

ARI *news*

MARCH 2010
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A newsletter of the **Asia Research Institute**, National University of Singapore

HIGHLIGHTS



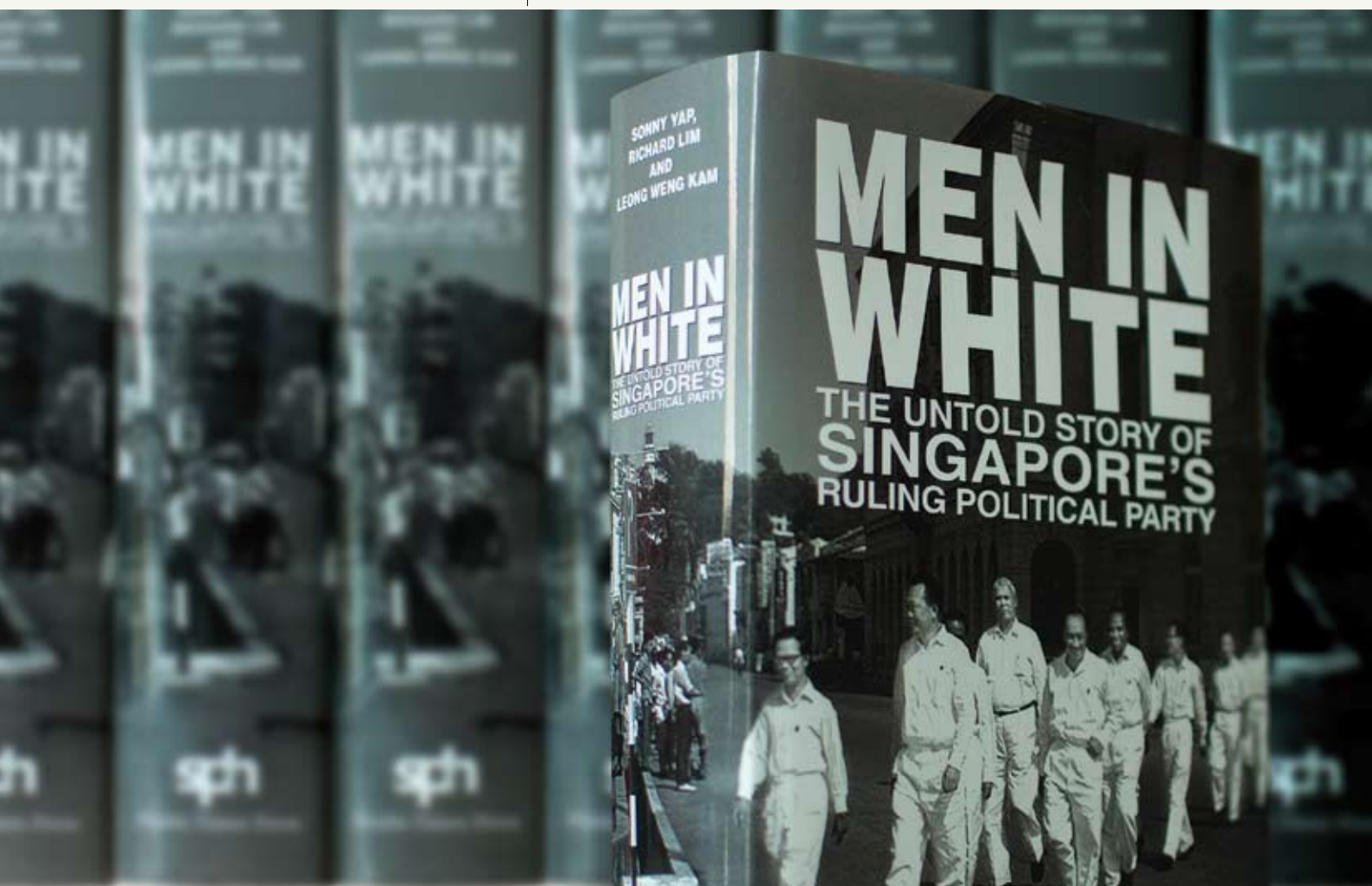
SPECIAL FEATURE

From Urban Stalking to the Travel of Cities



China's Century of Revolutions

by Professor Wang Gungwu



FEATURE ARTICLE

Forum on
Men in Black or White:
**History as Media Event
in Singapore**

sph
Strait Times Press

SONNY YAP, RICHARD LIM AND LEONG WENG KAM



Professor Lily Kong

Word from the Director

The last several months have brought much good news for ARI.

First, ARI received recognition as one of 29 centres of research excellence in Asia by Rockefeller Foundation. Much credit goes to Founding Director Tony Reid and Acting Directors Gavin Jones and Alan Chan; and to all the researchers whose work have earned this recognition. It offers encouragement to continue in the directions that have been pursued in the last nine years.

Second, the newest cluster at ARI, the Science, Technology, and Society Cluster, has done well at the Ministry of Education Academic Research Fund Tier 2 competition, winning a large grant of close to S\$800,000 at its first try. Credit here goes to Greg Clancey and Ryan Bishop, who lent leadership in this endeavour, working extremely hard over many months with numerous colleagues in the cluster (both in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and ARI) to submit the grant. The internal and international collaborations are extremely encouraging.

Third, ARI received a record number of applicants for its advertised research positions, and selected a very strong and impressive slate. The only regret

is that there were not enough positions to make more offers. The arrival of these new colleagues and visitors in the months ahead will bring ever more energy and ideas to an already vibrant intellectual environment.

Fourth, ARI received philanthropic support from the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation to fund two one-year visiting professors in 2011/12, one short-term visiting professor in 2010/11, and four Malaysian students for the Asian Graduate Student Fellowship and Summer Institute-cum-Graduate Student Forum for three years from 2010 to 2012. We are most grateful for the support.

