

ARI



Newsletter of the Asia Research Institute  
National University of Singapore

Issue No. 02

# ARI

## Officially Launched in March



*Prof Craig Calhoun and  
Prof Takashi Shiraishi*

The Asia Research Institute was officially launched in March. ARI, as the Institute is now known around the NUS campus, had existed for more than a year before this, but the official launch allowed the Institute to take its message to a broader domestic and international audience. Institute Director Professor Anthony Reid used the launch to outline his hopes for ARI as a world-class focus and resource hub for research on the Asian region, focusing on interdisciplinary frontiers between and beyond social science disciplines. Thematic foci include the changing Asian family, identity and culture, religion and globalisation, and Southeast Asia-East Asia interactions.

The official launch comprised activities over two days, 12 and 13 March, and brought together many of the luminaries of the Singaporean academic world. RADM (NS) Teo Chee Hean, then Minister for Education and Second Minister for Defence, officially launched the Institute, at a gala dinner, hosted by the NUS President Professor Shih Choon Fong on the evening of 12 March. The minister noted ARI's distinctiveness, "firstly as a point of convergence of graduate training, fundamental research, social analysis, and the discovery of long-term trends. And secondly by its open invitation to the best minds in social and cultural research to see the world from the vantage point of our dynamic region."



*L to R: Prof Anthony Reid, RADM (NS)  
Teo Chee Hean and Prof Shih Choon Fong.*

As a prelude to the dinner, Professor Tommy Koh introduced two prominent scholars – Professor Craig Calhoun, President of the Social Sciences Research Council in the United States, and Professor Takashi Shiraishi of the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies in the University of Kyoto – who spoke to the assembled guests. Professor Calhoun addressed the topic, "Overcoming the False Dichotomy of Basic and Applied Research", while Professor Shiraishi set out some particular problems and priorities for the Asian region.

ARI's International Board, chaired by Prof Tommy Koh and comprising five outstanding scholars from the US, Japan and Southeast Asia, held its first meeting in conjunction with these events. Its members were also able to participate in a roundtable of research directors and leaders from around the region, entitled "Research Priorities for Asia," held on 13 March. The meeting explored agendas for researching the extraordinary diversity of cultures, languages, beliefs, and social, political and economic systems which constitute Asia, and which make the region an important laboratory for the human sciences. Further details of the Roundtable can be found on the following page.

L to R: Prof Yoneo Ishii, Prof Lily Kong, Prof Tommy Koh, Prof Anthony Reid, Prof James Scott.



# Roundtable on Research Priorities for Asia

13 March 2003

As noted above, in conjunction with the official launch of the Institute, on 13 March, ARI convened a meeting of prominent Asia scholars from both within and beyond the region to deliberate on the possibilities for ARI's research agenda and for humanities and social research on Asia more generally. The meeting was chaired by Professor Reid.

During the first session, **James Scott** and **Jomo K.S.** spoke about the study of changing Asian polities. Scott urged ARI and the study of social sciences in Asia more generally *not* to imitate the hyper-professionalism he sees occurring in the United States. Rather, he urged the development in Asia of more interdisciplinary training in the social sciences, tailored to local situations, and the use of problem-centred thematic approaches to open up frontiers of disciplines. Jomo opened a theme that recurred throughout the day, speaking of the trend towards US intellectual and academic hegemony in Asia, with increased US-style standardization and conformity in the social sciences. Discussion centred on the issue of hegemony, what is sensed to be forcing this hegemony, and what alternatives to it there could be. **Pauline Yu** then spoke of the trends she sees as marking humanities research in the US — interdisciplinarity, collaboration, and new applications of technology, while **Andrée Feillard** offered remarks from the French experience of social science research in Asia. She spoke of two current problem areas; the first being the issue of language — the fact that research published in European languages other than English is largely inaccessible to researchers in Asia, and secondly the declining status of the humanities within Asia, which is evident in the difficulty in finding good PhD candidates in the humanities. She made a plea for more support to historical research in Asia. Discussion picked up on two points: the issue of the need to undo nationalist histories in Asia, and the need for more translation of research into and out of languages of Asia. It was suggested that research centres in Asia and abroad could offer awards for research in Asian languages, and facilitate the translation of works both from and into English. The last two speakers addressed trends in social theory and social change. **James Fox** spoke of trends in Asian Studies in Australia, including an increased US orientation since the 1990s, and the problem of finding students studying languages. He also mentioned the problem of finding good students of history from Asia. **Cynthia**

**Bautista** discussed the vulnerability of programs in the humanities to changes in the economic situation. Discussion followed on the subject of undergraduate teaching, and whether there was a need for the more multidisciplinary approach to be introduced at a graduate level once students had some disciplinary grounding.

The second session involved speakers from diverse research institutions introducing their own institutions and commenting on what they saw as possible areas where ARI could contribute to training researchers. The third and final session examined needs and priorities and the ways in which the various institutions could help each other. Linkages between government policy and academic research were discussed, as was the need for academics to remain independent and yet relevant. The importance of research on civil society was also underlined. More concrete issues such as the difficulties of collaborative research, the need to train young researchers and the lack of guides and directories to research also drew discussion. Scholars from the PRC spoke of their hope that Southeast Asian studies in the region and in China might be better interlinked. Later discussion centred on the issues of hegemony, language, collaboration in graduate training, travelling workshops, discipline-based versus interdisciplinary studies and networking. There was strong agreement of the need to maintain and develop the network begun with the meeting.

Synopsis by **Jennifer Lindsay**



## A Word from the Director

highest level of analysis of it."

ARI has grown rapidly since these challenging words were spoken. Our woeful lack of space has many disadvantages, but one

The Institute was formally inaugurated by the then Minister of Education on 12 March. As Admiral Teo Chee Hean pointed out, ARI "has an important mission: to help us better understand Asia, and our place in the world, and to encourage the

advantage is to bring people from diverse corners of the world into close and creative interaction. A buzz of intellectual excitement is often heard in the corridors of AS7. As of 1 October, ARI will house thirty academics, of whom 5 are from Singapore, 2 otherwise from NUS, 5 from the rest of Southeast Asia, 5 from East Asia, 1 India, 6 Australia, 2 Europe and 4 USA.

