2006

To coincide with the recent public interest in the history and historiography of Singapore, the roundtable brought together three notable scholars to discuss the ways in which the country's history has been written and presented, and to reflect upon the complex relationship between historiography and nation building. Prof. Constance Mary Turnbull, who wrote the hugely influential study, *A History of Singapore*, kicked-start the event by discussing trends in the historiography of Singapore in order to understand the changing attitudes towards the country's history by academics, politicians and the wider public. This was followed by Assoc. Prof. Kwa Chong Guan's presentation on why, until fairly recently, the pre-1819 past had been largely

ignored in the writing of Singapore's history, and on the prospects of more awareness of the country's pre-Raffles days. The huge turnout at the event—with many school teachers and secondary school students in the audience—reflected the keen public interest on the topic under discussion. The final speaker, the historian Dr. Hong Lysa, shared her experience in the teaching of Singapore history at NUS, and highlighted the complicated intertwining of historiography and politics in the researching, writing and teaching of Singapore's history.



### Official Launch NUS Religious Studies Program and Religion and Globalisation Cluster of the Asia Research Institute

18 February 2006

On 18 February 2006, the Religion and Globalisation Cluster of ARI and Religious Studies Programme of the National University of Singapore were officially launched at the Asian Civilizations Museum. The event, which was co-sponsored by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) and the Asia Research Institute, drew crowds from the general public as well as from the media, government and religious organizations.

The theme of the launch was "The Critical Spirit: Religious Studies at the National University of Singapore." It featured a keynote address from the Vice Provost for Education, Professor Lily Kong, who herself has a research interest in religion. She spoke about the institutional responsibilities of teaching religion in the tertiary education sector. The launch also featured Dr. Lai Ah Eng from the Institute for Policy Studies, and Associate Professor John Whalen-Bridge, from the Department of English Language and Literature.

ARI's Religion and Globalisation in Asian Contexts Cluster was well represented at the launch by its Research Leader, Professor Bryan Turner, and by Dr. Julius Bautista, who is co-appointed as a Visiting Research Fellow at the cluster and as Lecturer of Religious Studies at FASS. Professor Turner delivered a talk entitled "Buddhism and the Comparative Study of Religion: The contribution of Professor Trevor Ling". Dr. Bautista delivered a paper entitled "Religion in the Lecture Theatre at the NUS", in which he described how religion is taught, discussed and researched at the university.

The launch also featured a short video clip which included interviews with ARI's Founding Director, Professor Anthony Reid, as well as postdoctoral fellows Dr. Pattana Kitiarsa and Dr. Francis Lim. The organizing committee for the event was composed of both FASS and ARI staff, notably ARI's Ms. Manjit Kaur, who was also MC for the event, and Dr. Julius Bautista.



## RECENT ARI EVENTS

### Workshop

#### Cinematic Representations of the Tropical Urban/City

17 – 18 March 2006

The workshop was held to examine the conceptual and substantive connections between two disparate fields of research, namely, film studies and urban geography. The cities examined in the workshop included both the major centres and peripheral sites of movie productions in the Asian tropical belt: from East Asia, the subtropical cities of Taipei and Hong Kong; from Southeast Asia, the cities of Singapore, Manila, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur and Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City), from southern India, the cities of Kolkata, Hyderabad and Madras/Chennai. The papers dealt with a number of diverse subjects, from sex workers in Manila to the world of Suzy Wong in Hong Kong, from the concept of cosmopolitanism in Taipei to the creation of Indian cities as “cardboard monuments” in contemporary Telugu cinema, from the diasporic remembrances of Saigon to the social topographies of Kuala Lumpur as seen in the works of independent filmmakers in the new Malaysian cinema, from the depiction of rain in Kolkata to the plight of street children in Jakarta.



The workshop was an occasion for scholars from East Asia and Australia to deliberate upon filmic representations of tropical cities as real and imaginary geographies. The movies of a particular city unavoidably make reference to it through

distilled, specific images that ‘represent’ it. The city is thus simultaneously recognizable as a real city and yet ideologically ‘misrepresented’ on film. Thus, the ultimate aim of the workshop was an exploration of the actual geographies of different cities and their filmic representations as imaginary geographies and cartographies.

