



ARI NEWS



Dr Catherine Lim, *Keynote Speaker*

ASIA TRENDS 2: (Un)tying the Knot

Asia Trends 2004 was a one-day conference, held by ARI in the Marina Mandarin Hotel, on the theme "(Un)tying the knot: ideal and reality in Asian marriage", and was attended by over 200 people.

Marriage is a theme of universal interest, and engages the attention of scholars, social commentators, government planners, and the general public. As such, it provided a fitting focus for the second Asia Trends Conference. This conference brought together people from different disciplines and expertise to examine marriage issues from various viewpoints.

The Conference was opened by the Minister of State of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Community Development and Sports, Mr. Chan Soo Sen, who was introduced by the President of NUS, Professor Shih Choon Fong. The keynote address was given by the well-known Singapore writer, Dr. Catherine Lim, on the topic "Peril and paradox: a writer looks at love and marriage". Her spirited presentation kept the audience spellbound.

The papers were intended to be thematic in approach rather than geographic, and those with a country focus introduced issues with broader relevance. Nevertheless, there are issues in marriage that are more pertinent to some regions of Asia than others. This is why the conference began with an overview of East Asian and Southeast Asian trends and was followed by papers from three themes: aspects of marriage in India, issues relating to marriage, divorce and polygamy in Islamic Southeast Asia and a final session that cut across all geographic boundaries – inter-ethnic, inter-religious and international marriage.

The paper givers and discussants were drawn not only from Singapore, but also from Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, India, the United Kingdom and Taiwan.

What were some of the highlights of the Conference? Different participants will have different views on this, but the following points might be noted:

- Delayed marriage in many countries of the region has proceeded so far that it has now resulted in a significant proportion of women reaching their mid-40s without ever having been married. Such proportions are as high as 15 per cent in some of the large cities of the region. Proportions are even higher among women with tertiary education.
- Divorce rates are rising sharply in some countries – for example, Japan and the Republic of Korea – and are rising in most countries. However, this does not appear to be the case among Muslim populations in Malaysia and Indonesia. In Singapore, Muslim divorce rates are rising, and there is considerable concern in the Malay community about the possible reasons.
- In India, matchmaking remains the almost universal route into marriage, and religion, caste and sub-caste continue to dominate as criteria for spousal selection.
- In Islamic populations of Southeast Asia, the place of divorce and polygyny in Islam is hotly debated, with some women's groups arguing that Koranic teachings have frequently been misinterpreted in ways that disadvantage women.

International marriage is increasing; for example, 32 per cent of marriages in Taiwan 2003 were with non-Taiwanese. The circumstances of such international marriages raise a number of policy and planning issues.

This Conference followed the tradition of the first Asia Trends Conference held in 2003 by producing a book containing the Conference papers in advance. This book was presented to those registering for the Conference. The production of the papers in book form for distribution on the day of the Conference had two key advantages. One was that people attending the conference had the full papers immediately at hand. Another is that paper writers knew the papers would be published immediately, rather than going through the tortuous process of editing and possible publication at some later date, as is usual for most academic

seminars. This provided the incentive for them to produce a quality paper well before the conference, but at the same time put a severe time constraint on all authors, and did not allow for incorporation of points made in discussion.

Next year's Asia Trends Conference will be on a theme of ever-growing importance – immigration. Best wishes to the organizer, Associate Professor Brenda Yeoh, and her committee.

A transcript of Dr Catherine Lim's speech may be found at: http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/docs/Catherine_Lim.pdf

ARI does conferences! Singapore is a great location to bring together Asian and global scholars, in the hope of correcting some of the imbalance in the way the world's ideas tend to be generated. We hope that regional scholars have a stronger voice, and scholars based elsewhere rethink some of their assumptions. Those appointed to one-year fellowships because they have a good idea for a book are therefore encouraged also to convene a workshop around a related theme.

During the past three months, since June 2004, the tempo of ARI workshops and conferences reached a level of more than one a week, stretching even the astonishing resources of the events team of Lynn Tan, Valerie Yeo and Shalini Chauhan. The highlights are described elsewhere in this Newsletter, but I want to mention one example among many, of what our position at an interface makes possible.

