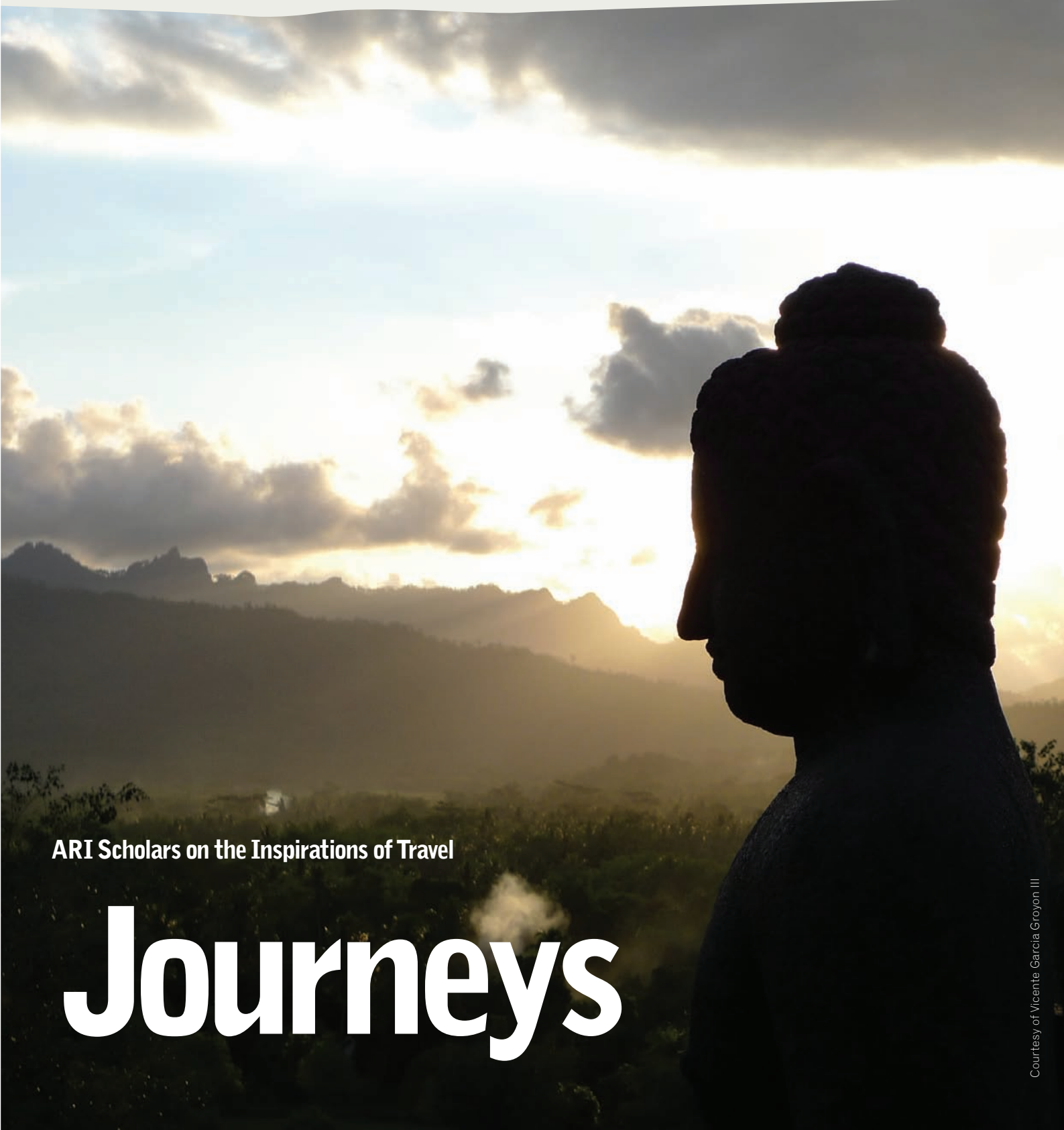


ARI *news*

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



ARI Scholars on the Inspirations of Travel

Journeys



**Professor
Prasenjit Duara**

Word from the Director

“It is with considerable delight — mixed with some trepidation and humility — that I have succeeded to the Directorship of the Asia Research Institute (ARI).”

ARI is one of the very few advanced research institutes in Asia that undertakes basic, interdisciplinary and innovative research in the humanistic and social scientific study of Asia. It is not directly committed to policy goals and imperatives; rather we seek to live up to the motto of our parent institution, the National University of Singapore: “A Global University centered in Asia”.

Although we are located in the tower of the verdant Bukit Timah campus, ours is by no means an ivory tower. We like to think of ARI as a thriving hub with internal links to many diverse nodes in the university and outward links to Singapore and the global research community. The ARI research faculty also teach in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and we frequently collaborate with scholars from the Faculty of Law, School of Business, School of Design and Environment, LKY School of Public Policy, the Global Asia Institute (GAI) as well as the

area research centres of NUS, such as East Asian Institute, Institute of South Asian Studies and the Middle East Institute.

The vitality and strengths of ARI derive from this nexus of the interior and the exterior. As such our visiting fellows have been selected not only for their academic accomplishments and promise but also with a view to their likely fit with our research clusters. The exchange of materials, ideas, perspectives and frameworks that take place on a daily basis at seminars, workshops and over coffee and lunch — between the long hours of research and writing — is a vital stimulus for pioneering outcomes. In the almost ten years of its life, ARI has produced significant global alumni of Asia scholars. We hope that you will keep in touch and return when possible to deepen our collective project.