## ASIA TRENDS SEMINAR SERIES

APRIL–NOVEMBER  
2006

The Asia Research Institute (ARI) Asia Trend Seminar Series is an annual series of monthly public lectures that focus on one emerging trend of development in Asia. The monthly lectures will be delivered by researchers in the field drawn from different major sites in Asia that are relevant to the trend in focus. The series of seminars will provide a platform for sustained participation and in-depth analysis and understanding for Singaporeans interested in the annually selected trend in development. The chosen focus of 2006 is the rapidly globalizing Asian Cinemas.

### Violence in Contemporary Asian Films

In the past decade, Asian films have broken out of their respective national confines and penetrated not only regional but also global markets, receiving critical acclaim and expanding audience and fan bases. A theme that is very often found in Asian films is real and imagined violence by which we live in the contemporary world: violence in colonial histories and legacies, violence in the family, violence across class, gender and sexuality, everyday violence of modern, urban life, violence in organized crime between factions and gangs or triads; comic-book violence of anime as well as live-action digitalized special effects blockbusters and violence posed by global capitalism itself. These different modes of violence are framed in the styles and concerns of distinctive genres, which are often crossed with each other: horror, gangster, thriller, epic and melodrama. Furthermore, these genres are handled differently within the different ‘Asian’ film traditions. Each, mobilizing specific local, historical materials and content to depict issues of violence. This series of seminars, with papers by leading researchers and film scholars in Asia, will examine the diverse traditions in the cinematic-aesthetic (re)presentations of the different modes of violence that are endemic in modern living.

The seminar series will be organized in collaboration with the National Museum of Singapore. The seminars will be held on the last Thursday, 7-9 pm, of every month from April till November 2006 at the auditorium of the new National Museum of Singapore.

Please visit this site for further details and the Seminar Schedule  
<http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/asiatrends2006.htm>

## NEW ARI MEMBERS

**Dr. George Bryan Souza** commences a one year appointment as Visiting Senior Research Fellow (Southeast Asia China Interactions Cluster) on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2006. Dr. Souza is a historian of Asia and European expansion. Born in California, he was educated at Stanford (B.A.), SOAS, London (M.A.), and Trinity College, Cambridge (Ph.D.). He is the author of *The Survival of Empire*, CUP, 1986 and numerous articles. During his stay at ARI, he will be engaged in completing the research and writing of, "On Sea, on Land: the Political Economy and Material Culture of Asia and the Early Modern World, c.1500-1800". This work highlights the importance of the colonial port city of Batavia and Java and Asian commodities in local, regional and inter-regional markets, the economies of Southeast, China, and South Asia and in the global economy.



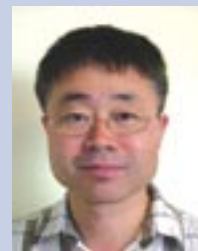
**Professor David T. Hill** joins ARI for a one year appointment as Visiting Senior Research Fellow (Cultural Studies Cluster) on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2006. He is Professor of Southeast Asian Studies at Murdoch University, Western Australia, where he is also a Fellow of the Asia Research Centre. His research interests include Indonesian media, literature, politics and culture. Professor Hill obtained his PhD in Southeast Asian Studies from the Australian National University, Canberra, in 1988. He taught in the Department of Indonesian and Malay at Monash University in the 1980s, joining Murdoch University in 1989. His recent books, co-authored with Professor Krishna Sen, include *The Internet in Indonesia's New Democracy* (2005) and *Media, Culture and Politics in Indonesia* (2000). While at ARI he will be working on a critical biography of Indonesian author and journalist Mochtar Lubis (1922-2004).



**Dr. Teo You Yenn** joins ARI as a Postdoctoral Fellow on 6<sup>th</sup> Feb 2006 (Changing Family Cluster). Dr. Teo is a sociologist who studies state-society relations and the cultural dimensions of state rule in the context of development. She recently completed her PhD at the University of California at Berkeley. Her dissertation demonstrates how family policies in Singapore generate relationships and expectations between state and society, producing particular citizen subjects with specific orientations toward the developmentalist state. It is titled "No Economy, No Singapore: Weddings, Babies and the Development Project." At ARI, she plans to draw on the dissertation to prepare journal articles and a book manuscript.