These scholars are chiefly appointed for one or two year terms. Longer-term leadership will come from senior appointees on longer contracts, of whom the first, Prof Gavin Jones, took up his position in August (see page 3). His arrival marks the emergence of the first research cluster, which will aim to establish a cutting-edge concentration on the dramatic ways in which Asian families are changing. Two other shorter-term scholars have been recruited to join this concentration, which incorporates

# New Research Team Leader Appointed



*Professor Gavin Jones*

ARI is pleased to announce the appointment of **Professor Gavin Jones** as its first research team leader, particularly responsible for developing a program of research on the changing Asian family.

Professor Jones is an Australian, who completed his PhD in demography at the Australian National University in Canberra in 1966 (conducting fieldwork in Malaysia). He then joined the Population Council, where he worked for the next nine years, first in New York, then in Bangkok and Jakarta. In Bangkok, he assisted in drafting a national population policy for Thailand. He was later involved in setting up a population planning unit in the National Economic Development Board.

In 1975, he took up a position at the ANU, where he has been for the past 28 years, successively as Senior Fellow, Professorial Fellow and Professor from 1990. He was Head of the Demography Program from 1990 to 1998. At the ANU, his research focused - substantively - on determinants of fertility and nuptiality, population and development, including human development issues, population policy, and urbanization. Geographically, his research has focused mainly on Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia and Malaysia. Trained in economics and geography before taking up demography, his interests have moved in recent years more towards sociological approaches.

His wide-ranging research is reflected in the breadth of his publications, which extend in topic from population growth and educational planning, to marriage and divorce in Islamic Southeast Asia, and from the demographic dimension in Indonesian development to ageing in ASEAN and prostitution in Indonesia. He has edited books on migration, urbanization in large developing countries, and the continuing demographic transition.

Professor Jones has continued to do consultancy work, for agencies including the Ford Foundation, the World Bank, the Population Council, the Australian Development Assistance Bureau, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, and the Asian Development Institute. Substantial periods of time have been spent working with planning agencies in Thailand, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Indonesia. Between 1991 and 1996, he led Programme Review and Strategy Development Missions for the United Nations Population Fund in Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia and the Lao PDR. In 2002, his international role was recognized by his election to the position of Chair of the Council of CICRED (Committee for International Cooperation in National Research in Demography) in Paris.

At ARI, Professor Jones will, as noted, be responsible for developing a program of research on the changing Asian family, but will also be continuing his research on urbanization. The key emphasis of the research program on the changing Asian family will be the dramatic increase in non-marriage in East and Southeast Asia, particularly in the cities, and assessment of the causes and consequences of this trend. Another strand of research will be on ageing.

the older-established Family Studies Research Program and has many points of contact with ARI's Asian MetaCentre for Population and Sustainable Development Analysis. Professor Jones is convening ARI's public conference in August 2004, on trends in marriage.

Another search has begun for an outstanding senior scholar to lead the concentration on 'religion and globalisation'. The newest of the interdisciplinary campus-wide study groups under ARI's umbrella has also just been launched on this theme, convened by Dr Vineeta Sinha (ARI/Sociology) and Dr Thomas Dubois (History). In addition to Dr Sinha, researching diaspora Hinduism on a one-semester secondment to ARI, a group of six other specialists is assembling for this concentration during the coming

year. Two will be working on Islamic phenomena, two on Theravada Buddhism, one on Philippine Catholic activism, and one on Chinese religious minorities.

Also in the process of formation and discussion are 1) a concentration on Chinese-Southeast Asian interactions, of which the recent workshop on 'Southeast Asia in the fifteenth century: the Ming factor' was an exciting beginning; and 2) a set of interests on culture and identity, in the process of defining a research agenda.

**Anthony Reid**  
Director, ARI

# New ARI Members

## Visiting Fellow



**Rajeswary Brown** (arira@nus.edu.sg) is an economic historian of Southeast Asia, and currently Reader in Business History at Royal Holloway College, University of London. She is the author of *Chinese Big Business and the Wealth of Asian Nations* [2000] and *Capital and Entrepreneurship in South-East Asia* [1994]. She is currently completing a book with the provisional title, *'Irrational Exuberance: the Fatal Conceit of Stock market Capitalism in South-East Asia'*, which considers the

sources of volatility in the region's corporate economy. During her time in Singapore, she will be undertaking research on the financial organization of the Muslim diaspora in Southeast Asia, and organizing a workshop on that theme.

## Visiting Affiliate

**Howard Dick** (hwd@unimelb.edu.au) is a Visiting Affiliate in August-September, on leave from the Department of Management at the University of Melbourne where he is Associate Professor and Co-Director of the Australian Centre for International Business. He is an economist, economic historian and Indonesia/Southeast Asia specialist who took his PhD in the Research School of Pacific & Asian Studies at the Australian National University.



At ARI his research will focus on discourses of 'corruption' and 'governance' as they elucidate or obscure the dynamics of institutional change. He is particularly interested in the interplay between economics, business, politics and law and seeks to understand the experience of Indonesia in the comparative perspective of Thailand, Japan and Italy. Other current interests are extended urban regions and second cities in East Asia and the role of logistics in integrating and transforming the business networks and economic geography of the Asia-Pacific.

Recent books are Lindsey & Dick (eds), *Corruption in Asia: Rethinking the Governance Paradigm* (2002); *Surabaya, City of Work: A Twentieth Century Socioeconomic History* (2002); Dick, Houben, Lindblad & Thee Kian Wie, *The Emergence of a National Economy: An History of Indonesia, 1800-2000* (2002) and Dick & Rimmer, *Cities, Transport and Communications: The Integration of Southeast Asia since 1850* (Palgrave, July 2003).

## Postdoctoral Fellows

**Ashley J. Carruthers** (aricaj@nus.edu.sg) obtained his PhD in Anthropology from the University of Sydney. His thesis, entitled "Exile and Return: Deterritorialising National Imaginaries in Vietnam and the Diaspora", analyses post-Cold War discourses of nation and identity in Vietnam and in the Vietnamese Australian and Vietnamese American diasporic communities. He is currently preparing it for publication. His current research interests include: transnationalism, Asian modernities, multiculturalism, diasporic public spheres, the Japanese consumption of Vietnam, Vietnamese postcoloniality and Vietnamese and Vietnamese Australian contemporary visual art. He is the co-ordinator of ARI's Indochina Study Group.