As for the study of Asia, my own dictum is Connecting Asia! I see Asia connecting in many different, old and new ways and not only with or within itself. Although our research may focus on a small part of this vast region, we need to be aware of the geographies and pathways across the region that have shaped this small part. The insight that informs my dictum is that our future will be increasingly molded by these connections — and the interdependencies and challenges that they throw up. It is my hope that by the time this becomes everyday reality, ARI will be exploring other new frontiers.

FEATURE ARTICLE

Travel Tales: The Researcher on the Wayfarer's Trail

"I travel, therefore I am" is the new definitive axiom. Everyone is drawn to it. To travel is to be counted in the thick traffic of bodies, baggage and e-tickets. To travel is to be out there in the unfettered world.

By **Dinah Roma Sianturi**

"I travel, therefore I am" is the new definitive axiom. Everyone is drawn to it. To travel is to be counted in the thick traffic of bodies, baggage, and e-tickets. To travel is to be out there in the unfettered world. The usual greetings have been replaced with "I'm leaving for..." or "I've just returned from..."—the bedrock motif of travel, with its departures and arrivals spiced by tales of (mis) adventures, chance encounters, insect bites, and the relief of home.

Out of this flourishing have emerged travel writings that continue to crowd bookstore shelves, the blogosphere and, of course, the ubiquitous Facebook to which we have turned over the task of memory. Landscapes are reduced to a few square inch photo identified by a few words. Numerous albums of journeys are uploaded everyday only to be pushed down by the next from another trip.

Critics view this resurgence in the interest of the travel genre over the decades as a sign of a deeper change in thinking. While the travel genre is indicted for its "merchandising of adventure" and "consumptive logic", its increased production articulates experiences reflective of the profound changes in the world. Nowhere in the recent past has the vocabulary of

travel been more pervasive than it is now. Spatial metaphors are shared across disciplines. Boundaries once thought of as fixed are now deemed as mere constructions. These negotiations of borders and confines have made the travel phenomenon and its writings both intractable and encompassing.

Yet despite the expanse travel promises, many who travel are not mobile. They are often coerced by need or circumstance. For many migrant workers, for example, mobility is an anathema. It does nothing to enrich their experience of geographies. What is present is the acute sense of corporeality, of a body being transported across unfamiliar terrains, nonexistent most probably in their own mental maps, and whose eventual landscape is that of pain and yearning.

In the current issue of the ARI newsletter, four fellows generously contributed their own insights into travel. Joanna Claire Cook writes on her engagement with pilgrimage, Leo Ching relates a recent trip with his family to India, Shu-Yi sheds light on how her travels are intimately linked to her own research on architecture and cultural heritage preservation, and Lai Ah Eng, who initially thought of writing up her travel to Kenya, surprised us with a poignant piece on her trip with her husband to Malaysia in 2010. Much as we wanted to include

Ah Eng's entire essay, we had to settle for an excerpt that nonetheless reveals both her anthropological reflexes and writerly eye for detail.

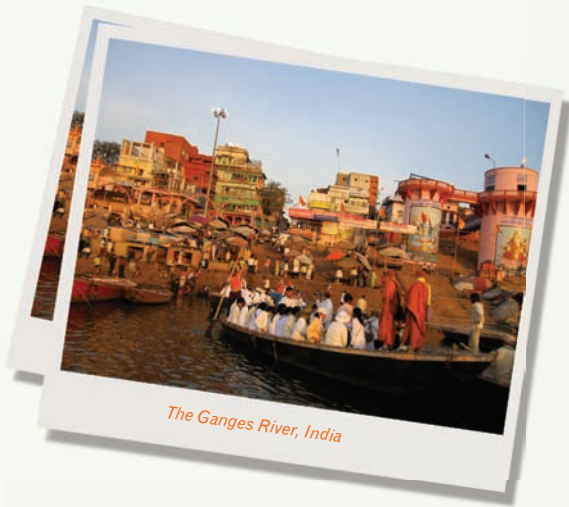
This issue comes in the heel of the *Workshop on Travel Writing: Practice, Pedagogy and Theory* held on February 24–25, 2011. It addressed the need to create more productive occasions into the critical inquiry of travel texts through a dialogue among writers, teachers and theorists. One of its goals was to articulate issues thought to be loosely related from each other in the hope that new sites of interaction, even collision, could be teased out of the exchange. It also aimed at exploring how debates assumed to be integral in earlier studies of travel texts may unravel into new strands of investigation as the global political and economic shifts that highlight Asia's rise are considered. Lastly, it emphasized how the practice, pedagogy and theorizing of travel narratives could no longer be perceived as distinct from each other if more socio-culturally responsive, rewarding and innovative ways of articulating travel experiences are to be encouraged.



Courtesy of Vicente Garcia Groyon III

The Pilgrim's Path

By **Joanna Claire Cook**



The Ganges River, India

On long journeys as a child, when guerrilla attacks on the enemy's side of the car had worn thin and my brother and I had taken up the unremitting drone of whining children the world over, our father used to quote Cavafy at us:

When you set out on your journey to Ithaca, pray that the road is long, full of adventure, full of knowledge.

In hindsight, it may well land at his door that I chose anthropology, a profession that affords multiple 'ports seen for the first time', much to his chagrin. But, the metaphor of Ithaca has never been more apt than during my recent research on Thai pilgrimage in India. The journey, for the anthropologist and for the pilgrim, is all.