**Dr. Shin Yoon Hwan** joins ARI as a Visiting Affiliate for one year, from February 2006. He has taught comparative politics, Southeast Asian politics, and political anthropology at Sogang University, Seoul, for seventeen years. Dr Shin obtained his Ph.D. from Yale in 1989 with a study on the origin and formation of big business in Indonesia. He previously served as Chairperson of the Department of Political Science (1995-96, 2000-01) and Director of the Institute for East Asian Studies (2001-2005) at the university. He is also a founding member of the Korean Association of Southeast Asian Studies as well as the Korean Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. His area of specialization is Indonesian studies with a special focus on its political economy and political change. Lately, he has expanded his research interests into regional community building in East Asia and comparative election studies in Asia. He is the author of the book *Political Economy of Indonesia: State, Capital, and Labor under Soeharto* (2002, in Korean), and has edited many books and written about forty articles on Indonesia and Southeast Asia.



**Dr. Maria Josephine Barrios** commences a three month appointment as Visiting Research Fellow (Cultural Studies Cluster) on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April 2006. Dr. Barrios is an Associate Professor at the University of the Philippines (UP) and until recently, was Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Letters. She has published articles in *MELUS*, the *Asia Pacific Migration Journal*, and the *Journal of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies*. She has also published five books, among them, a study on women playwrights, and the poetry collection *To Be a Woman is to Live at a Time of War*, 1990. She has a Ph.D. in Philippine Literature from U.P. and has taught at UCLA, UC Irvine, and Osaka University of Foreign Studies. In 2004, she received the TOWN'S (Ten Outstanding Women in the Nation's Service) Award.



**Dr. Sabina Faiz Rashid** commences a three month appointment as Visiting Research Fellow (Changing Family Cluster) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 2006. Dr. Rashid is an Assistant Professor at the James P Grant School of Public Health, BRAC University, Bangladesh. She has a PhD in Medical Anthropology/Public Health from The Australian National University (2005). Her thesis is titled: *Worried Lives: Poverty, Gender and Reproductive Health of Married Adolescent Women Living in an Urban Slum in Bangladesh*. She was awarded a Research Grant from the World Health Organization, Geneva in 2001. She also holds a Masters (1998) and Bachelors in Anthropology (1992) from the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, at the ANU. Since 1994, she has been working in Bangladesh, mainly carrying out research on gender and reproductive health issues. She has published articles on women and sexuality, gender and health issues. During the fellowship period at ARI, she will be writing on marriage structures and gender relationships in urban slums in Dhaka city, Bangladesh.



## ASEAN SCHOLARS

### ASEAN Research Scholars Programme

From 1st May to 31st July, 2006, nineteen graduate students from the region will arrive in Singapore for ARI's fourth annual ASEAN Research Scholars Programme. Hailing from Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar, Vietnam and the Philippines, their research interests traverse a wide range of disciplines and topics; from cultural practices to religious politics, linguistics to archaeology.

ARI warmly welcomes: Abdul Syukur, Anastasia Melati Listyorini, Jose Eleazar Bersales, Bibi Aminah Abdul Ghani, Burhan Ali, Resto Cruz, Ery Damayanti, Iim Halimatusa'diyah, Numan Hayimasae, Maria Khristina S Manuelli, Nona May Donquilla Pepito, Thamrongsak Petchlert-Anan, Thanattiya Potimu, Rudolf Methusala, Saifuddin Zuhri, Pornapa Sangdee, Teuka Cut Mahmud Aziz, Tran Kim Loan, and Thet Yu.

This year, with the introduction of the ASEAN Graduate Scholars Workshop from July 28-29, we hope to continue the process of expanding this programme, and making ARI an important centre for communication among future scholars from all over the region. We hope that the links forged here will facilitate Southeast Asian scholars' communication and cooperation as they mature into the next generation of academic leaders.

### Singapore Graduate Forum on Southeast Asia Studies ASEAN Graduate Workshop

**28–29 July 2006**

The Institute invites applications from advanced postgraduate students who are engaged in research on Southeast Asia to attend this inaugural Singapore Graduate Forum on Southeast Asian Studies. The two-day workshop will be thematically organized around issues that include religion, international relations, politics, gender, and language. In addition to student attendance, experts of the region have been invited to give keynote speeches. Among these will be Professor Wang Gungwu, Director of the East Asian Institute, NUS, and Professor Dato' Shamsul Amri Baharuddin, Director of the Institute of the Malay World and Civilization (ATMA), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

Interested and eligible students are invited to submit abstracts based on work in progress as well as polished final drafts. NUS students are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to interact and exchange ideas with students from ASEAN countries as well as those from other regions whose interests focus on Southeast Asia.