In July post-doc Guillaume Rosenberg, a French anthropologist working on Burma, collaborating with a young Buddhism scholar from Chicago, Jason Carbine, convened a workshop on Theravada Buddhist Studies, part of ARI's research concentration on 'Religion and Globalisation'. In summing it up, doyen of the field Frank Reynolds saw the meeting as a watershed, the first meeting ever to bring social scientists and Buddhism scholars together to look specifically at Theravada, and thereby create a community of enquiry. He deemed it crucial that the meeting was in Southeast Asia, as a third step to bring the field home, as it were, after an initial stage of European, and a second of American, domination. It seemed likely that a regular conference, an association, and even perhaps a journal would grow out of the enthusiasm generated by this meeting.

The second ARI Graduate Student workshop was held on 23-24 September, representing another example of the effects our location can give. The first was limited to NUS students, and had a non-thematic approach to attract the broadest range. The second was opened to students from anywhere researching within the theme, "Gender Studies in Asia". Here the four NUS and one NTU grad students had the chance to compare their data and analysis with fifteen students working out of universities like Cambridge, UC Berkeley and the ANU. It turned out that exactly half of the twenty students selected from around seventy applicants were pursuing their degrees in Asian institutions, and the mix provided outstanding chemistry.

Despite the rush of conferences at home, I managed to get to a couple elsewhere. I should mention one — the first 'Beijing Forum', convening 400 Chinese and international scholars in all the social and human sciences as guests of that city for three days in August. The theme was inscrutable — 'The Harmony and Prosperity of Civilizations' — but the aim appeared to be to insert the city, and its pre-eminent Peking University, more prominently into a civilisational dialogue among scholars.

Funding from Seoul's Korea Foundation was promised for a continuing annual event, and its importance for the hosts was underlined by a massive banquet in the Great Hall of the People. The impressions I took away from the bilingual discussions of the History Panel (one of six) were that a gap remained between the approach and purpose of the Chinese and international scholars, and that nationalist pressures over Taiwan and Japan might not be easy to manage. The debates among our PRC colleagues about globalisation, capitalism, and the rise and fall of states, had a political edge unfamiliar to the rest of us. One of the papers had initially been commissioned for a politburo committee concerned about the longevity of the current regime.



**a word
from the Director**

Anthony Reid
Director, ARI

New

ARI Members

Visiting Research Fellows



Lois M. Verbrugge is Research Professor and Distinguished Senior Research Scientist in the Institute of Gerontology at the University of Michigan. Her expertise is in social demography, medical sociology, and health survey research methods. She has contributed to disability theory and, using large-scale data sets, has conducted analyses of arthritis disability, gender differences in morbidity and mortality, and comorbidity's impact on disability. Her recent publications focus on

the relative benefits of equipment and personal assistance for disability, the interleaving of aging and disability, and global indicators of disability. She was awarded the American Psychological Association Distinguished Contribution to Women's Health Award in 1994. Her goals for the visiting fellowship are theoretical work on disability that addresses cultural differences in disablement, empirical analyses on disability in Asia, and implications for health and disability policies.



Greg Acciaioli will be working on a variety of tasks during his one-year research fellowship at ARI, all of them related to the field research he has been conducting in Indonesia for the last four years regarding the indigenous peoples' movement and ethnic relations. Besides work with NGOs in Jakarta and Palu, he has focused on the Lore Lindu National Park as a case study, looking at the relationship of revitalised adat (customary) institutions to ethnic relations and

conservation issues. Having attended the ARI workshop last March concerning adat revival in Indonesia, his first project will be to complete the revisions of the paper presented at that workshop and contribute to the conceptualisation of the introduction. He also hopes to complete revisions of a manuscript on Bugis migration, resource use and ethnic relations at Lake Lindu, on which he has been working for some years.

Kuan-Hsing Chen has been the coordinator of the Center for Asia-Pacific/Cultural Studies, National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan. Founding President of the Cultural Studies Association, Taiwan. He has held visiting professorships at universities in Korea, China, Japan, and the U.S. He has published extensively in both Chinese and English, including edited volumes in English: *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (1996) and *Trajectories: Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* (1998); and in Chinese: *Cultural Studies in Taiwan* (2000) and *Locating Political Society: Modernity, State Violence and Postcolonial Democracies* (2000). A core member of the *Taiwan: A Radical Quarterly in Social Studies*, he is a co-executive editor of the journal and books series of *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies: Movements*. At ARI, he plans to finish a book project on the politics of decolonization in East Asia.