Anthropology has been described as travel writing about places without air-conditioning. Both demand a commitment to exploration, but for the anthropologist this is no longer necessarily the broadening of geographical horizons. The anthropology of networks, the Internet, biosciences, auditing, all point towards the possibility of the scholarly exploration of worlds without the demand for the martyred sacrifice

of comfort and basic sanitation. Such were my ruminations after a week of barrelling along dusty North Indian roads between Buddhist holy sites. In a convoy of buses packed with Thai men and women euphoric from the transformations of Buddhist pilgrimage we travelled 10 -12 hours a day. Sleeping on temple floors, chanting in unison on our buses, worshipping at each of the holy sites, scrumming for food with 119 other pilgrims: I had chosen to do research about pilgrimage but I had not chosen to make it easy for myself. Along with my companions I was tired, dirty, fatigued by perpetual motion, and totally elated. For all my revelries of alternative fieldwork methods, neither my companions nor I would have had it any other way.

After a short night's sleep we parked our buses in Varanasi and walked through the pre-dawn light towards the Ganges. We silently boarded the boats as the rising sun painted the city orange. And, as I watched the myriad domestic ablutions of people beginning their days, the multiple, infinitesimal moments of humanity that skim past us, barely perceptible in our hurried bulky movements, I was overawed by the wealth and richness of experience that my work affords. Later, an elderly Thai pilgrim asked me how I felt about the pilgrimage. I told her that for me the journey was a spectacular adventure. She laughed. 'Do you not like adventure?' I asked. 'No child', she chuckled. 'I like making merit'. Perhaps the anthropologist and the pilgrim share some of the same Ithacas. After all, would the journey mean as much if it was easy?

Notes on a Weekend Travel to Malacca and Negri Sembilan (An Excerpt)

By **Lai Ah Eng**

I have travelled the length of the peninsula many times in my youth



Deity in Temple

when I was a student, first between Singapore and my hometown Kuala Lumpur, then between Penang and Kuala Lumpur, taking the bus and train, and once even hitchhiking between Singapore and Alor Setar. I have also travelled to the east coast, on roads and railways that cut through the remote jungles and deep plantations of Kelantan, Trengganu, Pahang and Johor... And crossing the Causeway inevitably evokes intense emotions of departing and arriving that only the diasporic traveller experiences... This weekend, I impulsively decide to go to Negri Sembilan... my reason being that it is the fruit and flower season that I have missed seeing in its glory in the jungle and orchards, and also to indulge in some food- and fruit-tasting...

Our neighbours soon join us as prearranged ... Like most Singaporeans, they have already done some shopping in Malacca town first and bought pineapple tarts, biscuits, foods ... Following the food trail is unavoidable for many Singaporeans ... Pineapple tarts especially are central to my Eurasian neighbours' identity ... and then of course there are the durians ... Come to think of it, the Chinese-durian connection is testimony to how diasporic Chinese have settled into the land. They grow it, eat it, sell it with a complicated D 10 – 24 grading system and an assortment of names of celebrities, and invent ridiculous new dishes with it like durian mooncakes and puffs. In contrast, the angmohs, for all their colonising, did not get anywhere near this king of tropical fruits they found so pungent..

We drive into the countryside ... LK keeps saying, 'Ah, this is the Malaysia of my youth!' whenever we pass forests, smallholdings and villages... But suddenly, the Malaysia of our youth ends abruptly. We are greeted by a hill severely mauled of its trees and large tracts of land turned into housing and industrial sites. The country road becomes a super highway and leads to a gigantic stadium ...

We get lost on the super highway of modernity and turn into a side road to check our bearings. The anthropological me immediately gets distracted by a kindergarten with a huge picture of Mickey Mouse and an Indian temple beside it. The temple has two shrines: one with a huge stone dog guarding three little deities, the other with a giant fierce-looking man whose right hand wielded a sword and left hand held a severed head while his left leg stepped on another... an Indian lady in the house nearby ... says that the man is like a father and the chopped heads are those of bad people. LK says it is disgusting to live beside such a statue but I wonder if residents felt safer ...

We also stop at various fruit stalls to buy durians, rambutans, mangoes, mangosteens, guava, starfruit, soursop, bananas and papayas. When we are done, our car looks like a fruit stall and smells heavenly of durian fragrance...

We stop to take pictures of a Minangkabau house and talk with an old man... His eight children and twenty-eight grandchildren are all working and living in Kuala Lumpur in "modern" houses; only he lives in the village house and there will be no one to maintain it when he dies. The surrounding abandoned houses belong to those who have passed away and whose children no longer return... He is telling us the story of Malay rural-urban migration ... Ah, Pakcik is from that generation of Malays who went to work in Singapore in the 1950s ... as a plumber in Sembawang Naval Base ... He brings out two faded pictures. Both show Malay, Indian, Chinese and Caucasian men in jerseys - the

football multiculturalism of old Sembawang days ...



My trip makes me think the highway to heaven should be lined with tropical fruit trees and food stalls selling burning hot sambal dishes and melt-in-the-mouth pineapple tarts. And heaven itself should definitely have a durian orchard. Indeed, a section of heaven should be like the Malaysia of my youth... It also makes me plan for more trips on the highways, old trunk roads and country lanes in my homeland ... and to write a book about a once young woman who returns to travel on them in her old age ...



Pakcik and picture of football team

Random Thoughts on Modern Travel: Our Trip to Rajasthan

By **Leo Ching**

During the winter break and taking advantage of Singapore's relative

proximity to the Subcontinent, we embarked on a two-week trip to Rajasthan, the land of colors. What follows, however, is less a chronicle of our trip than some random reflections on traveling as a modern (or is it postmodern?) practice.