Secretariat: Ms Alyson Rozells (ariaar@nus.edu.sg)

## NEW BOOKS



**Anthony Reid**  
 editor 2006  
*Verandah of Violence: The Background to the Aceh Problem.*  
 Singapore; Seattle: Singapore University Press; Washington University Press.



Sun Ge, Baik Youngseo and **Chen Kuan-Hsing**  
 editors 2006  
 (in Japanese)  
*Discourse on Post-East Asia.*  
 Tokyo: Sakuhinsha



**Chen Kuan-Hsing**  
 editor 2006  
 (in Chinese)  
*Critical Nexus: 2005 Cultural Forum on Chinese in Asia.* Taiwan Radical Social Study's Forum Series. Taipei: Tangsan.

**Chen Kuan-Hsing** and Li Chao-jin  
 editors 2005  
 (in Chinese)  
*Critical reflections on 'Thesis on Taiwan'—Dialogues between critical circles in Taiwan and Japan.* Taiwan Radical Social Study's Forum Series. Taipei: Tangsan.



**Jennifer Lindsay**  
 contributing editor 2006  
*Between Tongues. Translation and/off/in Performance in Asia.*  
 Singapore: Singapore University Press

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 contributing editor 2006  
*Between Tongues. Translation and/off/in Performance in Asia.*  
 Singapore: Singapore University Press



**Vatthana Pholsena**  
 2006  
*Post-War Laos. The Politics of Culture, History and Identity.*  
 Singapore, Ithaca: ISEAS, Cornell University Press.

Vatthana Pholsena was a postdoctoral fellow at ARI from 2002-2004 where she worked on the completion of this book.

## ARI RECOGNITION

**Professor Bryan Turner** was recently made an adjunct professor of Murdoch University, Western Australia, for the period 2006-2009.

He also gave a key note lecture to the 37<sup>th</sup> Israeli Sociological Association Conference in Tel Aviv on "Forgiveness and Vengeance as Modes of Social Action" on February 23 2006.

**Professor Chua Beng Huat** was member of the Commissioning Panel, Singapore Pavilion, 10<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale International Architecture Exhibition 2006, DesignSingapore Council, Ministry of Information, Communication and the Arts.

**Professor Chen Kuan-Hsing** is organizing committee member of the International Association for Cultural Studies Crossroad Conference in Istanbul, Turkey, July 2006.

He was also co-organizer, International Workshop on "Teaching Cultural Studies", National Central University and Ministry of Education, Taiwan in January 2006.

**Dr. Nicola Piper** gave a guest lecture on "Gendering the Politics of Migration" on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2006 at the Department of Political Science, University of Lund, Sweden.



Best wishes to **Ms Rina Yap** on the birth of her daughter.



Congratulations to **Ms Kalaihelvi Sitharthan** for receiving a 15-year Long Service Award.

## THE ASIAN METACENTRE FOR POPULATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS

The Asian region has experienced remarkable demographic, social, economic, political, and environmental changes in the last decade. Progress has been made in lowering birth and death rates, raising education and income levels, and improving reproductive health care. However, continual efforts are required to sustain developmental advances in the region in order to alleviate poverty, increase gender equity, improve health, develop more efficient and equitable strategies of resource allocation, and give priority to stewardship of the environment.

This international conference was aimed at highlighting, understanding and assessing critical population issues for sustainable development in the new millennium. It was organized by the Asian MetaCentre for Population and Sustainable Development Analysis between 20 and 22 March 2006 in Phuket, Thailand. The conference venue itself, Bantjai Beach Resort & Spa, was affected by the tsunami. It has now been over a year since the tsunami struck the area and the reconstruction of the Patong beach area appears to be nearly completed. At least the businesses along the coastline of Patong beach looked normal. The damages were observed to be less severe as compared to Aceh. Nonetheless, participants of the Conference were still able to derive a picture of how the tsunami affected the area. The conference, stretching over three days, brought together more than 70 participants. This included some 64 experts on Population and Development Issues in Asia from over 18 countries such as China (including Taiwan), India,

### Recent Conference

#### International Conference on "Population and Development in Asia: Critical Issues for a Sustainable Future"

20 – 22 March 2006, Phuket, Thailand



Indonesia, Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, Philippines, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Japan, South Korea, Austria, USA, Australia, Germany, United Kingdom, and Argentina. The papers were organised into 10 panels, with two parallel sessions running simultaneously. The panels were as follows:

- Marriage and Development;
- Ageing and Development;
- Migration and Development: Impacts at Origin;
- Migration, Development and Difference;
- Population and Development;
- Population and Sustainable Development Research Challenges After the Tsunami;
- Population, Ethnicity and Violent Conflicts in Asia;
- Reproductive Health for Sustainable Development;
- Skilled Diasporas and Development, and
- The Globalisation of Households in Pacific Asia - Trends, Consequences and Responses.