**Khoo Gaik Cheng** (arikgc@nus.edu.sg) obtained her PhD in Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of British Columbia (2000) and has taught in Asian Studies, Women's Studies, English and Film. During her postdoctoral fellowship at ARI, she will be revising her dissertation into a publication and conducting further research on contemporary Malaysian independent filmmaking.



Her dissertation focused on gender, modernity and the nation in Malaysian literature and film from the 1980s to the 1990s. She is currently interested in exploring questions of masculinity, modernity and culture, and the possible intersections between modern Southeast Asian cultural practices and European theories about urban popular culture and subjectivity.

## Assistant Professors

(on secondment from NUS faculties for six months)

**Gregory Clancey** (arigc@nus.edu.sg) was educated at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and teaches the history of science and technology, and the history of Japan, at NUS. His research is primarily concerned with the cultural history of modern Japanese science, but he also writes about architecture, natural disaster, and the politics of emergency. While at ARI he will be finishing a book manuscript entitled *Foreign Knowledge: The Cultural Economy of Japanese Earthquakes*, on the cultural construction and meaning of seismological science in Meiji Japan. He also intends to complete two journal articles on the political history of modern Japanese architecture, the subject of his next book project (tentatively entitled *Fabrications: Architectural Modernism and Japan*).



**Vineeta Sinha** (arivs@nus.edu.sg) is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore. She obtained her PhD in anthropology from the Johns Hopkins University. Her research interests include the critique of concepts and categories in the social sciences, the history of the social sciences, sociological and anthropological theory, sociology and anthropology of religion, the Hindu diaspora and the political economy of health care in medically plural societies. Some of her publications include 'Merging different sacred spaces: Enabling religious encounters through pragmatic utilisation of space?' (*Contributions to Indian Sociology* (forthcoming), 2003), and 'Decentering social sciences in practice through individuals, actions and choices' (*Current Sociology*, 2003). While at ARI, she will be pursuing her current research interest relating to Hinduism in the diasporic context of Singapore and Malaysia. In particular she is documenting the practice of an aspect of folk dimension in Hinduism, expressed in the veneration of the male guardian deity Muneeswaran in urban Singapore. Such ethnographic data form the basis for engaging issues (one example being Sanskritisation) of conceptual and theoretical importance in classical sociological and anthropological accounts of Hinduism.

## Research Assistant

**Kamalini Ramdas** (arikr@nus.edu.sg) graduated from NUS with a BA (Hons) and MA (by research). Her research interests include non-governmental organisations, volunteerism and civil society. She completed her Masters thesis on "The politics of the environment in the Andaman Sea: networking and the dynamics of state-NGO-community relations". She has 6 publications to her credit and research, consulting and tutoring experience spanning a period of about 6 years. She will be assisting Prof Brenda Yeoh.



## Administrative Staff

**Simon Chin** is an NUS Graduate who majored in English Language and Mathematics. Simon is part of our administrative support temporary staff. He assists in the coordination of various ARI workshops and conferences, as well as the maintenance of ARI's website.



**Shalini Chauhan**, joined ARI on 30 June 2003 as a Management Support Officer. With more than 15 years of events management experience, she brings to ARI a wealth of knowledge and skills in organizing seminars, workshops and conferences.

## Awards and Kudos for ARI Staff

Professor James  
F. Warren



- Our congratulations to **Professor James F. Warren**, on being awarded the Centenary Medal. The Medal was established by the Australian Government in 2001 as part of the Australian system of honours and awards, and is intended to commemorate the Centenary of Australian Federation and to honour the contributions made to Australian society and government by its citizens and other persons. The citation for Professor Warren's medal reads: For Service to Australian Society and the Humanities in the Study of Ethnohistory.
- **Dr Theresa W. Devasahayam**, a post-doctoral fellow with the Asian Metacentre, won a Population Association of America Travel Award to attend the 2003 Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, U.S.A. The title of her paper was "Managing Caregivers in Singapore Organisations: Why and how the State Should Become Involved."
- **Dr Jennifer Lindsay** was shortlisted for the New South Wales (Australia) Premier's Translation Prize and PEN Medallion 2003. The Prize is awarded annually and is based on one's overall translated oeuvre. The work she submitted for the prize was her translation of Goenawan Mohamad's *Conversations with Difference*. The comments of the judges included that: "Jennifer Lindsay's translation of Mohamad's *Conversations with Difference* is a superb example of cultural transplanting of ideas and points of view, otherwise inaccessible to a Western European mainly Eurocentric audience. Dr Lindsay has successfully crossed the barriers between different cultures by bringing into life a dissenting voice through its specificities and its distinct semantic idiom."



A/P John Miksic (Program Coordinator) and Prof Anthony Reid with Library Research Fellows: Manoch Prompanyo, Korakit Choomgrant, Thibodi Buakamsri, Arief Akhyat, Kanjana Jaroenkiatboworn.

conducted by Gadjah Mada University and Temple University, Philadelphia, USA. His research topic *Technological Transformation and Socio-Religious Construction: The Urban History of the North Coast of Java 1870-1930s* empirically attempts to establish a clear view of the revolutionary process of structural change in north coastal Javanese society. Arief found his 3 months of research in the NUS Central and ISEAS Libraries, particularly the Indonesian colonial collection, very productive. More generally, he regarded the atmosphere at ARI to be very welcoming and conducive to serious academic scholarship. The weekly intensive discussions and seminars about various topics throughout Southeast Asia which employed interdisciplinary approaches imbued him with "a new spirit" for conducting his doctoral research.

**Mr Thibodi Buakamsri** (thibodi@hotmail.com) is a MA student in Southeast Asian History from Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. He is conducting research for his MA thesis "Ekasar Meahaboros Khmaer (Documents of Great Khmer Figures): A Study of a Modern Cambodian Historical Text." His research focuses on traditional genres - such as myth, legends, and chronicles - and modern Cambodian historical writing. In addition, in his research he will consider genres of historical writing in other countries in Southeast Asia, especially Thailand and Laos. Like other library research fellows, Thibodi found a wealth of historical sources here. Documentation available on Vietnam and Cambodia during the 1940s-60s facilitated an understanding of Cambodian society today and permitted him to do a comparative study of how history is taught in modern national educational systems within Indochina.