Five days into our trip and right after the spectacular Taj Mahal, our thirteen-year-old son declared the trip a great success and we should abort and return to Singapore. He claimed he had seen enough of Forts and Palaces (that they all began to look alike) and absorbed sufficient historical lessons to last him a lifetime. While not happy with his disinterest, unsettling questions kept haunting us as we continued on the quick-paced journey. When we implore our son to appreciate the privilege of travelling and to see the "world," what exactly do we want him to see — the awe-inspiring palaces of the past or the dire poverty unfolding presently in front of our eyes? When we instruct him to understand history, whose history do we expect him to learn — the royal history of the Maharajas or the invisible histories of the silent and labouring masses? The contradictions seem irresolvable and we trudged on.

Taking pictures, whether of people, landscapes or monuments, has become the quintessential modern tourist practice. The critique of this mode of capturing has lamented the "tourist gaze" that objectifies the indigenous peoples and the standardization of the tourist images. However, the locals are no longer passive. Clearly understanding their value as the exotic other, they demand to be compensated (rightfully) for their posing and their perceived otherness. This "economic transaction" makes us uncomfortable for it disrupts the supposed organic and authentic experience and lays bare the structure of unequal exchange. In the cultural economy of tourism, the guide performs many roles: interpreter, translator, historian, and security, between them and us, between insider and outsider. It is from working in this liminal space that s/he earns a wage. Their allegiance, however, is always in doubt. Are they helping us getting a better deal or are they conspiring to rip us off? One is not, and can never be, sure.

Travelling entails temporary physical, psychological and cultural displacements. But most notably, it is a dislocation from the everydayness of modernity. It is also an opportunity to get out of our comfort zone, question our normative beliefs, succumb to the demand of the others, and enjoy the inescapable contradictions of such encounters.

The Architecture of Travel

By **Shu-Yi Wang**



Courtesy of Vicente Garcia Groyon III

I used to travel with a group of friends from architecture school to visit artistic works designed by internationally famous architects. Travel was a ritual, and I was a pilgrim to eulogize the creation of talented architects. The goal of travel, then, was clear – chasing buildings: driving long distance to see a specific building and take enormous pictures of that building inside out. For us, travel was to experience the space and the spirit of objects they learned from the classroom and textbooks. Geographical and cultural context was subordinate to the existence of buildings themselves. Of course, sneaking into the buildings and being caught by the security guards were part of the experience.

Travel became a habit in a different form when architecture was no longer a priority to me. I started to enjoy staying at one place for a much longer period. Travel was a luxury



Courtesy of Vicente Garcia Groyon III

between jobs. As the habit developed, I intentionally took advantage of the opportunities to travel for conferences and conduct fieldwork in different countries. Because of this purpose, I often had to stay at one place for long periods and sometimes move around between places. Observation of local people was part of the research, instead of being just curious. Talking to people at restaurants or on the streets became part of focus group interviews. Gradually, the fun part of travel faded away. When travel becomes work related, travel is not desirable, even if it is a vacation.



Courtesy of Vicente Garcia Groyon III

However, frequent travel enables me to cultivate two major skills - pack efficiently and "let go" quickly. Since travel is part of life, I don't want to

compromise the comfort during the trip. I have to know what I need exactly in the field as to not increase the burden. Eventually, the habit of packing efficiently, precisely, and selectively became the principle of my life. I surprisingly realized that I could survive with one suitcase. All things that I left in the storage are to satisfy the material desire. In order to pack efficiently, I gave up buying souvenirs that I like so much on the trip, and thus, barely have any trophy souvenir at home from my extensive travel experience. These two skills affect the principles of my lifestyle. Consequently, I am not to attach to materials and could let go of things easily.

Travel is still an adventure to me. Due to my research on historic cities and heritage development, travel gives me the chance to see places that have not been devastated by mass tourists and to also meet people with the most innocent smiles. I am grateful of the lessons I learn from travelling - the more I travel, the more simple my life will be.

Placing Religious Pluralism in Asian Global Cities

5 – 6 May 2011

Contact persons for further details:

Dr Chiara Formichi:
aricf@nus.edu.sg

Dr Juliana Finucane:
arijkf@nus.edu.sg

This workshop takes a critical approach to the concepts of “religious pluralism” and “the global city,” arguing that both are value-laden normative constructs that illuminate aspirations more often than realities. As a starting point, we follow Michael Peletz’s description of pluralism as not simply the existence of diversity, but diversity that is accorded legitimacy. As such, in our examination of the spaces of religious pluralism in global cities (or absence thereof), we seek in particular to examine the quality of relations that emerge in encounters in these urban places among people of different religious traditions. We take a broad view of “place,” understanding place not just to suggest settings and material places, but also imagined places, private places, and itineraries through place. Central conference questions include: What social, cultural, political, economic factors intersect in the places of these encounters that either promote or erode sociability? Where are the places in global cities that these encounters take place, and how have their boundaries changed in light of recent urban transformations? How have religious groups, whose boundaries are shifting, either contributed to the creation of these places or somehow played a role in their contraction?

Transitioning to Adulthood in Asia: Marriage, Fertility, and Labour Force Participation

21 – 22 July 2011

Contact persons for further details:

Prof Jean Yeung:
ariywj@nus.edu.sg

Dr Cheryl Alipio:
aricjba@nus.edu.sg

The trends of delayed marriage, lower marital fertility, and greater participation of married and single women entering the labor force are mimicking the changes that took place earlier in the industrialized societies of Europe and North America. Traditional customs, like arranged marriages, has also nearly collapsed and the emergence of social networks for single men and women has not balanced out this decline. At the same time, the increasing acceptance of premarital sex and divorce in most of Asia’s modern societies furthermore reduces the attractiveness of marriage.