Jomo Kwame Sundaram was born in Penang, Malaysia, in 1952, and studied at the Penang Free School, Royal Military College, Yale and Harvard. He has taught at the Science University of Malaysia (USM), Harvard, National University of Malaysia (UKM), Yale, University of Malaya (since 1982), and Cornell, besides twice being a Visiting Fellow at Cambridge. He has authored over 35 monographs, edited over 50 books and

translated 11 volumes, besides writing many academic papers, as well as articles for the media.

At ARI, he intends to critically examine the political economy of economic development in the region and to organize a conference on 'Revisiting Asian Economic Miracles: Economic Growth and Governance in a Globalizing Asia'. He will also complete several book projects on 'The Long Twentieth Century' (2 volumes), 'Pioneers of Development Economics' (3 volumes), 'bail-outs' after the 1997-8 crisis, industrial policy, privatization and re-nationalization, law and economic development, services labour market segmentation in Malaysia and Mahathir's economic policy legacy (in Malay).



Felice Noelle Rodriguez is Associate Professor at the Ateneo de Manila University, where she graduated with a degree in Interdisciplinary Studies and became chair of its History Department. She holds masters and doctoral degrees in History from the University of the Philippines. Her published articles explore vital aspects of Philippine history in warfare, the early Christian missions, nationalism and the urbanization of Zamboanga.

She has curated landmark exhibits in three languages, tracing diverse historical concerns such as the Revolutionary press, Philippine postcards, and the regional history of Zamboanga. Her creative side finds expression as a consultant curator, writer and translator for various exhibit works. Since 1996, Dr. Rodriguez has been much at the cultural forefront, organising conferences and activities to celebrate the centenary of the Philippine Republic. These projects include a CD-ROM anthology of the works of Jose Rizal and a Sephis funded photo archive. She is presently completing *The History of A Shipping Company in the Philippines*.



Charles Wheeler is Assistant Professor of History at the University of California, Irvine, where he has worked since receiving his Ph.D. in History from Yale University in 2001. His works derive from a commitment to bringing Vietnamese history into world historical perspective. At ARI, he plans to complete a book that will re-visit the problem of Vietnamese southern expansion during pre-colonial times from a maritime perspective

centered at the ancient seaport of Hoi An (Faifo). Additionally, he will develop the beginnings of a second project about the role of Buddhism in the development of Chinese sea commerce during the early modern era.



Indralal De Silva is Professor of Demography, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka where he has been served since 1979. During this period he has published a large number of research articles in international journals. His main interests include fertility, mortality, migration, ageing, population and labour force projections and reproductive health in developing countries with special emphasis on Sri Lanka. He obtained his

Bachelor's Degree in Development Studies from the University of Colombo in 1977 and Masters and Doctoral Degrees from the Australian National University in 1985 and 1990 respectively. He was a Visiting Fellow at the Harvard School of Public Health during 1996-1998 and was also a Visiting Fellow at the Australian National University in 1990-91 with Senior Fulbright Fellowship and Rockefeller Foundation Fellowships for his attachments.



Allen Hicken is on leave from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor where he is an Assistant Professor of Political Science and Southeast Asian Politics and a Faculty Associate at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies and the Center for Political Studies. He received his Ph.D. Political Science and Pacific Studies from the University of California, San Diego in 2002. Dr. Hicken studies

political institutions and political economy in developing countries. His primary focus is on elections, political parties, and party systems in developing democracies and their effect on policymaking.



Erik Martinez Kuhonta is a political scientist with research interests in comparative political development, political economy, qualitative methodology, and Southeast Asian politics. He received his Ph.D. from Princeton University in 2003. His dissertation analysed the political foundations of equitable development in Malaysia and Thailand. In 2003-04, Kuhonta held a Shorenstein Fellowship

at the Asia-Pacific Research Center at Stanford University, where he co-organised a project on theory and method in the study of Southeast Asian politics.

Zheng Yangwen was born and raised in Hunan, Liaoning and Shenzhen and educated at Beijing Language Institute, Oberlin College (B.A), Universite Strasbourg, and King's College of Cambridge University (M.Phil & Ph.D). She was Bradley Postdoctoral Fellow-Lecturer at the University of Pennsylvania (2002-04) and Isaac Manasseh Meyer Fellow at NUS's history department in summer 2004. Her thesis-turned book *The Social Life of Opium in China* will be printed by Cambridge University Press in February 2005. She also contributed a chapter "The Naturalization of Ballet in China" to *The Cambridge Companion of Ballet*. Her research in ARI will be "A Chinese Century, 1740-1840" and "The Cultural Biography of Communism in China".