Overall, the Institute is busy and buzzing. My colleagues are alive with ideas and abundant with energy. They are the Institute.

The Asia Research Institute is honoured to have been named one of 29 research centres of excellence in Asia by the Rockefeller Foundation in October 2009.

Professor Brenda Yeoh was appointed Dean of Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, NUS, on 1 January 2010. On 11 February 2010, she gave a talk to the staff of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences during which she shared her plans and initiatives for the faculty for the year moving forward.

Professor Chua Beng Huat gave a public lecture on "East Asian Pop Culture: A Trend Report and Agenda for Research" at Heidelberg University, Germany, 19 November 2009. He also gave a keynote addressed titled "Disrupting Liberalism in East Asia" at the Postgraduate Conference on Reconsidering Indonesia, Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, 2 December 2009, and another public lecture titled "Malay Language Pop Culture: An Agenda for Research", Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, 3 December 2009.

Prof V. V. Krishna was appointed a member of the Editorial Board of the African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development (AJSTID), Adonis & Abbey Publishers Ltd, UK, and a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of the Journal of Knowledge-based Innovation in China, Emerald Group Publishing Limited, UK, both with effect from 2009.

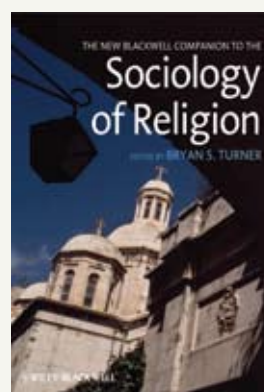
Professor Gavin Jones attended the first meeting of the Regional Programme External Advisory Group at the Asia-Pacific Regional Office of the United Nations Population Fund in Bangkok on 23 February 2010. He also gave an invited presentation at a seminar on "Demographic Transition: Investing in the Next Generation" organised by the Planning Commission of Pakistan in Islamabad, and held meetings with the Minister of Population, the National Institute of Population Studies and the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics on 25 - 26 February. On 2 March he gave an invited presentation at the Workshop on Development of the Population and Reproductive Health Strategy for 2011 - 2020, hosted by the Ministry of Health in Hanoi, Vietnam.

New Books



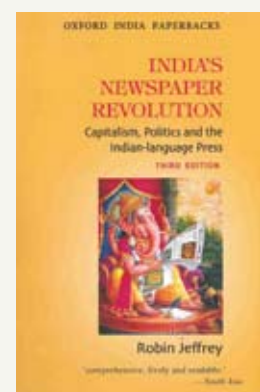
China's Urban Planning under the Market Economy (In Chinese)

Zhu Jieming
Beijing, China
Architecture & Building
Press, 2009



The New Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Religion

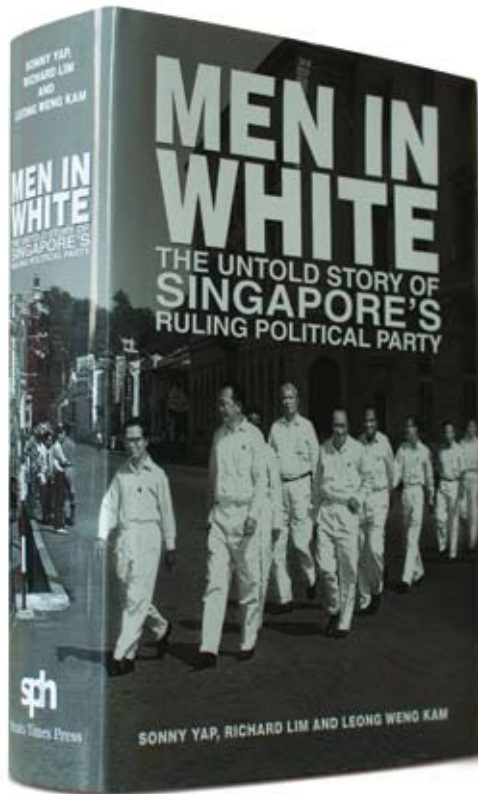
Bryan S. Turner (editor)
Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell
2010



India's Newspaper Revolution: Capitalism, Politics and the Indian-language Press 3rd Edition

Robin Jeffrey
New Delhi, Oxford University
Press, 2009

FEATURE ARTICLE



Forum on *Men in Black or White:* History as Media Event in Singapore

BY PROFESSOR CHUA BENG HUAT

The Forum on Men in Black or White: History as Media Event in Singapore was held at the National Library of Singapore on 16 January 2010, and was jointly organised by ARI and National Library Singapore. It attracted a full house audience of members of the public and the academe, and represents ARI's endeavours to foster an environment of public discussion of vital academic issues in Singapore. Professor Chua Beng Huat, the organiser of the event, gives an account of the main themes and audience reaction to the forum.



The publication of *Men In White: The Untold Story of Singapore's Ruling Party* (by Sonny Yap, Richard Lim and Leong Weng Kam, Straits Times Press), in August 2009, created much excitement among Singaporeans who have for five decades been waiting for the "full" story of politics of Singapore of the 1950s and 1960s to be told.

Hitherto, they have only been fed the version of the victors, culminating in the memoirs of Lee Kuan Yew, leader of the winning half of the original People's Action Party (PAP). This victor's version, having been taught in primary school, repeated in secondary school, thematised in television dramas and finally, paraded in the national museum, has wide currency but it is also tired and draws heavy doses of skepticism from all quarters. The book's subtitle promises untold stories, first-hand accounts, from the PAP's left-wing comrades who were marginalised, detained, deported and otherwise vanquished, by the winning half that came to dominate Singapore's parliamentary politics since 1968.

The voices that until now have not been allowed to speak for themselves, appearing as "national villains" in ventriloquist speeches of the victors, are now to be heard for the first time. The excitement was completely understandable.