### Recent Workshop

#### International Workshop on "Sexuality and Migration in Asia" Co-organised with the Royal Holloway College, University of London

10 – 11 April 2006, Singapore



This workshop on the linkages of sexuality and migration was a continuation of a series of various migration-oriented research activities that the Asian MetaCentre had organized. The aim of this workshop was to address the gap in the current literature on various forms of sexual intimacy that occur as a result of migration, and that also shape and reshape migration processes. The 18 papers presented were directed towards the understanding of the entanglement of sexuality with gender, class, ethnic and national identities, from a comparative perspective. The workshop brought together about 50 participants from academia, NGOs and governmental agencies in 15 countries.



## ASIAN METACENTRE FOR POPULATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS

### New Staff: Visiting Senior Research Fellows

**Dr Tracey L. Skelton** will be at the Asian MetaCentre at ARI from 3-22 April 2006. She is working on a journal article which examines the ways in which the Guardian newspaper, as part of the British print media, represented the 'Asian tsunami disaster'. Through textual and discourse analysis Tracey is particularly interested in whether a representation of 'vulnerability' is evident. She is currently investigating the possibilities of work which links her Caribbean scholarship with future research in Southeast Asia. Tracey Skelton got her Ph.D. in the Department of Geography at the University of Newcastle, UK and is now a Senior Lecturer in Social and Cultural Geography at Loughborough University, UK. Tracey is the editor of *An Introduction to the Pan-Caribbean* (2004, Arnold Press) and the author of several articles and chapters relating to her work on the Caribbean region. Her specific area of expertise in the region is on the British Overseas Territory of Montserrat with her most recent work focusing on the volcanic crisis and the re-development of the island. Her other areas of expertise include children's and young people's geographies, and the social and political identities of vulnerable young people, in particular D/deaf people, lesbians and gay men. She currently co-holds an Arts and Humanities Research Council grant which is examining the ways in which D/deaf people engage (or not) with the Internet.



**Dr Philip F. Kelly** will be at the Asian MetaCentre at ARI from 5-30 April 2006. He is Associate Professor of Geography at York University, Toronto, Canada. He was educated at Oxford, McGill and the University of British Columbia, and formerly taught in the Southeast Asian Studies Programme at NUS. His current research examines the labour market integration of Filipino immigrants in Toronto, the transnational linkages created with communities and families in the Philippines, and the process of socio-economic change in sending areas. He is author of *Landscapes of Globalization: Human Geographies of Economic Change in the Philippines* (Routledge, 1999) and co-editor of *Globalization and the Asia-Pacific: Contested Territories* (Routledge, 2000). He is currently co-investigator and Migration domain leader in a major Canadian research initiative on agrarian transitions in Southeast Asia (ChATSEA). He is also the Economic domain leader for the Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement (CERIS) in Toronto.



## NEW APPOINTMENTS

### Visiting (Senior) Fellowships

Applications are invited for a 3 month Visiting (Senior) Fellowships at the Asia Research Institute (ARI), National University of Singapore to commence on 2 January 2007, 2 April 2007, 2 July 2007. The positions are intended for outstanding active researchers on Asian topics, with a balance anticipated between senior and junior, the Asian region and the world. At least one published outcome is expected, and applicants who do not normally publish in English will be encouraged and assisted to do so. Interdisciplinary interests are encouraged. The positions will be allocated to one of the ARI research clusters. Most of these represent the Institute's current areas of research focus, while the "open cluster" ensures openness to any innovative and promising project in the social sciences and humanities. Applicants should mention which category they are applying in, and which term.