**Mr Korakit Choomgrant** (ph\_phoon@hotmail.com) is an MA student in Thai History from the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. His study involves analysing relations between social groups which did not depend on the royal trade monopoly for their formation in the international port of Ayutthaya during the period from 1580 to 1688. This study will explain and consider the diverse social groups which existed in that port, how they came to be formed, and the characteristics of these social relationships in the context of the international trade controlled by the king of Ayutthaya in the late 16th and 17th centuries. Korakit noted that, during his stay in Singapore, he found a great many sources on Ayutthaya in the 17th century, both primary and secondary. These works, together with suggestions from ARI Southeast Asian historians, have helped shape his thesis.

**Mr Manoch Prompanyo** (ononoe@hotmail.com) is an MA student in Southeast Asian History from Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand. His research on "The Rise of the Konbaung Dynasty, 1752-1776" considers the rise of the Konbaung shortly after the decline and fall of the Restored Toungoo dynasty in 1752, to become one of the most powerful kingdoms in Southeast Asia. His study examines centralized authority, control over manpower and customs, and control of Sangha affairs, rather than the personal achievement of the kings. Manoch also found many of the texts which were unavailable to him in Bangkok, and advised that he benefited greatly from the interchanges with ARI members.

## ARI Library Research Fellows

The ARI Library Research Fellows program is intended to provide opportunities for postgraduate students from ASEAN countries to benefit from library facilities at NUS and elsewhere in Singapore. Fellows reside in Singapore for three months, and are provided with access to the NUS and ISEAS libraries. The first five Fellows took up their appointments on 1 April 2003. On 29 May, the Fellows made presentations on their research and received feedback which was intended to assist them in completing their theses and dissertations.

The program has this year been renamed the ASEAN Research Scholars program. Applications are now being invited. Please see the advertisement on the back page of this issue.

### The Fellows

**Kanjana Jaroenkiatboworn** (kanjana.j@chula.com) is a PhD student in the linguistics department, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. Her major areas of study include semantics, pragmatics and discourse analysis. She is researching the discourse of humour, specifically Thai jokes. Since she is in the initial stages of her research, Kanjana found the access to the NUS library greatly beneficial to her work as it provided her with much background knowledge and more particularly studies of interdisciplinary approaches to the social, psychological as well as linguistic aspects of humour.

**Mr Arief Akhyat** (akhyatarief@yahoo.com) is a lecturer in the Department of History, Faculty of Cultural Studies, Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. He is enrolled as a postgraduate student in Religion and Cross-Cultural Studies, a joint programme

# ARI Conferences, Workshops and Seminars



Speakers at the Asia Trends Conference

## 1. Conferences

### ASIA TRENDS CONFERENCE - "BABEL OR BEHEMOTH: LANGUAGE TRENDS IN ASIA" (4-8 July 2003)

The Asia Research Institute (ARI), NUS held its inaugural Asia Trends public conference, titled "Babel or Behemoth: Language Trends in Asia" on 4 July 2003 at the Marina Mandarin Singapore. This conference was the first of what is to become a regular annual event in the calendar of Singapore and the region. The theme chosen to launch the ARI Asia Trends series, which aims to link scholars and practitioners from various fields at a public event, was language - something that shapes and affects everyone.

Professor Wang Gungwu, Director of the East Asian Institute opened the conference with a fascinating exposition of both *Babel* and *Behemoth*, in the form of a contrast between the "Father('s) language" and "Mother('s) tongue". Drawing upon his own experiences of learning different Father Languages and mother tongues, he highlighted issues involving language loss in the face of powerful and dominant "Father Languages"; of education policies that support transformative teaching; and the performance power and orality of the mother tongues.

Internationally renowned scholars from Australia, India, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore at the conference addressed many basic issues concerning language in an Asian context: when does language "matter"; how does it "matter"; and how does this "mattering" change over time. Professor Joseph Lo Bianco, foundation Director of Language Australia: The National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia, identified and discussed patterns in language and communication issues across Asia, despite the forbidding complexity of the region, with the greatest number of languages in the world, the largest number of people, and the most diverse range of writing systems.

Professor Udaya Narayana Singh, Director of the Central Institute for Indian Languages highlighted the multilingual situation in India, and brought to our attention how language becomes linked to nationalism and how it is used to shape political territory. Language policies, language education and their impact on the language



Ki H. Anom Suroto, renowned *dalang* from Solo, central Java, gave a Javanese wayang kulit performance of the story "Bima Sacrificed" at Fort Canning Park on 4 July 2003.

situation in Thailand and Malaysia were discussed by Professor Rujaya Abhakorn (University of Chiangmai) and Associate Professor Azirah Hashim (University of Malaya) respectively. Speakers also brought performance and non-print media into the wider discussion of language, both of which are essential to a comprehensive view of language use and to understanding the importance of "communities of sound", whether imagined via recording and broadcast, or experienced as live reality.

One of the major dilemmas highlighted by Dr Jennifer Lindsay (Asia Research Institute) was how to translate a performance which is both in a language unknown to the audience, and spontaneously altered from performance to performance. This was demonstrated in a spectacular evening showing of *'Bima sacrificed'*, an episode of the Javanese wayang kulit repertoire from the beloved Mahabharata cycle. The translation dilemma was tackled through a simultaneous English translation and explanation by Professor Hardja Susilo of Hawaii, to a performance given by the renowned Surakarta *dalang* (puppetmaster) Ki Anom Soeroto. A large audience enjoyed the show at Fort Canning Park on the evening of the conference, with joint sponsorship from ARI, TheatreWorks, and the Ford Foundation.

Following this innovative demonstration of one method of tackling the dilemmas of preserving integrity for language-based performance in a globalising world, a group of Asian performers, critics and analysts debated the issues in an intense 4-day workshop convened by Jennifer Lindsay (ARI) and held at the TheatreWorks studio. Besides the Javanese wayang example, participants discussed the ways language aesthetics of Indian *Kootiyattam*, Thai *Khon* and Chinese opera might be understood and conveyed, and also how multilingualism is exploited in contemporary theatre in Asia.