Three journalists, Sonny Yap, Richard Lim and Leong Wang Kam, on paid leave from The Straits Times (Singapore Press Holdings), were to undertake the writing of presumably the full story of the rise of the PAP. Supported by a team of researchers, they combed sixty years of archives and spent endless hours contacting, wherever they can still be found, cajoling and persuading the suppressed individuals to speak their versions of the PAP's history. As this history continues till today, the book covers the founding of the Party till the present government. However, much of the excitement among readers was focused squarely on the political intrigues of the first decade. Such a publication rightly deserved public discussion and debate.

The online journal *S/PORES: new directions in Singapore studies* and ARI agreed quickly to hold a public forum, in partnership with the National Library Board. The Forum was held on 16 January 2010, at The Pod, the National Library Building. The Forum invited three speakers, Dr Hong Lysa, an independent historian well recognised in Singapore; Mr Tan Tarn How, Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy; Associate Professor Philip Holden, Department of English Literature and Language; and chaired and moderated by Dr Sai Siew Ming, Department of History, all from the National University of Singapore. It drew a full house audience.



Tan, an ex-journalist of The Straits Times, focused on the launching and publishing of the book as a “media event”. He drew attention to the conundrum that the publisher of the book is at the same time publisher of the national newspapers, in all four official languages, that were creating the media buzz, with news items on the launch — featuring on the front page and inside photographs of the, not surprisingly, “happy” gathering, if not amounting to “reunion”, of the past enemies — excerpts, editorials and letters to the forum, critiques and rejoinders of the journalists/writers. Meanwhile other books on broadly similar topics, including those written by previous political detainees themselves, such as *The Fajar Generation: The University Socialist Club* and *The Politics of Postwar Malaya and Singapore*, received hardly a mention in the premier national press.

The very explicitly male dominance and patriarchy of the title could not escape critical attention, even when one of its obvious pop cultural references is the comedy film, “Men in Black”, starring Will Smith. Philip Holden noted the underplaying of women’s contributions, in leadership and at the grassroots, in the years of decolonisation, in the book. Even prominent women politicians who made it to the ranks of Ministers

of State were not mentioned. Furthermore, the characterisation of women on the scant occasions that they appear are always less than celebratory; for example, in the depiction of the 1950s Chinese middle school student activism, the “pigtails” of protesting Chinese middle school girls were duly noted, but not the boys with their baggy short pants. One could ask, further, do the “Men in White” include the expelled left-wing members of the PAP, who before their expulsion also wore the same white uniform.

Detailed comments on the text were provided by Hong Lysa, displaying her thorough familiarity with the more than 600-page book, which she confessed to have read four times. She pointed out a central problem in both the book and what might be called the “official” narrative of highly “organised” connections between the communists who had infiltrated the open political sphere and those who worked in the shadows. At the various points in the book, the writers, repeating the interviewees/actors words, suggest that coordination between the two groups practically did not exist, let alone suggesting a tightly organised front. Of greater general importance is why the book, and by implication the present PAP government, need to continue with the “anti-communist” narrative

The very explicitly male dominance and patriarchy of the title could not escape critical attention, even when one of its obvious pop cultural references is the comedy film, “Men in Black”, starring Will Smith.

even when it is now evident that most of those who were labelled “communists” were admittedly left-wing, partly a reflection of the politics of the time, but not card-carrying members of the Malayan Communist Party.

The question-and-answer session that ensued focused on the relevance of the PAP’s early history to particularly the younger generations, the tendency towards “being heroic” among the historical actors, both victors and vanquished, of the decolonisation period and, the need for ARI to be more attentive to other voices and other books in its seminars and forum series.

www.ari.nus.edu.sg/calendarofevent.asp

International Workshop on Modern Sports in Asia: Cultural Perspectives

29 - 30 April 2010

Contact persons for further details:

Dr Cho Younghan:
choy@hufs.ac.kr

Dr Charles Leary:
charles.leary@nus.edu.sg

Modern sports were introduced to Asia in the late 19th century as an innovation from the West, and the diffusion and rise of modern sports in Asia overlapped with the development of modern society in Asia. This workshop attempts to understand the influence that modern sports has brought upon everyday life in Asia and will consider a variety of topics pursuant to the impact of modern sports in Asia. Its main objective is to assess and further develop the current research on sports in Asian contexts.

Marital Dissolution in Asia

6 - 7 May 2010

Contact persons for further details:

Dr Premchand Dommaraju:
prem@nus.edu.sg

Prof Gavin Jones:
arigwj@nus.edu.sg

Asia is characterised by a wide diversity of patterns in both marital formation and marital dissolution. Though there has been some work on recent changes in marriage patterns, marital dissolution in the Asian context has not received much critical attention. Changes in divorce rates have been linked to ideational change, shifts in education and labour force participation of women, changing nature of spouse selection, changes in marriage age, extent of social support for divorced women, changes in religious and civil laws regulating divorce and changes in life expectancy. To a varying extent, many of these changes have been occurring in most of Asia and their influence on marital dissolution needs to be examined.

Singapore Cinemas: The Locations of Film Exhibition

22 May 2010

Contact person for further details:

Dr Charles Leary:
charles.leary@nus.edu.sg

This workshop is brought to you by ARI in collaboration with Singapore Heritage Society, Asian Film Archive and National Library Singapore. It aims to document the history of film exhibition in Singapore by inviting methodologies such as archival research as well as oral history and incorporating disciplines such as film studies, architectural history, geography, and local Singapore history. Papers will focus on specific places for film going in Singapore, from the silent era to the present and in tracking the histories of certain places for film-going in Singapore, this workshop thus also hopes to contribute to a history of everyday life and culture in Singapore.