Interested applicants are invited to email/mail their curriculum vitae (including details of referees and email), a synopsis of the research project, at least one sample of their published work, and ensure that 2 or 3 referees submit directly to us a report on their academic standing and comment on their research project by **31 May 2006**. It is anticipated that the following deadline will be in November 2006

Address for applications and references:

Human Resources

c/o: Ms Connie Teo

Asia Research Institute

National University of Singapore

AS7, Level 4, 5 Arts Link, Singapore 117570

Fax: (65) 6779 1428

Email: [joinari@nus.edu.sg](mailto:joinari@nus.edu.sg)

For further details please visit:

<http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/appoint/3mthSVFpost.htm>

### PhD Research Scholarships, NUS

The Asia Research Institute is pleased to offer Ph.D. research scholarships from January 2007 in the interdisciplinary areas corresponding to ARI's research clusters.

The PhD scholarship is to be taken up jointly with the appropriate discipline-based department. This would normally be with a department of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, but where appropriate could also be with the Faculty of Law, School of Business or School of Design & Environment at the National University of Singapore.

Interested applicants are required to submit their application to ARI at the address stated below by 31 MAY 2006, indicating clearly both which ARI interdisciplinary area they wish to join and which department they would be attached to. Application procedures and forms can be obtained from the NUS website via this URL: <http://www.nus.edu.sg/registrar/prospective/graduate/application.html>

### ARI collaborates with World Vision in Tsunami response study

ARI has entered into an innovative two year project that will apply high academic standards to the improvement of responses by aid organizations to meeting human need, particularly the needs of children, in disaster relief situations. In this project, ARI will work in partnership with World Vision to help it and other organizations learn from their experiences in disaster relief and develop more effective approaches.

World Vision, an independent private Christian organization, is one of the largest relief and development agencies conducting child-focused emergency relief, sustainable community development and advocacy in over 100 countries worldwide. Since the December 26, 2004, tsunamis hit Southeast Asia, World Vision has been working to meet the immediate and long-term needs of survivors in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, and Myanmar. World Vision's programs focus on children and other vulnerable groups. The aim is to help communities rebuild and to help individuals recover and secure their livelihoods.

ARI will appoint a (senior) research fellow to work with a World Vision counterpart to plan and oversee the writing and review of eight disaster response learning papers which will be available on both ARI and World Vision websites, and to produce briefer key issues papers based on these learning papers. Each of the learning papers will be reviewed by an editorial team, including practitioners and academics, drawing on expertise in NUS and beyond

The aim of the disaster response learning paper series is to facilitate learning in World Vision and other agencies through research on operational and sectoral issues that have been identified as significant in World Vision's tsunami response effort. The target readership of the learning paper series will be internal World Vision staff, peer organizations and academics with related interests.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### **Asian Expansions: The Historical Processes of Polity Expansion in Asia**

**12–13 May 2006**

While historical expansion by European states and empires has been a subject of intense research in recent decades, Asian expansions is a field which remains largely unresearched. The processes of decolonization and nation-building in Asia over the last half century have produced much nationalist history posited on a long-term “natural” historical genealogy of contemporary polities. It is crucial to an understanding of the modern world that the evolution of Asian polities be explored not only in terms of political systems but also in terms of expanding territories. In looking at the emergence of modern states, the autonomous Asian processes of bureaucratization and accretion need also to be compared to those of Europe.

This workshop is intended to open a space for comparative studies. By examining the aims, modes, mechanisms and processes of polity expansion in Asia, some generic conclusions about the nature of such expansion may well be forthcoming. The papers selected address both specific examples of polity expansion as well as possible patterns which might be shared with (or differ from) other examples of Asian expansions.

Secretariat: Ms Valerie Yeo (ariyeov@nus.edu.sg)

### **Chinese Nation, Chinese State, 1850-2000 Historical Society for Twentieth Century China Biannual Conference**

**26–28 June 2006**

**Co-organized with the East Asia  
Institute and Faculty of Arts and  
Social Sciences, NUS**

The historical emergence of China as a nation-state has built upon certain discourses of self and nation, while ignoring or even obscuring others. This conference will examine the many changing and competing perceptions of and aspirations for China and its place in the world, and how these have shaped political, social and economic developments of the past century and a half. This conference is the biennial meeting of the Historical Society for 20th Century China (HSTCC).