## 2. Roundtables/ Workshops

### Workshop on Southeast Asia in the 15th Century: The Ming Factor (18-19 July 2003)

In mid-July, some 20 scholars from around the globe, specialists in various aspects of early modern Asian history, gathered in Singapore to discuss the 15<sup>th</sup> century in Southeast Asian history and the role of Ming China in the changes which occurred during that century. The gathering was advertised as an investigation of the early modern in Southeast Asian history, and particularly the role of the Zheng He voyages in promoting the emergence of a new age in the region, as well as the rise of new states, links with other parts of Asia and "Asian or global systems, technological, demographic, economic and disease regimes, where these have particular relevance to Southeast Asia."

The 15 papers presented did address some of these issues, but ranged further and wider in investigating 15<sup>th</sup> century change in both the mainland and maritime world of what is today Southeast Asia. The importance of technological change in the period and



particularly the introduction of firearms into Đại Việt through the Chinese invasion of the early part of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and later into Korea, stood out as one of the essential changes. The spread of wet-rice agriculture in the highland polities of Southeast Asia was also seen as a characteristic marking the 15<sup>th</sup> century, with the Tais achieving a hegemony over many of the Mon-Khmer peoples. The effects of the Ming maritime prohibitions on Southeast Asian ceramic and ship-building technologies attracted much discussion. These discussions also raised questions about the nature of technology transfer, its carriers and, of course, its origins.

The importance of the Ming invasion of Đại Việt in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century for that polity and its neighbours was underlined during the presentations. The great cultural and demographic changes and administrative evolution which the Chinese occupation engendered certainly changed the nature of the polity. The expansion of Vietnam in the latter part of the century was also seen to be, to some degree, a product of the Ming invasion. The destruction of the major Yunnan Tai polities by the Ming during the 15<sup>th</sup> century was also presented as having profound effects on the upland polities.

The importance of the Zheng He voyages was discussed in terms of new maritime linkages for Southeast Asian polities, the emergence of a *pax Ming* throughout the region, strengthened interaction with Islamic polities, the spread of Islam in Southeast Asia, and the introduction of new means of exchange and commodities, new foods and new linguistic terms into Nusantara. However, the possibility that some of the changes had begun during the earlier Mongol invasions of Southeast Asia was also raised for discussion. The hybridity and fluidity of ethnic categories in the region during this period was raised in several papers.

The breadth of the issues explored determine that this brief notice must fall short in terms of an overview of the gathering. All participants agreed that it was a stimulating meeting and that it certainly demonstrated the importance of the Ming factor in inducing change in Southeast Asia in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Selected papers from the workshop are to be included in a volume which will address this important issue.

### Roundtable Discussion on SARS: Public Health and Social Science Perspectives (5 June 2003)

In the wake of the social disruption caused by the SARS outbreak in the early part of the year, ARI organised a workshop titled "SARS: Public Health and Social Science Perspectives" on 5 June 2003.

While medical scientists raced to further understand the virus, governments were struggling to contain the SARS epidemic, and the public was engulfed by SARS-dominated headlines and the attendant fears. In that situation, ARI saw an urgent need for social scientists to provide an intellectual context for understanding the SARS issues and offer critical analyses on them.

The workshop brought together researchers from the medical field

as well as historians and social scientists from throughout Singapore to discuss issues raised by the discourses, policies and impacts of the SARS outbreak in Asia. After the opening remarks by Professor Reid, the discussion centred on three main issues: Is SARS different from other viruses, medically or as a social phenomenon? How is SARS perceived by the public and what are the social consequences of the outbreak and the responses? What can be learned about governance from the SARS outbreak?

Participants discussed the new measures most Asian countries had instituted since the emergence of the virus amid the "drama" associated with this new disease. These were placed in a historical context through comparisons with earlier plague, smallpox, cholera and influenza pandemics, and the quarantine measures instituted during those crises. The variety of reactions to quarantine restrictions in various Asian societies during the recent crisis were also examined in terms of what that said about the relations between administration and populace. The use of these measures as a rallying and national identity tool was also examined, as was the way in which the "generalised" (as opposed to lifestyle-related) susceptibility of the population is used to justify intensified policing and surveillance by the state. Another major aspect of the disease discussed was the link with labour migration and the related class issues, tourism and economic costs. In the discussions on governance and SARS, the case of China aroused much interest, particularly in terms of the transformation of the state health care system.

A fuller account of the Roundtable has been presented by Xiang Biao and Theresa Wong in *Economic and Political Weekly*, 21 June 2003, pp. 2480-2483.

## 3. Recent ARI Seminars

14 Mar 2003  
*Why Civilisations Can't Climb Hills: Upland-Lowland Relations in Mainland Southeast Asia*  
Prof James C. Scott, Eugene Meyer Professor of Political Science and Anthropology, Yale University, USA

18 Mar 2003  
*Chinese Fish, Buddhist Fish, Muslim Fish: Inter-ethnic Relations in Southern Thai Fish Markets*  
Dr Saroja Dorairajoo, Dept of Sociology, NUS

24 Mar 2003  
*Creative Processes as Guides to Research*  
Prof. Kenneth R. MacCrimmon, University of British Columbia, Canada  
(Jointly organised with the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences)

25 Mar 2003  
*Southeast Asian Life Histories: Problems and Potentials in Research on Personal Narratives*  
A/P Roxana Waterson, Dept of Sociology, NUS

1 Apr 2003  
*(Re)Naming Peoples, (Re)Living Identity: Power, History and the (Re)Construction of the Orang Asli in Peninsula Malaysia*  
Ms Nah Han Yuong Alice Maria, Dept of Sociology, NUS

8 Apr 2003  
*Visual Representations of Ethnic Violence: An Indonesian Portrayal*  
Dr Jamie Seth Davidson, Asia Research Institute, NUS

15 Apr 2003  
*Newly Discovered Jar Burial Sites in the Cardamom Mountains, Western Cambodia*  
A/P John N. Miksic, Asia Research Institute; and Southeast Asian Studies Programme, NUS

22 Apr 2003  
*A 'New' God in the Diaspora?: Persistence of and Innovations in the Worship of 'Muneeswaran-Muniandy' Deities in Singapore Hinduism*  
Dr Vineeta Sinha, Dept of Sociology, NUS