CALL FOR PAPERS — 5th Singapore Graduate Forum on Southeast Asia Studies

www.ari.nus.edu.sg/events_categorydetails.asp?categoryid=6&eventid=1034

7 - 9 July 2010

Contact person for further details:

Miss Sharon Ong:
arios@nus.edu.sg

Postgraduate students working on Southeast Asia are invited to submit abstracts based either on work in progress that is at an advanced stage (i.e. already completed data collection and analysis), or on completed work. NUS students are encouraged to take advantage of this unprecedented opportunity to interact and exchange ideas with students from ASEAN as well as those from other regions whose interests focus on Southeast Asia.

Graduate students should submit a 300-400 word abstract of their proposed paper using the provided application form to Ms Sharon Ong at arios@nus.edu.sg by 9 April 2010.

International Conference on Economic Stress, Human Capital, and Families in Asia: Research and Policy Challenges

3 - 4 June 2010

Contact persons for further details:

Prof Jean Yeung:
ariywj@nus.edu.sg

Prof Gavin Jones:
arigwj@nus.edu.sg

This conference aims to provide a forum for researchers, policy makers, and practitioners to share findings about the consequences of economic stress, adaptation behaviour, and the policy implications for human capital development and family well-being in Asia. The scope of this conference goes beyond the impact of the current financial crisis to include the effect of economic deprivation families experience as a result of marital dissolution, low-wage employment, or trying family events and circumstances. A multidisciplinary group of scholars and experts in international organisations from sociology, economics, social work, public policy, anthropology, from many Asian countries will examine the various topics.

Fatherhood in the 21st Century Asia: Research, Interventions, and Policies

17 - 18 June 2010

Contact person for further details:

Prof Jean Yeung:
ariywj@nus.edu.sg

This conference will provide a platform for scholars and policy makers to discuss issues related to the trend, determinants, and consequences of father involvement, as well as policies and interventions that engage men in family lives in Asia. We aim to gain a better understanding about (1) the nature of Asian men's diverse roles and challenges they face in becoming involved in their children's lives; (2) diverse policies and practice-based interventions related to fatherhood in Asian countries, by bringing together researchers and policy makers who are interested in exploring the diversity and challenges of fatherhood in Asia, encompassing differences across social class, ethnic origin, life course, and cultural contexts.

The Nexus of Migration and Masculinity in the Asian Context

15 - 16 July 2010

Contact person for further details:

Prof Brenda Yeoh:
geoyasa@nus.edu.sg

It is time to fill the gap in contemporary scholarly conversations about gender and migration by focusing on the nexus of migration and masculinity. This conference brings together scholars to address how men are migrant subjects, but also how men are affected when their wives, daughters, sisters and other female relatives are the migrants, while they are left behind. The aim of this conference is to examine the nexus between migration and masculinity in Asia. Papers will address gender and migration, but with a specific focus on how men configure in migration processes, and how migration is configured into men's lives.

Opening the Black Box of Migration: Brokers and the Organisation of Transnational Mobility

19 - 20 August 2010

Contact persons for further details:

A/P Johan Lindquist:
johan.a.lindquist@gmail.com

Prof Brenda Yeoh:
geoyasa@nus.edu.sg

This workshop will take the migrant broker or middleman as a starting point for investigating changing local, regional, and global regimes of transnational migration. It will pursue a series of empirical questions such as 1) How do brokers operate in practice, both in local and transnational terms? How are the relations between brokers structured? 2) What are brokers' relationships with a) government authorities (including individual officers of the state) b) migrants c) employers (or other third parties) d) nongovernmental organisations (NGOs)? 3) How are brokers—and brokerage systems more generally—embedded in local institutions? What forms of authority, legitimacy, and trust are utilised and constituted in this process?

Transnational Labour Migration, Remittances and Changing Family Structures and Relations in Asia

27 - 28 July 2010

Contact person for further details:

Dr Hoang Lan Anh:
arihla@nus.edu.sg

This conference will explore how economic outcomes of transnational labour migration impact on family relations and structures in both empirical and theoretical terms. The discussion at the conference is expected to be around but not necessarily restricted to the following questions: 1) How do gender, marital and inter-generational relations mediate the family decision making about remittances? 2) How do economic costs and benefits of transnational labour migration affect family structure and (gender, marital and inter-generational) relations? 3) How do remittances in migrant-sending families, particularly in gender-differentiated labour migration uphold, reconstitute or transform gender norms and ideologies in labour-sending societies?

Pop Culture China

7 - 8 December 2009

This international workshop examined the history and contemporary development of pop culture in Chinese languages that circulates among locations where *Huaren* are either the majority or a visible minority; namely, the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Philippines. A total of fifteen papers were presented, with participants from Australia,

the United States, the People's Republic of China, Indonesia and colleagues from Nanyang Technological University and NUS. It had four sections: film, pop music, television drama and pop novel and other writings. Specific topics examined were the birth and decline of Amoy language cinema, the failed attempt to produce Teochiu pop music, the phenomenal success of *wuxia* novels written in Bahasa Indonesia with Hokkien titles and recent developments of pop culture industry in the PRC. The workshop also drew a relatively large local audience reflecting interest in the topic in Singapore.

Beyond Shi'ism: Alid Piety in Muslim Southeast Asia

14 - 15 January 2010

One major debate that has been frequently reprised over the past century of scholarship on Islam in Southeast Asia has been that of the extent of "Shi'ite influence" on the region. Often more polemical than academic, these debates have had the effect of obscuring more nuanced understandings of local Muslim beliefs and practices related to veneration

of the family of the Prophet. This workshop brought together scholars from the region and around the world to critically re-examine this topic in ways that would deliberately move beyond pre-occupations with Shi'ism in a formal sectarian sense, and thus develop a new appreciation of diverse manifestations of religious experience and expression centred on the image of the Prophet Muhammad and his family. Framed in terms of a broader conception of "Alid piety" the research presented at the conference contributes to a significant re-evaluation of legacies of internal Muslim pluralism in the region.