This conference aims to bring together academic researchers, public practitioners, and policy makers from across the disciplines and from across East, Southeast, and South Asia to examine these trends. Issues investigated may fall within the following themes: Theories and methodologies of young adult research in Asia; Institutional frameworks and policies related to young adult’s well-being; Changing values of work: labor force employment and young adults’ productive potential; Young adults’ labor market experience and living arrangements; Conceptions and youth attitudes towards courtship, marriage, and sexuality.

6th Singapore Graduate Forum on Southeast Asia Studies

11 – 15 July 2011

Contact persons for further details:

Prof Gavin Jones:
arigwj@nus.edu.sg

Dr Chee Heng Leng:
arichl@nus.edu.sg

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

Prof Thongchai Winichakul:
aritw@nus.edu.sg

This 3-day forum will be part of ARI's 5-day Graduate Development Institute and Forum, which in addition to the forum will include two full days of sessions aimed to develop graduate student understandings of academia and relevant skills, through roundtable discussions with faculty, focused practical seminars and breakout group discussions.

This event coincides with the Asia Research Institute's Asian Graduate Student Fellowship Programme 2011, which brings some 35 graduate students to ARI for a two and a half month period. These students will also participate in the Graduate Forum. This three-day forum, the sixth of an annual series of forums for graduate students who work on Southeast Asia, will be organised thematically. Themes broadly reflect (but are not limited to) the core research strengths of the Asia Research Institute, including the Asian dynamics of religion, politics, economy, gender, culture, language, migration, urbanism, science and technology, population and social change.

In addition to student presentations, experts from the region will also be invited to give keynote speeches, sharing their insights on challenges and issues facing contemporary social science scholarship.

Householding in Transition: Emerging Dynamics in "Developing" East and Southeast Asia

25 – 26 July 2011

Contact persons for further details:

Prof Gavin Jones:
arigwj@nus.edu.sg

Prof Brenda Yeoh:
geoyasa@nus.edu.sg

In recent decades, dramatic social and economic changes have swept the "developing" East and Southeast Asian region, having profound implications for household structures and their members' everyday lives. Drawing on Douglass' (2006) concept of "householding" this workshop seeks to enhance understanding of the challenges being faced in the creation and sustenance of household-level social processes that cover all life-cycle stages and extend beyond the family. The workshop covers three broad themes of the up most contemporary and regional salience, namely (non)marriage and divorce; inter-generational questions concerning ageing and care; and finally, issues surrounding migration and the "left behind".

Bringing together scholars working on these interconnected trends, the workshop aims to shed light on the changing household structures and dynamics which are increasingly shaping the domestic landscapes of some of Asia's lesser understood country contexts (including Burma, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Thailand, The Philippines, and Vietnam).

INTER-ASIA ROUNDTABLE 2011 — Recycling Cities

1 – 2 August 2011

Contact persons for further details:

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

Dr Peter Marolt:
marolt@nus.edu.sg

Dr Michelle Miller:
arimam@nus.edu.sg

Cities are at once generators of waste of various kinds and key sites for innovative practices of reuse and recycling through which waste products become revalued. Organized by ARI's Asian Urbanisms research cluster, the InterAsia Roundtable 2011 will examine waste practices and products in urban Asia. Our framing of the Roundtable includes but also extends beyond conventional definitions of recycling (as making new products using materials from waste products). We apply "Recycling Cities" to new uses of existing urban space and material fabric and also to ways in which urban models, ideas and cultural practices are reworked over time. The two-day Roundtable will be comprised of five panels, each consisting of two sessions (one revolving around a presentation by an invited speaker and the other led by one or more discussants who will open out the debate beyond the empirical details of the presented papers).

The three presentations on the first day will revolve around the recycling of specific material products, or types of product, in Asian cities:

- (1) Water;
- (2) E-Waste; and
- (3) The built environment.

On the second day, the remaining paper presentations will consider practices of urban recycling, focusing on:

- (4) informal waste pickers; and
- (5) issues of lifestyle and public participation.

Presentations and discussion over the two days are intended to extend understanding of both existing practices of recycling and aspirational possibilities in a region which is home to half of the world's urban population.

Masculinities in Asia

4 – 5 August 2011

Contact person for further details:

Dr Chee Heng Leng:
arichl@nus.edu.sg

This international workshop seeks to contribute to current understandings of masculinities and, more broadly, gender in Asia. It addresses the need for a regional, comparative, and interdisciplinary dialogue among scholars of gender across regions in Asia, broadly defined as South, East, Southeast, and Central Asia. By engaging scholars of gender in Asia from a variety of geographical locations, theoretical perspectives, and disciplinary approaches in a conversation, the workshop promises to identify sets of shared concerns, challenges and discourses, and discern transnational and regional patterns and processes. The goal is not to cultivate a unique "Asian" view on manhood and masculinity that can be readily used to compare and contrast with its "Western" counterparts, but to explore and highlight varied and competing articulations and experiences of masculinities that complicate conventional perceptions of Asia as a region. We hope to provide an opportunity for developing a new understanding of Asia through analyzing issues concerning masculinity in different parts of the region in a comparative framework.

Religious Revival in the Ethnic Areas of China

25 – 26 August 2011

Contact person for further details:

Dr Liang Yongjia:
liangyongjia@nus.edu.sg

This workshop examines the current revival of religious faith and practices in Chinese ethnic areas, and explores the reasons/variations/implications to China and Asia. It seeks to move beyond the general discussions of the applicability of the state-society model to more sophisticated interpretations based on the empirical and ethnographic study of the ethnic areas in contemporary China.