For further information please visit the conference website <http://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/histdd/notes/HSTCC.htm>

### **The Challenges of the Agrarian Transition in Southeast Asia**

**29–30 June 2006**

Agrarian transition represents perhaps the most profound process of social change of the last three centuries. In the wealthier countries of the north it is a transformation that is largely complete, but in the developing societies of the south it is still very much underway. This transition can be defined as the transformation of societies from primarily non-urban populations dependent upon agricultural production and organized through rural social structures, to predominantly urbanized, industrialized and market-based societies.

In collaboration with the Challenges of the Agrarian Transition in Southeast Asia (CHATSEA) project, the Asia Research Institute is hosting this workshop for graduate students at the National University of Singapore. The CHATSEA project is currently operational in five Southeast Asian countries, viz., Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines. It involves collaboration between several universities in these countries and also universities in Canada, Europe and Australia. The two-day workshop will provide Masters or PhD students with the opportunity to present and discuss their ongoing research and methodologies. Several of the senior CHATSEA project researchers will also attend the workshop to lead the sessions exploring these areas.

Please visit this website for further details.

<http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/conf2006/challenges.htm>

### **Burma Studies Conference 2006 “Communities of Interpretation”**

**13 –15 July 2006**

**Co-organized with the Faculty of Arts and Social  
Sciences, NUS and Institute of Southeast Asian  
Studies, Singapore**

“Communities of Interpretation” seeks to recognize and explore the various ways in which the idea of Myanmar/Burma has come to be epistemologically understood in contemporary times. The field of Burma Studies and the knowledge that supports it has been produced through a variety of historical, economic, cultural, and political contexts, each adding important and sometimes competing ways of thinking about what has and what has not come to define Myanmar/Burma. The conference hopes to investigate how Burma/Myanmar has come to be known through those who write about it and build, lead, criticize, sculpt, resist, perform in and travel to Burma. In doing so, it seeks to embrace intellectual and phenomenological diversity by exploring the Communities of Interpretation that have contributed to the conceptualizing of Myanmar/Burma.

For more details, please contact:

Email: [bsc2006@nus.edu.sg](mailto:bsc2006@nus.edu.sg)

### **Cultural Management in Southeast Asia**

**25–27 July 2006**

Southeast Asian cultures are under intense pressure on many fronts. Many cultural resources are at critical junctures; their future existence depends on rapid development and implementation of effective management strategies. Cultural Resource Management (CRM) represents a vital asset for tourism across Southeast Asia. Tourism, however, transforms while entraps, restores while erodes, cultivates while restricts. Rapid socio-economic development creates constant flux in the cultural landscape of the region. Culture remains a contested territory where projects of nation building and localized identity constructions intersect with trans-national neo-liberal economic policies and cultural paradigms driven by a global civil society.

Understanding CRM in Southeast Asia in such terms requires an interdisciplinary approach. This conference promises to create a dialogue between scholars from numerous disciplines, ranging from geography to economics. The conference is aimed at two audiences: academics, including scholars and students, and CRM professionals including Euro-Americans who are interested in theoretical innovations and new ways of dealing with practical CRM issues.

Secretariat: Ms Alyson Rozells ([ariaar@nus.edu.sg](mailto:ariaar@nus.edu.sg))

## THE ARI INTERVIEW DR HONG LYSA



**Dr. Hong Lysa**, Senior Visiting Fellow in the History Department at NUS, was one of the panellists at the Roundtable on Rethinking Singapore History. Here, she shares her insights on the politics of studying history and the issues of pedagogy.

### The politics of history in Singapore

The most salient issue in the study of history in Singapore is the dominance of official historiography, and the concomitant difficulties faced by those seeking to produce alternative historical discourses.

While in the early decades of Independence, the government had considered the study of 'Singapore history' in schools to be inimical to the interest of nation-building as there were largely only separate immigrant histories, by 1998 a 'national history' had been enunciated—one starting with the post-war decolonisation process and the rise to power of the ruling People's Action Party (PAP).

This narrative is centred on PAP's elimination of its own left-wing leadership, which had given it a mass electoral base among the majority of Chinese-language speakers. The detention without trial of the left-wing faction and trade union leaders has been discursively rendered as the fight against violent communist subversives.

Verifiable alternative historical discourses have emerged only with the expiry of the 30-year embargo on the archival records from the British Public Records Office. They reveal that there is inconclusive evidence, to say the least, that the Left posed a serious security threat to Singapore. These studies have opened to question the high moral position that the PAP government claims, but the basis of legitimacy derived from the country's economic progress remains intact.