29 Apr 2003  
*Domestic Violence: Legal Perspectives*  
Dr A. Kumararalingam, Asia Research Institute; and Faculty of Law, NUS

6 May 2003  
*Negotiating Diasporas: The Straits Chinese Literati of Singapore, 1870-1920*  
Dr Mark Frost, Asia Research Institute, NUS

20 May 2003  
*TV, Orality and Performance - Indonesia's 1999 Elections*  
Dr Jennifer Lindsay, Asia Research Institute, NUS

27 May 2003  
*Reconciliation and Forgiveness in Post-Suharto Indonesia: The Case of the Tanjung Priok Killings*  
Dr Priyambudi Sulistiyanto, Southeast Asian Studies Programme, NUS

29 May 2003  
*Library Fellows Seminar*  
Mr Arief Akhyat, Mr Thibodi Buakamsri, Mr Korakit Choomgrant, Mr Manoch Prompanyo, Ms Kanjana Jaroenkiatboworn

2 July 2003  
*Keeping it Real in Mandalay: Contemporary za' pwè Performances*  
Prof Ward Keeler, University of Texas at Austin

22 July 2003  
*"What's Cooking in Malaysia?": Betwixt Modernity and 'Tradition' with Convenience Foods*  
Dr Theresa Devasahayam, Asia Research Institute, NUS

28 July 2003  
*Approaches to the Sociology of Religion*  
Prof James L. Peacock, Kenan Professor of Anthropology, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

## 4. Recent ARI Study Group Seminars

26 Mar 2003  
*The Role of Yunnanese in Thai Labour Recruitment Networks in Taiwan*  
Dr Mika Toyota, Asia Research Institute, NUS  
(Study Group on Asian Business Networks Event)

27 Mar 2003  
*Studying Local Politics in Post-Suharto Indonesia: Governance, Democracy, Civil Society and Regime Change in Jepara*  
Dr Jim Schiller, Asian Studies and Languages, Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia  
(Study Group on Indonesia Event)

24 Apr 2003  
*Communists and Soldiers during a Time of Confrontation, Tet 1930 to Autumn 1931*  
Mr Tobias Rettig, School of Oriental and African Studies, London  
(Study Group on Indochina Event)

25 Apr 2003  
*Ryukyu and Hokkien Business Network with Southeast Asia: An Introduction to Documents (Rekidai Hoan) of the Ryukyu Kingdom 1424-1867*  
Prof Hamashita Takeshi, Visiting Fellow at the Dept of Japanese Studies, NUS; and Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, Japan  
(Study Group on Asian Business Networks Event)

8 May 2003  
*The First and Second Demographic Transition in South-East Asia and East Asia*  
Prof Gavin Jones, Asian MetaCentre for Population and Sustainable Development Analysis, Asia Research Institute, NUS  
(Study Group on Family and Lifecycle Changes Event)

# Upcoming Workshops and Conferences

**22-24 September 2003**

### **Workshop on Migration and Health**

organised by the Asian MetaCentre for Population and Sustainable Development Analysis

<http://www.populationasia.org/Migration%20and%20Health%20in%20Asia.htm>

**16-17 October 2003**

### **Inaugural Nus Graduate Students Symposium**

Social and Cultural Change in Asia: Past and Present

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

**2004**

**16-17 January 2004**

### **Rethinking Identities in Contemporary Laos**

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

**29-30 January 2004**

### **Working and Mothering: Asian Women Negotiating Work Challenges and Family Commitments**

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

**5-7 February 2004**

### **A Plural Peninsula: Historical Interactions Among Thai, Malays, Chinese and Others**

<http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/040502EthnicInteractions.htm>

**19-22 February 2004**

### **Our Modernities: Positioning Asian Art Now**

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





# ACTIVITIES OF THE ASIAN METACENTRE

The Asian Metacentre For Population And Sustainable Development Analysis has been established by a consortium of Asian population studies centres that include: the Asia Research Institute, Singapore; the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, Austria; the College of Population Studies, Thailand; and the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health, Australia. The Asian Metacentre is headquartered at ARI.



## Completed Workshops:

The Asian MetaCentre organized 2 workshops during the period of 1 January to 30 June 2003. The *Workshop on 'Singaporean Women as Workers, Mothers and Caregivers: Coping with Changes, Challenges and Commitments'* was held on 18 January 2003 at York Hotel in Singapore. Jointly organized by the Family Studies Research Programme and the Asian MetaCentre, the workshop examined the social, cultural and legal implications of wage employment on the everyday lives of Singaporean women. In the last decades, the numbers of women engaged in paid work has increased greatly, contesting the traditional model of the male as breadwinner and, in turn, changing the constitution of the family. Yet traditional norms still persist in that the division of unpaid work in the home is unequal to the degree that women more than men are expected to manage home responsibilities. In view of the persistence of traditional values, women are forced to balance work demands and home commitments in a variety of ways, although structural and legal constructs in Singapore aim for greater equality among the sexes in the family context. This is a clear indication that the quality of women's lives lag behind the structural conditions prevalent in Singapore. That women are working also means that they face greater challenges in having to balance their caretaker role in the home and workplace demands. To this end, it is vital to explore the extent to which employers have played a supportive role for women - whether they are mothers or elder caregivers. More than 70 participants from ministries and non-governmental institutions participated in the workshop.

On 16-19 February 2003, the *Workshop on 'Urbanisation, Transport and Health in Asia'* took place on the campus of the Australian National University. Organised by the Asian MetaCentre and hosted by the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health (NCEPH), a collaborating partner of the Asian MetaCentre, the workshop was well-represented by about 40 participants from 13 countries in Asia and Europe. The workshop sought to address the issues related to health consequences of population, urbanization and increasingly complex transportation systems. It called for macro- and micro-level research that brings together social and population perspectives, and considered empirical situation of cities, transport and health, as well as looked at the methodological issues involved in improving relevant data collection. Participants were involved in a series of lectures, group discussions of research methodologies and presentation of research plans.

## Forthcoming Events:

A *workshop on 'Migration and Health in Asia'* will be held on 22-24 September 2003 at Bintan, Indonesia. Organised by the

Asian MetaCentre, the workshop will focus on the relationship between 'migration' and 'health' in the context of Asia, along with themes such as conceptions of health meanings across different diasporas in Asia; differential access to health and social services among migrants and locals, differential health status among migrants and non-migrant populations; illegal migration; gender, body politics and health needs among migrants; and migration and vectors of diseases. Please refer to <http://www.populationasia.org/Migration%20and%20Health%20in%20Asia.htm> for more information.