The workshop will bring together scholars from Singapore, China and other parts of the world to examine topics of religious separatism, religious nationalism, religious commodification and ethnicisations, practice of ritual music, temple restoration, religious institutions, and state control. The workshop emphasizes on empirical studies of contemporary China with questions pertinent to the China and Asia context. It aims to focus scholarly attention on this intersection of religion and ethnicity, and to develop a new understanding of the variations and implications, to address this lack of scholarly knowledge.

Prof Chua Beng Huat gave a keynote address titled “Regionalization of Media Industry and Identities in Asia” at the International Conference on Asian Identities — Trends in the Globalized World, Center for Academic Services, Srinakharinwirot University, Bangkok, Thailand, 10–11 February 2011.

Prof Prasenjit Duara gave a plenary address on “Hong Kong as Global Frontier” at the conference on Hong Kong in the Global Setting, Hong Kong University, 11–12 January 2011.

He also gave a keynote address titled “Is there a post-Western Modernity? Writing Histories in a Changing World Order” at the conference on PostNationalism and Cosmopolitanism, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, 1–3 November 2010; and 2 distinguished lectures on “Sustainability and the Crisis of Transcendence” (20 November 2010) and “The Historical Roots of Secularism in China” (22 November 2010) at the Indian Thinkers Series, From West Heavens to the Central Plain: India-China Summit on Social Thought, China Academy of Art and Fudan University, Shanghai, 20–24 November 2010.

A/P Michael Feener was appointed Visiting Chair, Institut d’Études de l’Islam et des Sociétés du Monde Musulman by the L’École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), Paris, for the period 2010 to 2011.

Prof Gavin Jones gave a keynote address on “Population and Development” at the XVII Brazilian National Meeting of Population Studies, Caxambu, Brazil, 20–24 September 2010.

He also gave 2 plenary presentations: “Asia’s Human Capital: Some Uncomfortable Thoughts” at Asian Population Association Conference, New Delhi, 18 November 2010; “Inter-generational Change in the Ultra-low Fertility Countries of Asia” at the 15th Biennial Conference of the Australian Population Association, Surfers Paradise, Queensland, 30 November–3 December 2010.

Dr Lai Ah Eng has been made a member of a United Nations media project, Global Experts. Global Experts is a central part of the Alliance of Civilization (AoC) established in 2005, at the initiative of the Governments of Spain and Turkey, under the auspices of the United Nations. AoC aims to improve understanding and cooperative relations among nations and peoples across cultures and religions, and to help counter the forces that fuel polarization and extremism.

Professor Brenda Yeoh gave a keynote speech on “State Policy, Civil Society Developments and the ‘Place’ of Talent/Labour/Marriage Migrants in the Singapore Cosmopolis” at the Conference on Pathways, Circuits and Crossroads: Immigrant Pathways, Policy and Practice, Wellington, New Zealand, 6–7 December 2010.

She gave another keynote speech on “Talent/Labour/Marriage Migrants and Singapore’s Project of Becoming a Cosmopolis” at the 3rd Next-Generation Global Workshop — Migration: Global Reconstruction of Intimate and Public Spheres, Kyoto, Japan, 11–12 December 2010.

Prof Jean Yeung gave a keynote address on “Studying the Impact of Antipoverty Policies with Household Panel Data: Lessons from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics” at the 2010 Seoul Welfare Panel Study Conference, Seoul, Korea, October 2010.

New Books



*Figuring Catholicism:
An Ethnohistory of the
Santo Nino De Cebu*
Julius Bautista
Ateneo De Manila
University Press,
Philippines, 2010



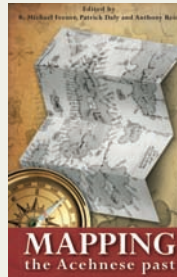
*Medical Travel and Global
Social Policy*
Special Issue of *Global
Social Policy* 10 (3)
**Chee Heng Leng and
Andrea Whittaker**
(guest eds)



*Online Society in
China: Creating,
Celebrating, and
Instrumentalising the
Online Carnival*
**David Kurt Herold
and Peter Marolt (eds)**
Routledge, 2011



Prasenjit Duara Reader
(杜赞奇 读本)
从西天到中土: 印中社会
新思潮读本
*From West Heavens
to the Central Plain:
India-China New
Thought Series*
Prasenjit Duara
Nanfang Daily Press,
Guangzhou, 2011



Mapping the Acehnese Past
**Michael Feener, Patrick Daly
and Anthony Reid (eds)**
KITLV Press, Leiden, 2010



*Women and Migration
in Globalizing Asia:
Gendered Experiences,
Agency, and Activism*
Special Issue of
International Migration
48 (6), 2010
**Arianne Gaetano
and Brenda Yeoh
S.A. (guest eds)**



*Violence in Contemporary
Asian Cinema*
*New Cinemas: Journal of
Contemporary Film*
8.3, 2010
**Charles Leary and
Chua Beng Huat (eds)**

3 – 4 March 2011

Inter-Asia and Japanese Empire

This two-day international workshop was organized by the Cultural Studies Cluster, with A/P Leo Ching of Duke University as principal convenor. By emphasizing on comparative and associative analyses, the workshop aimed at disrupting the normative and formalist approach to the study of Japanese empire. Mobilizing the notion of "Inter-Asia," it probed substantively and methodologically the nexus of comparable and overlapping issues that inter- and intra-regional approaches can offer.