The 23 months when Singapore was part of Malaysia before Separation in August 1965 form the other historical ground from which the government constructs its narrative of national salvation. The conflicts and contestation between the Federal government and the PAP leaders of the State of Singapore have become the story about Singapore's commitment to multi-racialism and meritocracy, and about its vigilance against communalists and chauvinists.

The labellings are derived from a particular rendition of Singapore history, one that essentialises 'race' as a universal primordial identity. As such, the 'Singapore Story' is postulated on vulnerabilities arising from inherent conflicts along racial lines as demonstrated by the riots in 1964 in which Malays and Chinese were killed. The riots, which broke out in the context of heightened racialisation of politics aroused by politicians on both sides of the Causeway—has provided the PAP government with grounds to manage the populace along racial lines, and to delineate what constitutes the harmless promotion of cultures, and what constitutes 'chauvinism.'

In sum, the study of history involves contestations over who has the authority to make truth claims.

### On pedagogy

Increasingly, therefore, the training of historians involves familiarization with fundamentally historiographical issues: can historians retrieve what actually happened in the past, as they once thought they could? What are the implications of the fact that history is a form of narrative? What is the nexus between history and memory? How would historians study social groups for which there have not been written archival materials? Do official documents reveal only the facts that they are presented in them, or can they be treated as texts that can be read against the grain—for the marginalised voices that the records insist on speaking for?

History can thus be meaningfully taught with a consideration to examining the epistemological grounds of the discipline. What is now considered the history of Singapore itself has a history, and reconsidering history also entails alternative readings of the legacies of Singapore's first generation leaders. At the same time, a more complex understanding of power to encompass not only the legitimate use of force to gain compliance, but also the power to determine appropriate social and cultural knowledge and practice, such as the definition what constitutes 'proper' language use, is no less pertinent to historical inquiry.

## Conference

# 'The Unravelling of Civil Society: Religion in the Making and Unmaking of the Modern World'

22–24 March 2006



The growth of religious and ethnic diversity is a consequence of complex, interlocking factors such as global labour markets and population flows, the emergence of flexible citizenship, the partial erosion of state sovereignty, legal pluralism and multiculturalism, the spread of fundamentalism, and the growth of popular religious movements. In the Asian context, there are distinct arenas of social and political struggle between religious groups in Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines that create conditions for significant civil conflict. The conference examined how states and societies manage the social and political complexity of globalisation, religious diversity and cultural pluralism, and hence respond to diasporic cultures, conflicting religious identities, cultures and communities. Issues such as emerging religious conflicts related to fundamentalism, the evolution of citizenship and human rights, the creation of nation-state identities and the sources of both religious tolerance and violence were discussed and debated.

The keynote address 'Global Clash between Modernity and Religion', was given by Prof Mark Juergensmeyer, Director of Global & International Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara and Director of Orfalea Center for Global & International Studies. Principal speakers included Prof Peter Beyer from the University of Toronto, Dr Anna Gade, a Senior Research Fellow at ARI, Prof Duncan McCargo of the University of Leeds and a Visiting Senior Research Fellow at ARI, and Prof Bryan Turner, Research Leader of the ARI Religion and Globalisation Cluster.

Speakers presented papers discussing issues in the religious revivalism and fundamentalism of modern Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and other 'world religions'. In part these religious

movements are associated with the collapse of communism, educational revival, globalisation, fundamentalism, and a communications revolution. While global travel and communication have produced transnational religious communities, the global labour market has also created a world of diasporic, fragmented and localised communities, partially held together by modern communication technologies and global religious networks. The new media paradoxically makes possible the integration of dispersed religious communities, and constitutes a challenge to traditional religious teaching, training and recruitment. Traditional principles and institutions of religious authority are paradoxically being democratised, fragmented and localised in a global communication system. The conference also considered theoretical discussions of religion and globalization, and empirical cases studies (both historical and contemporary) of globalization, politics and religion in the Asian context.

Some of the questions discussed and debated were (1) whether it is possible to live with social diversity without compromising orthodox belief and practice; (2) whether religious law can exist alongside secular law, and thereby accept legal pluralism; (3) whether to accept the so-called Westphalian model in which religion is a personal practice of individuals in their private lives outside the public sphere of civil society; and (4) whether it is possible to retain the loyalty of the next generation in a context of international terrorism.

About 50 participants attended the 3-day conference and a publication is expected to result from it.