## Visiting Senior Research Fellow

Gavin Jones joined the Asian MetaCentre as a Visiting Senior Research Fellow for three months from March to May 2003. While at the Asian MetaCentre, he assisted in developing workshops, building up research proposals and collaborations for the Centre, and reviewing research papers. He gave two seminars and also published two working papers entitled "*The 'Flight from Marriage' in Southeast and East Asia*" and "*Strategies and Achievements in Expanding Lower Secondary Enrolments: Thailand and Indonesia*" with the Asian MetaCentre Research Paper Series. Professor Jones has now returned to ARI as a Research Team Leader.

## New Staff

The Asian MetaCentre and ARI welcomed Dr Xiang Biao who joined as a joint-postdoctoral fellow on 5 February 2003. Xiang Biao has worked on migration and social change in China, India and Australia over the last decade. His main work includes a long-term ethnographic study on a migrant community in Beijing which has been published in Chinese in 2000 and will be forthcoming in English. Another interdisciplinary study on migrant Indian computer professionals in Australia ("*Global 'Body Shopping'* ". 2002, PhD thesis) explores a new international labour system in the era of globalisation and examines its impacts on the local society in India. Xiang Biao plans to develop his PhD thesis into a publishable monograph; and conduct a short-term field research project on migration and health in China. He can be contacted at [arixb@nus.edu.sg](mailto:arixb@nus.edu.sg).

# New Books

## by ARI Members



### **Babel or Behemoth: Language Trends in Asia**

Jennifer Lindsay and Tan Ying Ying (eds.)  
Singapore: Asia Research Institute,  
National University of Singapore (2003)  
[http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/  
pub\\_BabelBehemoth.htm](http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/pub_BabelBehemoth.htm)



### **Earthenware in Southeast Asia**

John Miksic (ed.)  
Singapore: Singapore University Press (2003)  
<http://www.nus.edu.sg/SUP/9971-69-271-6.html>



### **Approaching Transnationalisms: Studies on Transnational Societies, Multicultural Contacts, and Imaginings of Home**

Brenda S. A. Yeoh, Michael W. Charney and  
Tong Chee Kiong (eds.)  
Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers  
(2003)  
<http://www.wkap.nl/prod/b/1-4020-7447-6>



### **Theorizing the Southeast Asian City as Text: Urban Landscapes, Cultural Documents, and Interpretative Experiences**

Robbie B. H. Goh and Brenda S. A. Yeoh  
(eds.)  
Singapore: World Scientific Publishing (2003)  
[http://www.wspc.com/books/  
eastasianstudies/5205.html](http://www.wspc.com/books/eastasianstudies/5205.html)



### **The Politics of Landscapes in Singapore: Constructions of "Nation"**

Lily Kong and Brenda S. A. Yeoh  
New York: Syracuse University Press (2003)  
[http://sumweb.syr.edu/su\\_press/  
fallwinter2002/  
CONSTRUCTIONSOFNATION.htm](http://sumweb.syr.edu/su_press/fallwinter2002/CONSTRUCTIONSOFNATION.htm)



### **Chinese Migrants Abroad: Cultural, Educational and Social Dimensions of the Chinese Diaspora**

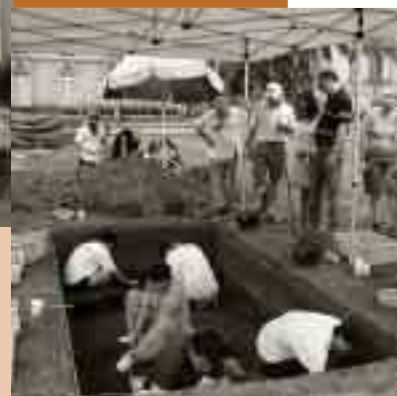
Michael W. Charney, Brenda S. A. Yeoh and Tong  
Chee Kiong (eds.)  
Singapore: Singapore University Press and World  
Scientific Publishing (2003)  
<http://www.nus.edu.sg/SUP/981-238-041-8.html>  
[http://www.worldscientific.com/books/  
eastasianstudies/5000.html](http://www.worldscientific.com/books/eastasianstudies/5000.html)

## Archaeology in Singapore

John Miksic, Visiting Fellow at ARI on leave from his position as Associate Professor in the Southeast Asian Studies Programme, NUS, conducted an archaeological excavation at the Singapore Padang from April 16 to May 2, 2003. The Singapore Cricket Club, which has jurisdiction over the use of the Padang area where the dig was conducted, not only gave permission for the project but provided much assistance to facilitate the excavation. Despite the unseasonably wet weather, the well-constructed drainage system of the Padang kept the heavy rains from leaking into the excavation.

Results of the test excavation were beyond expectations. There were no colonial-period buildings nor World War II intrusions in the area chosen to dig and, as such, the lower levels of

*The Padang  
excavation in  
progress.*



deposit were undisturbed. At the depth of half a metre, a dense deposit of 14th-century artefacts was found: Chinese coins from the Tang and Song dynasties (and a rare example from the Jin dynasty as well, the title taken by the Mongols who conquered north China in 1126), Chinese ceramics from the Yuan dynasty, earthenware pottery of Malay and possibly Javanese origin, carnelian beads from India, bronze items, and much else in addition. This excavation shed considerable new light on life in 14th-century Singapore and more excavations in the area are planned for the future.

## Senior Search for

# 'Religion and Globalisation'

## Research Team Leader

The Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore invites applications from established scholars with a strong research record to establish and lead a research focus at ARI on 'Religion and Globalisation in Asia'. Successful applicants will be expected not only to pursue their own research at the highest level, but to act as a focus for international and regional scholars who will be brought to the Institute for periods of up to 12 months as Visiting Fellows, or two years as Postdoctoral Fellows, as well as for conferences.

The successful candidate will be appointed at Associate Professor or Professor level, on a renewable contract of three years.