Through an inquiry into a cluster of topics such as modernities, visual cultures, narratives, religion, tourism, the Cold War, race relations, and so forth, the workshop addressed significant gaps and the unevenness extant within the current terrain of Japanese empire studies. It brought together conversations that have been sequestered into separate camps, and opened a new chapter in studies of colonialism, empires, and postcoloniality.

6 – 8 January 2011

Asian Biopoleis: Biotechnology and Biomedicine as Emergent Forms of Life and Practice

This three-day international workshop was co-organised by the ARI Science, Technology and Society (STS) Research Cluster and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences STS Cluster, and was funded by the MOE and NUS grant *ASIAN BIPOLEIS: Biotechnology and Biomedicine as Emergent Forms of Life and Practice*. It reported on work done over the first six months of the *ASIAN BIPOLEIS* project and developed future work and collaborations. Over fifty local and regional scholars participated and the workshop attracted twenty-one presentations and seventeen full draft papers centred

on biotechnology, bioscience and biomedicine in Singapore and the Asian region. Special issues/sections for three journals are currently in planning – *East Asian Science, Technology and Society* (published by Duke), *Science, Technology and Society* (published by Sage) and *Theory, Culture and Society* (published by Sage). The two Principal Investigators of the project, Associate Professor Gregory Clancey of the Department of History and Associate Professor Ryan Bishop of English Language and Literature will be involved in editing roles.

2 – 3 December 2010

Daoist Ritual and Chinese Popular Religion: Historical interactions and Regional Differentiation

The conference was organised by the Religion Cluster of ARI and its convenors were Dr Liang Yongjia and ARI alumni Prof Kenneth Dean (McGill University). The conference explored the relationships between Daoist ritual and Chinese popular religion, moving beyond general discussions of the applicability of Axial age transitions in early Chinese religion to the study of specific historical transitions in the early modern age. Speakers from Canada, United States, China, Hong Kong and Singapore examined the integration of the classical sacrificial system of Chinese popular religion

with Daoist ritual, and trace the various interactions between Daoist ritual and local regional cultures from the Song onwards, over different regions of southern China and Southeast Asia, from Zhejiang, Hunan, Fujian and Guangdong, to Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore. Several presenters showed the ethnographic films they produced. The conference opens up the field to comparative analysis of popular religion, relating to the study of processes of globalization of religion by demonstrating the transnational spread and networks of popular Chinese religion.

25 – 26 November 2010

How Safe is Safe? Evaluating Migration Channels for Women Migrants

Jointly organized by ARI, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies and the Asia Pacific Centre, University of New England in Australia, this workshop interrogated the discourses, regulations, and practices of "safe migration" dominant in the migration policy today that assumes that documented channels of migration provide unsurpassed legal protection to migrants. In total 20 papers were presented in seven thematic and country-specific panels. They addressed various problems that arise at different stages of the migratory process,

namely, pre-departure, recruitment, migration regimes in the host countries, trafficking and return. Many papers argued that while many migrant protection mechanisms indeed provide better protection to migrants, some mechanisms make migration more costly and migrants more vulnerable. In order to better protect migrants, it is necessary to coordinate the protection mechanisms at every step of the migration process, and to address the gaps and contradictions between mechanisms proposed or enforced by various actors.

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



MS CYNTHIA LAI UIN RUE has commenced a 1-year appointment as a Research Assistant with effect from 8 November 2010.

Ms Lai graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Economics and Administration in 2008 and a Master's Degree majoring in Applied Statistics from the Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya in 2010. Her Master's thesis was on Population Projection for Educational Planning. Before her appointment at ARI, she was with Asia Research Institute as an Asian Graduate Student from May to June 2010. During that period, she did a study on foreign domestic helpers in Malaysia.



DR MARIA PLATT has commenced a 1-year appointment as a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Changing Family Cluster with effect from 7 December 2010.

Dr Platt completed her PhD in anthropology at La Trobe University. In 2007-2008, as an Endeavour Research Fellow, she undertook field work on marriage on the Indonesian island of Lombok. Her thesis explored women's capacity to exercise agency within marriages where Islam and adat (local custom) rather than the state are the key institutions which govern marriage. Her research interests include marriage, gender and Islam within Indonesia and the Southeast Asian context.



DR JEREMY KINGSLEY has commenced a 1-year appointment as a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Religion and Globalisation Cluster with effect from 13 December 2010.

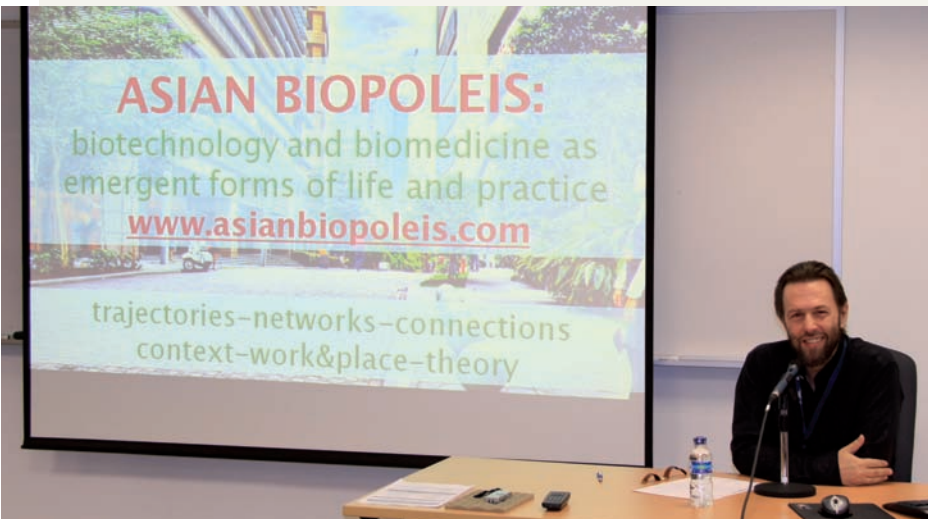
Prior to joining ARI, he completed his LLM and PhD degrees in Law at the University of Melbourne and received his BA and LLB from Deakin University. His research interest focuses on Muslim religious leadership, conflict management, militia and the interplay between state and non-state actors in Indonesia. His specific geographic emphasis is on the eastern Indonesian island of Lombok.