Performing Space in Asian Film: Interdisciplinary Perspectives

22 - 23 February 2010

This workshop, sponsored by ARI's Cultural Studies in Asia cluster, was convened by Dr Lilian Chee of the NUS Department of Architecture, Dr Edna Lim of the NUS Theatre Studies Program, and Dr Charles Leary of ARI. Practitioners and scholars from a range of disciplines considered various perspectives on conceptualising the performative dynamics of space in contemporary film

practice across Asia.

The keynote address was delivered by Prof Ackbar Abbas, head of the Comparative Literature department at University of California, Irvine, on "Between the Visible and the Intelligible in Asian Cinema". Participants presented thoughts on performance and spatial representation in films from China, Hong Kong, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, India, Taiwan, Indonesia, South Korea, the Philippines, Japan, and Singapore. Integrated among the papers was recent work presented by local and overseas filmmakers. The convenors intend to publish the proceedings of the workshop in an edited volume.

Rural-Urban Networks and Transitions in Asia: Re-spatializing Cultural and Political Imaginaries

25 - 26 February 2010

This workshop was jointly organised by the Asian Urbanisms cluster and the Cities cluster of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. The convenors were Tim Bunnell and D. Parthasarathy (IIT Bombay and formerly Visiting Senior Research Fellow at ARI). Twelve papers were

presented in total, three each in panels on India, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia. This enabled appreciation of the diversity of rural-urban linkages within specific national contexts as well as comparison between countries. The first day ended with a roundtable discussion chaired by Ho Kong Chong and including Nihal Perera (Ball State University) and Jim Glassman (University of British Columbia) designed to draw out commonalities and differences across the nationally-based panels. The convenors have been in contact with editors at the *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* concerning publication possibilities.

Visit www.ari.nus.edu.sg/ARI-Events.htm for more details.

CLUSTER NEWS

Religion and Globalisation in Asian Contexts Cluster



A/P Michael Feener
Research Leader
*Religion & Globalisation
in Asian Contexts*

The Religion and Globalisation in Asian Contexts cluster is dedicated to exploring global reconfigurations of religion and its diverse manifestations in Asia. Our work focuses on the dynamic interactions of secularisation and religious revival in the modern period, as well as to related issues of authority and tradition in contemporary religious discourse and practice. The cluster's research deals with major established religions such as Buddhism, Christianity and Islam, as well as new religious movements in all parts of Asia, broadly conceived. The cluster's wide range of research projects is organised around a shared commitment to critically examine the diverse ways in which processes of modernisation and globalisation have re-framed the ways in which religion is experienced and understood in contemporary Asia.

In our work we strive to move beyond established paradigms of secularisation developed for discussions of modern Europe to engage in more meaningful and nuanced ways with the different historical trajectories of religious developments in Asia. This line of approach is reflected in such cluster events as the recent workshop on "Secularization, Religion and the State" (21 Jan 2010, co-organised with the University of Tokyo) and conference "Empire, Civilization and the Anthropology of China" (4 - 5 Mar 2010). Over the coming year the cluster will continue its work on issues of religion, law and society while also expanding into new areas including studies of religion and NGOs.

NOTICE OF NEW APPOINTMENT

PhD Research Scholarships, NUS

The Asia Research Institute is pleased to offer PhD research scholarships from January 2011 in the following interdisciplinary areas:

- **Asian Migration**
- **Changing Family in Asia**
- **Cultural Studies in Asia**
- **Religion & Globalisation in Asian Contexts**
- **Science, Technology, and Society**
- **Asian Urbanisms**

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. Please note that some departments/programmes have only one intake per year in August (Semester 1).

Interested applicants are required to submit their application by 15th May 2010, 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 www.nus.edu.sg/registrar/edu/gd-applnres.html

Applicants must use the application forms in the respective Faculty websites depending on the Faculty to which they wish to seek admission. They should send their applications directly to their respective faculties, indicating their interest to be attached to ARI, and not send a duplicate copy to ARI.

Please visit ARI website www.ari.nus.edu.sg for the interdisciplinary areas offering scholarships.

Address for applications and references:
c/o Ms Kristy Won, Asia Research Institute,
National University of Singapore, 469A Tower Block,
Bukit Timah Road, #10-01, Singapore 259770,
Tel: (65) 6516 3810 Fax: (65) 6779 1428

ARI SPECIAL FEATURE



From Urban Stalking to the Travel of Cities



A/P Tim Bunnell
Research Leader
Asian Urbanisms

For several years now, it has seemed as though Kuala Lumpur (KL) has been following me. By the time my book (*Malaysia, Modernity and the Multimedia Super Corridor: A Critical Geography of Intelligent Landscapes*) was published in 2004, I had been conducting research on Malaysia's federal capital and contiguous urban territories for more than a decade. I was ready to move on. But KL, in various forms, has continued to appear in my academic life.

The feeling of being stalked by my city of study is only partly attributable to academic

reputation. Of course, through publication in numerous journals as well as the book, I have gained some international visibility as a scholar of KL, particularly in Anglophone human geography and urban studies. Regrettably, however, "Bunnell" citations have not been the most common means through which I have continued to be reminded of KL. Much more often, well-meaning colleagues and friends, knowing of my interest in the iconography of landmark urban megaprojects, have alerted me to instances where KL – usually through the image of the Petronas Towers – appears in promotional, advertising and/or tourist material around the world.