The focus on 'religion and globalisation' is intended to explore the changing patterns of religious practice, belief and loyalties in recent times, particularly in the areas of greatest interest to the Institute - that is Southeast Asia, Greater China, and South Asia. The 'globalisation' of the title implies a particular interest in transnational linkages, relations between diasporas and heartlands, and new forms of identity which respond to global challenges. Singapore's location suggests a particular interest in Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity, but a broadly comparative and sociological approach will be encouraged.

Interested applicants are invited to **email/facsimile/mail** their curriculum vitae, and a description of the research program envisaged by **31 December 2003** to the address below. You should also arrange for at least three referees' reports to be sent confidentially by the same deadline to:

### **Christopher Anthony**

Manager

Asia Research Institute

5 Arts Link, Level 4

AS7, Shaw Foundation Building

Singapore 117570

Fax: 65 6779 1428

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

# ARI's Distinguished Visitor Program

The Asia Research Institute invites nominations from NUS departments and individuals for persons to be invited as ARI Distinguished Visitors. Nominators may be from academic staff in the Faculties of Arts & Social Science and Law, and the Schools of Business and Design & Environment. To ensure some degree of interdisciplinary support, nominations should be supported by either a Head of Department and one member of another department or ARI, or two members of different departments or Institutes of at least Associate Professor level. Nominations should include a CV of the distinguished person sought, an argument as to their importance for NUS, a program of lectures or workshops, and some indication of the probability of availability (preferably prior agreement in principle). Nominations for the current (2003/04) academic year should reach Christopher Anthony, ARI Manager, [ariaca@nus.edu.sg](mailto:ariaca@nus.edu.sg), by 31 August 2003. Nominations for the year 2004/05 may be considered at the September meeting of the selection committee, but will be also considered at a subsequent meeting in January 2004.

Further details of the Program and conditions are available on the ARI website at:

[http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/Distinguished\\_Visitor\\_Prog.htm](http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/Distinguished_Visitor_Prog.htm)

# The ARI Working Paper Series

[www.ari.nus.edu.sg/wps/wpsindex.htm](http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/wps/wpsindex.htm)

The ARI Working Paper Series is the first on-line publication series launched by the Asia Research Institute. The Series is a forum to electronically publish new work in a timely manner to the widest possible interested audience. The Editorial Committee is chaired by the Director, Professor Anthony Reid, and also comprises James Warren, Geoff Wade, Jamie S. Davidson and Tan Ying Ying. The Working Paper Series includes papers presented at ARI seminars as well as other new work on a diverse range of topics. Citations from these electronically published papers are encouraged.

1. *War, Peace and the Burden of History in Aceh*  
**Anthony Reid**, June 2003
2. *A Tale of Two Centuries: The Globalisation of Maritime Raiding and Piracy in Southeast Asia at the end of the Eighteenth and Twentieth Centuries*  
**James F. Warren**, June 2003
3. *The Ming shi Account of Champa*  
**Geoff Wade**, June 2003
4. *Narrative, Memory and History: Multiple Interpretations of the Lao Past*  
**Vatthana Pholsena**, July 2003
5. *The Cultural Significance of Fish in India: First Steps in Coming to Terms with the Contradictory Positions of Some Key Materials*  
**Peter Reeves**, July 2003
6. *A Feminist Critique of Domestic Violence Laws in Singapore and Malaysia*  
**Kumaralingam Amirthalingam**, July 2003
7. *The Spectacle of Detention: Theatre, Poetry and Imagery in the Contest over Identity, Security and Responsibility in Contemporary Australia*  
**Prem Kumar Rajaram**, August 2003
8. *Toward a Spatial History of Emergency: Notes from Singapore*  
**Gregory Clancey**, August 2003
9. *"Primitive" Politics: The Rise and Fall of the Unity Dayak Party in West Kalimantan, Indonesia*  
**Jamie S. Davidson**, August 2003
10. *Transcultural Diaspora: The Straits Chinese in Singapore, 1819-1918*  
**Mark Ravinder Frost**, August 2003

## ASEAN Research Scholars

The Asia Research Institute of NUS invites applications from ASEAN citizens (except Singaporeans) enrolled for an advanced degree at a university in an ASEAN country for appointment as ASEAN Research Scholar. These fellowships are offered to students working in the Humanities and Social Sciences on Asian topics, and will allow the recipients to be based at NUS for a period of three months. The aim of the fellowships is to enable scholars to make full use of the wide range of resources held in the libraries of NUS and the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. Scholars will be expected to commence their work on 1 April 2004.

Successful candidates can anticipate the following benefits:

- a. A monthly allowance of SGD\$1500 which will be subject to tax
- b. A monthly allowance of SGD\$250 to subsidise the cost of accommodation. This will be subject to tax.
- c. A one time travel subsidy of up to SGD\$1000 on a reimbursement basis upon being accepted for the fellowship.
- d. Access to library and computer resources on campus.

Applicants are invited to email/facsimile/mail their curriculum vitae, a 2-page outline of their research proposal in English (this may be accompanied by a longer statement in a Southeast

Asian language) to the address below by 15 November 2003. Arrangements should also be made by which at least two letters of reference, one of which is from your principal supervisor, are sent confidentially to the same address by the same deadline. The research proposal must include the following details: 1) how the fellowship will contribute to the research; 2) the types of sources to be consulted in Singapore; 3) proposed work plan during the fellowship.

You can look forward to excellent library and internet computer facilities at NUS' main library (<http://www.lib.nus.edu.sg/>) and the library at the Institute of South East Asian Studies (ISEAS) [ <http://www.iseas.edu.sg/library.html> ] to facilitate your research for the dissertation. NUS' main library has 2 million volumes covering all topics while ISEAS' library has 200,000 on South East Asian topics, half of which are in South East Asian languages.

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Email: [arisec@nus.edu.sg](mailto:arisec@nus.edu.sg)  
[www.ari.nus.edu.sg](http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg)

The Newsletter masthead incorporates the image of Kala. According to ancient legends popular in India and Southeast Asia, Kala symbolises immortality. This gold armband found on Fort Canning Hill, Singapore, in 1926, is one of the remains of the 14th-century kingdom of Temasik.

Newsletter compiled by Sun Laichen, Valerie Yeo, Tan Ying Ying, Khoo Gaik Cheng, Jennifer Lindsay and Geoff Wade