DR CHRISTINE HELLWIG has commenced a 3-month appointment as a Visiting Senior Research Fellow in the Changing Family in Asia Cluster with effect from 3 January 2011.

Dr Hellwig is an Associate Professor in the department of Asian Studies at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. She obtained her PhD, MA and BA degrees in Indonesian language and literature from Leiden University, the Netherlands. Her research interests are Indonesian/Malay language, literature, culture and history, women and gender studies, feminist theory and postcolonial studies. The geographical area of her focus is the Malay-Indonesian archipelago.

ARI SPECIAL FEATURE



Associate Professor Clancey introduces the workshop

The Century of Biology In Asia?

ASIAN BIPOLEIS — Biotechnology, Bioscience and Biomedicine as Emergent Forms of Life and Practice

6 – 8 January 2011

As the 19th century was marked by changes in communication and transport technologies that enabled modern urban life in the 20th, so did the last century bring developments in biotechnology and biomedicine that are beginning to influence urban life in the new millennium. Singapore and Asia are no longer experiencing a scientific lag, but are very much very partners in this global project, with bioscience laboratories embedding within urban spaces here and increasingly integrating with daily life. Such developments provoke new questions about the historical trajectories, policy impacts and characteristic features of 'science cities', questions dealt with at the recent workshop *ASIAN BIPOLEIS: Biotechnology and Biomedicine as Emergent Forms of Life and Practice*.

The workshop is the first of a series under a three-year project funded by the Ministry of Education and NUS's Division of Humanities and Social Science. Six paper sessions included contributions from Singapore, China, India, Japan, Korea, Thailand and Vietnam, by scholars working from the perspectives of anthropology, critical theory, design, history, philosophy, communications theory, and sociology. The third day of the workshop was held at the Genome Institute of Singapore (GIS) reflecting ongoing engagements of the project participants with this and other Asian labs and institutes.



Panel session at Genome Institute of Singapore with (from right) AJP Ryan Bishop (chair), Dr Sandra Lee (speaker), Dr Takashi Kido (speaker) & Asst Prof Denisa Kera (speaker and organizer)



Workshop participants listen to Professor Mike Fischer's Synoptic Talk

The six sessions covered a range of issues related to biotech/science/medicine in the region. "Biomedicine in Singapore" and "Consumer Genomics, Citizen Science, and BIYBio Movements" (seven presentations) examined the social and historical context of (emerging) biotech/science/medicine locally and regionally. The sessions "Securities, Standards, and Policy" and "Laboratories, Networks and Practices" (six presentations) centred on products, objects, media, environment and work. Finally, "Biosampling and Biobanking" and "Philosophy, Religion and Meaning" (eight presentations) spoke to concerns over the politics, ethics, and implications of biotech/science/medicine for future life in Asia.

To what extent can we speak of biomedical research as having an 'inter-Asian' dynamic?

One long-term goal of the project is testing the strength and character of linkages between science labs/cities in Asia, and not just their relations with those outside the region. To what extent, in other words, can we speak of biomedical research as having an 'inter-Asian' dynamic? Participants are also seeking out links between biomedicine and post-modern conceptions of citizenship. A general theme across sessions was how bodies, tissues, cells, and genetic identities are being represented and deployed in Asia. Another theme was how bioscience/medicine is contributing to the changing understanding of security and insecurity in the region.

The workshop was co-organised by Members and Associates of the ARI Science, Technology and Society (STS) Research Cluster and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences STS Cluster. Prof Prasenjit Duara (Director of ARI) and A/P Gregory Clancey, leader of the ARI STS Research Cluster, opened the workshop. Senior visiting participants included Profs. Aihwa Ong of UC Berkeley, Masato Fukushima of Tokyo University, Michael MJ Fischer of MIT, V.V. Krishna of JNU, and Margaret Sleeboom-Faulker of the University of Sussex. The papers will be published in special issues or sections of three leading journals in 2011 and 2012.

*For more information on the project visit:
<http://www.asianbiopoleis.com>.*



The speakers and invited guests

PhD Research Scholarships, NUS

The Asia Research Institute is pleased to offer PhD research scholarships from January 2012 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 15 May 2011, indicating clearly both which ARI interdisciplinary area they wish to join and which department they would be attached to. Application procedures and forms can be obtained from the NUS website via this URL: <http://www.nus.edu.sg/admissions/graduate-studies/scholarships-nrs.php>

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. Applicants should not send a duplicate copy to ARI.

For the description of interdisciplinary areas offering scholarships, please visit ARI website www.ari.nus.edu.sg.

For enquiries, please contact:

Ms Kristy Won
Email: arisec@nus.edu.sg
Tel: (65) 65163810
Fax: (65) 6779 1428