While internationally-disseminated images have filtered back to me, I have also encountered KL in some of my subsequent research sites outside Malaysia. In Aceh, where I was involved in a collaborative research project on post-tsunami

redevelopment, for example, the Petronas Towers appeared both on the t-shirt of an activist interviewee and in miniature replica form (like the ones in the picture) in the restaurant of a man who had worked in Malaysia during the conflict. In Liverpool where I have been conducting life history research on Malay ex-seafarers, I was afflicted by similar high-rise haunting – through “Malaysia Truly Asia” posters in the community club house and in the photo albums of Liverpoolians who had visited Malaysia in search of their roots.

I have come to regard these sporadic encounters with KL-at-a-distance less as a shadow cast by previous work and more as a phenomenon worthy of attention in its own right. The conception of cities “travelling” speaks to recent work on relational forms of comparative urbanism. This strand of research in urban studies has heightened my interest in constitutive relations and linkages between cities. The research project which I am developing from this interest begins with three straightforward questions: (1) how do cities travel? (2) which cities travel? and (3) what are the effects of these travels?

Some clues to the first of these questions are evident from the anecdotes above. Cities may be understood to travel in official forms of place promotion (tourist imagery, investment brochures and advertising) and through a range of everyday practices (e.g., tourist photo-taking and souvenir purchasing). However, I am also interested in the way that cities – or, rather, *some* cities – travel in urban planning practice and as academic models.

So which cities are these? All too often, it is cities in Europe and especially North America which have been seen as models for emulation or as diagnostic of the leading edge of urban trends everywhere. As part of ARI’s Asian Urbanisms cluster, I am concerned with the travel of cities in Asia. Which Asian cities are being drawn upon as models by planners and policy makers? Singapore, as Chua

“As part of ARI’s Asian Urbanisms cluster, I am concerned with the travel of cities in Asia. Which Asian cities are being drawn upon as models by planners and policy makers?”



Beng Huat has pointed out, is certainly one.¹ KL is another, albeit travelling in different as well as overlapping networks from Singapore. I intend to study – and to map – both.

My aim is certainly not to promote either Singapore or KL as exemplary. Rather, I am concerned with examining the diverse urban effects of cases where these cities have been referenced or even consciously emulated. One might admire the way in which authorities in Singapore cleaned up the Singapore River. But the human consequences of “Singaporeanisation” are very different in a city such as Surabaya where riverbanks are home to large numbers of urban poor.

This leads on to a final issue concerning methodological practice. Efforts to understand on the ground effects of intra-Asia urban referencing will incorporate field-based observation and survey. However, tracing the travel of cities – or

particular parts or features of a given city – also necessitates consideration of sites of urban circulation and exchange. As such, policy and planning conferences, for example, become “the field”.

The project I am proposing means having to trace flows of the very kinds of city imagery that friends and colleagues have bombarded me with over the years. So perhaps the tables have turned with me now plotting to stalk the travels of cities such as KL.

¹Chua, B. H. (2008) “Singapore as Model”, paper presented at Workshop on Inter-Referencing Asia: Urban Experiments and the Art of Being Global, Dubai, 21 - 23 February.

ARI SPECIAL FEATURE

Studying and Teaching Buddhism as “Living Traditions”



Shi Zhiru
Visiting Senior Research Fellow
Asian Urbanisms Cluster

Associate Professor of Religious
Studies, Pomona College

In the summer of 1997, as I was beginning research on my dissertation topic, I had the wonderful opportunity to join a group of Chinese Buddhist studies specialists and art historians to conduct research at Buddhist sites in Southwestern China. It was my first trip to China, and it radically changed my approach to the study of Chinese Buddhism, particularly reshaping my dissertation study of the bodhisattva Dizang (also transliterated as Ti-tsang; Sanskrit, Kshitigarbha, or Japanese, Jizō).

Growing up in a Chinese family in Singapore, my early impressions of Dizang Bodhisattva mostly came from attending family memorial rites held in local temples, especially during the seventh lunar month, a time for venerating the dead in the Chinese liturgical calendar. In Chinese temples today, Dizang is separately enshrined in the Merit Cloister or Memorial Hall, venerated as the patron saint who steers the faithful dead away from the clutches of the infernal realms. Naturally, when I began research on this bodhisattva, I anticipated charting out a trajectory of his increasing specialisation as the Buddhist saviour of hell in medieval China.

However, at the Buddhist art-historical sites in Sichuan, I came across intriguing images of Dizang that really could not be explained by only his underworldly function. The visual images and inscriptions suggested fascinating cultic links connecting Dizang to an array of Buddhist and Daoist cults, several of which were not recorded in the canons, at least not in the versions transmitted today. Returning to the University of Arizona where I was writing my PhD dissertation, I had to re-conceive my study with an eye to recover the complex diversity of the formative phase that was subsequently eclipsed by the flourish of the afterlife Dizang cult.

Until then, my academic training had focused on historical and textual analyses of religion. I was suddenly faced with the challenge to incorporate material artifacts and ritual practices into my study of Chinese Buddhist history. Several field trips followed, as I set out to trace the dissemination of the Dizang cult across central China beginning with the Longmen caves in Henan and sculptural sites in Shaanxi, through the border regions of Sichuan and Gansu, as well as the pilgrimage site, Mount Jiuhua in Anhui. In addition, I found myself foraying for literary

evidence beyond the transmitted Chinese Buddhist canonical texts which as a Buddhist nun, I am most familiar with. Buddhist manuscript collections, non-Buddhist narrative and historical records, as well as ritual manuals have yielded critical sources for reconstructing forgotten facets of the medieval Dizang cult. I learned to question fruitfully the normative representations and to look for silenced or forgotten voices. My goal was always to render the Dizang cult in terms of “living” practices and attitudes operating within the broader political, religious, and social contexts of medieval China (6th to 10th century).

In all my research publications and also in my teaching at Pomona College, I have pursued this interdisciplinary combination of field research with the study of Buddhist history, texts, and art with the agenda to analyse religion as “lived” traditions. I constantly encourage my undergraduate students to combine the reading of Buddhist texts and history with the encountering of the religion as a “living” tradition with its array of material realities, nuanced complexities, or even apparent contradictions, which cannot always be explained by textual categories and literary representations. Field research is a critical component in my classes, and I see to it that my students get opportunities to interact and experience Buddhism as a “living” tradition at one of the Buddhist centres of their choice in the LA county. The exposure to the religious community is often a timely reminder of the irreducibility of religious life and practices which the realm of ideas and texts do not always reflect.

For my year at ARI, I am writing up a second book manuscript that studies how Buddhist patronage of art and architecture has transformed Buddhist aesthetics to produce a rich visual world for a form of Buddhist identity known as *renjian fojiao*, usually translated as Humanistic Buddhism. Again I adopt an interdisciplinary perspective to contextualise Taiwanese trends within Chinese Buddhist history, while also including art-historical and anthropological investigation into the current usages and interpretations of religious visual culture.



PROF ROBIN JEFFREY

has commenced a 1-year appointment as a Visiting Research Professor in the Open Category with effect from 3 November 2009. He is jointly appointed to ISAS. Prof Jeffrey is an Emeritus Professor at the

Australian National University and LaTrobe University. He is working on a study of mobile phones in India and completing a book called "Slices of India", an idiosyncratic history of India in the second half of the 20th century.



DR KIM TAE HO

has commenced a 9-month appointment as Postdoctoral Fellow in the Science, Technology, and Society cluster with effect from 9 November 2009. Dr Kim obtained his PhD from Seoul National University, South Korea,

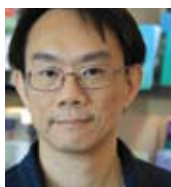
in August 2009. He majored in the history of science and technology in modern Korea, in the Interdisciplinary Program in History and Philosophy of Science, Seoul National University. He is currently concentrating on the "International Skill Olympics" and promotion of vocational education in South Korea.



PROF KENNETH DEAN

has commenced an 8-month appointment as a Visiting Research Professor in the Religion and Globalisation in Asian Contexts cluster with effect from 6 January 2010. He is jointly appointed to the Department of Chinese Studies,

Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences. He is the author of several books on Daoism and Chinese popular religion and the local cultural history of Fujian, China. His current research project is a study of transnational temple networks originating in Southeast China, and their spread and development across Southeast Asia.



MR CHIA CHEE KAIN ARTHUR

has commenced a 1-year appointment as a Research Assistant with effect from 14 January 2010. Mr Chia will be supporting an ARI research project entitled "State Boundaries,

Cultural Politics & Gender Negotiations in Commercially Arranged International Marriages in Singapore and Malaysia". He is also currently writing a PhD thesis at Southeast Asian Studies, NUS, based on his ethnographic fieldwork with Kuan-Im devotees in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur.



DR CHERYLL ALIPIO

has commenced a 1-year appointment as Postdoctoral Fellow in the Changing Family in Asia cluster with effect from 22 January 2010. Dr Alipio received her doctoral degree in

Anthropology from the University of Washington. Her dissertation title is "Affective Economies: Child Debts, Devotions, and Desires in Philippine Migrant Families." Her research interest lies in studying the Philippines and Southeast Asia through the anthropology of childhood; anthropology of affect and reciprocity; intersections of experience, subjectivity, and identity; kinship and reproductive labour; and transnationalism and labour migration.



PROF SUSAN KNEEBONE

has commenced a 3-month appointment as a Visiting Senior Research Fellow in the Asian Migration cluster with effect from 2 February 2010. She is a Professor of Law and Deputy Director of the

Castan Centre for Human Rights Law at the Faculty of Law, Monash University, Victoria, Australia. She teaches Forced Migration and Human Rights, International Refugee Law and Practice, and Citizenship and Migration Law.



PROF SONG PING

has commenced a 3-month appointment as a Visiting Senior Research Fellow in the Asian Migration cluster with effect from 8 January 2010. She is a Professor of Anthropology at Xiamen University, China. Her research

focuses on Chinese New Migration and Chinese transnationalism in the era of globalisation as well as "cultural southeast" (vs. cultural China) and transnational Chinese social practices.



MS ZHANG JUAN

has commenced a 1-year appointment as a Research Assistant with effect from 1 March 2010. She will be supporting the ARI research project entitled "State Boundaries, Cultural Politics & Gender

Negotiations in Commercially Arranged International Marriages in Singapore and Malaysia". She is also a PhD candidate with the Department of Anthropology in Macquarie University in Sydney. Her doctoral research focuses on the everyday politics and interactions along the China-Vietnam borderland.

ASIA TRENDS 2010

ASIA TRENDS is an ARI flagship public outreach event. ASIA TRENDS lectures reinforce ARI's objectives as a world-leading humanities, social sciences and interdisciplinary centre for research and education on Asia that attracts scholars, researchers and students globally, through research, conferences, lectures, seminars and graduate study. It connects with the local Singapore community through informing and interacting with various public sectors (citizenry, government, civil society organisations, businesses, universities and colleges) on major social research issues about Asia.

Asia Trends 2010 is the eighth in the annual series with a new format. Each research cluster within ARI will host an evening

seminar on a trend within its research field. The series of seminars will be held on alternate Wednesdays in April and May, 7.30pm to 9.00 pm, at The POD (Level 16) of the National Library, which is co-organiser of the event. For more information, please visit the our website at <http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/conf2010/asiatrends2010.htm>

7 April 2010

Charisma and Compassion: A Genealogy of NGO-ness from Taiwan to the Globe

21 April 2010

Green Urbanism: How Does Singapore Compare?

5 May 2010

Lifelines: The Ethics of Blood Banking for Family and Beyond

12 May 2010

Voices in the Gap: Media and Culture in China's Era of Transition

26 May 2010

Families, Children and Domestic Workers in Contemporary Asia

Inter-Asia Roundtable 2010

TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION AND CHILDREN IN ASIAN CONTEXTS

2 - 3 August 2010

The ARI Inter-Asia Roundtable is an annual flagship event of ARI. A discussion platform on major issues and their significant and emerging trends in the various regions of diverse Asia, the Roundtable features invited expert speakers who present papers and lead discussants who comment briefly on papers presented and lead discussions with prepared guide topics, while invited audiences are from academia, NGOs, government institutions and other interested organisations.

The Inter-Asia Roundtable on Transnational Migration and Children in Asian Contexts takes up the challenge of developing critical accounts of children in migratory circumstances which capture the diversity of regional experiences, and in so doing, destabilises the intellectual and practical hegemony of well-honed western models of children on the move. While giving serious consideration to the view best developed in western-based research that children have social agency and can no longer be treated as adults-in-waiting, the Roundtable also emphasises the interplay between structural construction of children's identities and agency on the one hand and situated practices in real-world contexts on the other.

The Roundtable features five panels, each focused around a different group of children involved in transnational migratory circumstances in Asia:

*Panel 1: **Left-behind Children of Migrant Parents***

*Panel 2: **Children Migrating for Work***

*Panel 3: **Children Migrating for Education***

*Panel 4: **Child Trafficking***

*Panel 5: **Transnational Adoption of Children***

The Asia Research Institute (ARI) was established as a university-level institute in July 2001 as one of the strategic initiatives of the National University of Singapore (NUS).

Its mission is to provide a world-class focus and resource for research on the Asian region, located at one of its communication hubs. ARI engages the humanities and social sciences broadly defined, and especially inter-disciplinary frontiers between and beyond disciplines.



ASIAN MIGRATION



CHANGING FAMILY IN ASIA



RELIGION AND GLOBALISATION IN ASIAN CONTEXTS



CULTURAL STUDIES IN ASIA



SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIETY



ASIAN URBANISMS



OPEN CLUSTER



China's Century of Revolutions

ARI invited Professor Wang Gungwu to give a public lecture on 12 January 2010, co-sponsored by Asian Civilisations Museum. This article is an excerpt of his lecture.



In 2011, China will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of the *Xinhai geming* (1911 Revolution). In this lecture I examine the usage of the term *geming* in Chinese history and the concept of revolution. The question I shall try to answer is, why was one revolution not enough and had to be followed by others? How much did China need its revolutions?

The ancient Chinese word *geming* has become the word to translate modern ideas of revolution. The “*ge*” means to change and the “*ming*” refers to *tienming*, the mandate of heaven. In ancient history, each *geming* was not only described as righteous but some also represented the success stories that lasted for centuries. At its simplest, *geming* became a ritualistic term that simply acknowledged every dynastic change. The dominant Confucian rhetoric of Chinese historiography stressed the continuity of basic ideas and institutions in all dynasties, thus leaving us with a picture of stagnation. Western scholars have tended to confirm this view.

This view is misleading. Some of the long-lived dynasties did achieve transformations that could be compared to revolutions. There is also evidence that some major transformations in Chinese history actually occurred during the in-between periods of instability. The Chinese now acknowledge that there have been many kinds of *geming* in their history. The concept has always carried expectations as being on the right side of the moral authority that conferred legitimacy on each ruling house. *Geming* was, in other words, not limited to the transfer of power or mere regime change. Its association with the new mandate to rule also assumed the duty to produce changes that were necessary in order for the mandate to be properly fulfilled.

Now I turn to four leaders in modern China and what they thought about revolution: Sun Yat-Sen, Chiang Kai-shek, Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. Sun Yat-Sen was referred by the Japanese press as a “revolutionary”. He accepted the term because he saw that the name described his goal of overthrowing the ruling corrupt and incompetent Qing dynasty and he saw his act of rebellion as worthy of the heavenly mandate. Yet the republic proclaimed in 1912 represented merely a preliminary change. On his deathbed in 1925, he left a message that the revolution was not completed and exhorted his comrades to continue the struggle. Chiang Kai-shek claimed a partial victory in 1928, which was almost immediately negated by the Japanese invasion. In the end, hope for victory was snatched away from

his Kuomintang (KMT) by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1949.

Mao represents the coming together of the Chinese tradition of *geming* and the modern ideology of revolution. To Mao, 1949 itself was just the first step in a much longer process where each victory was only one more step towards the next, and many steps had to be taken for the commitment to, and dream of, revolution to be fulfilled. Mao wanted the party to reach for his dreams and was prepared to destroy the CCP if it did not follow his lead. The consequences were so dire that in the end Deng, a committed revolutionary who came to reject Mao's supra party and supra national goals, came to the conclusion that China had had enough of slogans and violence. Under Deng, the restored CCP ended all talk of revolution and accepted that their revolution had already succeeded and all attention should be focused now on building the wealth and power of a united nation. In essence, this completed revolution was reformed to achieve goals not much different from those that Sun had, 60 years earlier, set for China. They were to create a unified and sovereign nation with the popular support that marked heaven's approval, a country that was dedicated to becoming prosperous, strong and secure.

Like the word “revolution”, the *geming* concept was a complex one. No *geming* was ever complete if it did not meet the obligation to produce the achievements that were expected of it. During the 20th century, it served similar aspirational purposes in 1911 and in 1949 but the pursuit of *geming* went out of control in 1966 under Mao. The fact that after 1978 the word is no longer needed tells us that the mandate or legitimacy assumed to be conferred through victory on the battlefield is confirmed. Essentially the revolution is ending with both concepts of *geming* and revolution enriched and reinforced by association. Together they are now combined and integrated into the new Chinese political culture.