Assistant Professors



Angelique Chan is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore.

She obtained her PhD from the University of California, Los Angeles and completed a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Michigan, Population Studies Center. Dr. Chan has been researching aging issues since 1990 when she began studying living arrangements of older adults in Malaysia and subsequently

Singapore. Recently, she has been focusing on health issues among the aged, specifically, gender and socioeconomic differentials in health status among older adults in Singapore and the region. Her published works include academic articles and book chapters that focus on aging in Singapore and comparative analyses of Singapore with other countries in the region.



Bruce Lockhart is an Assistant Professor in the Department of History, National University of Singapore.

He specializes in Vietnam, Thailand and Laos, with a particular interest in historiography and constructions of national narratives. During his time at ARI he will be revisiting his dissertation work on kingship in Vietnam and Thailand, working on a book on the evolution of the Thai monarchy since King Chulalongkorn.



Niti Pawakapan is an Assistant Professor in the Southeast Asian Studies Programme, National University of Singapore.

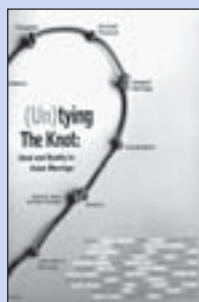
He teaches courses in migration and diaspora, ethnohistory, historical anthropology, ethnicity and state-ethnic relations, and economic anthropology at NUS. He completed his study in Anthropology at The Australian National University, and his research interests include local traders and politico-economic developments in regional Thailand, global-local dynamics, responses of local people to globalisation and economic and cultural changes caused by global economy, ethnic relations and political anthropology. Dr Pawakapan's new research project focuses on cross-border movements, politico-economic transitions in the borderlands and links with economic development at the national-global levels, and border identity.

ARI Recognition

Professor Anthony Reid gave a Keynote Lecture to the 4th Malaysian Studies Conference at UKM, Bangi, on 4 August. Later in August he was invited to lecture at the Shanghai Conference of the Harvard Program on Asian and International Relations, and to participate in the first 'Beijing Forum' (22–25 August).

Gavin Jones was one of three invited international plenary speakers at the 12th Biennial Conference of the Australian Population Association, Canberra (15-17 September).

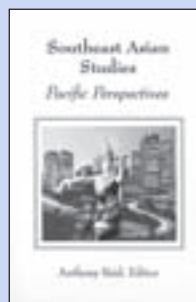
New Books by ARI Members



(Un)tying The Knot: Ideal and Reality Asian Marriage

**Gavin W. Jones &
Kamalini Ramdas (eds.)**

Singapore University Press,
Singapore, 2004, 232 pp



Southeast Asian Studies: Pacific Perspectives

Anthony Reid (ed)

Tempe, Arizona :
Arizona State University
Program on SE Asian Studies,
2003.



M Way: Mahathir's Economic Legacy

J. K. Sundaram

Forum, Kuala Lumpur,
2004, 248pp



Karaton Surakarta

**John N. Miksic
(Jono Mulyohadipuro) (ed.)**

Yayasan Pawiyatan Kabudayan
Karaton Surakarta, Jakarta,
2004, 409 pp



Deforesting Malaysia: The Political Economy and Social Ecology of Agricultural Expansion and Commercial Logging

J. K. Sundaram, Chang Y. T., Khoo K. J. with others

Zed Books, London,
2004, 253pp

ARI Working Paper Series 2004

<http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/pub/wps2004.htm>

No. 28 **Ming China and Southeast Asia in the 15th Century:
A Reappraisal**
Geoff Wade

No. 29 **Gossips about Stars:
Newspaper and Pop Culture China**
Chua Beng Huat

Recent ARI Workshops,

Seminars and Conferences

Workshop on The Archaeology of Early Harbours and Evidence for Interregional Trade 14–15 June

In order to place recent important discoveries and excavations in Southeast Asia relating to trade and commerce conducted through the maritime realm in the broader framework of Southeast Asian maritime archaeology, the Asia Research Institute convened a symposium bringing together archaeologists who have been working on harbour, riverine and other maritime sites in and around the Straits of Malacca.

The aim was to have persons from the respective countries make reports on recent relevant discoveries and excavations in their country to complement generic or synthetic papers on maritime archaeology of the region in order to engender discussion of the regional relevance of the country finds and excavations and stimulate interchange and awareness of what various counterparts were doing in places often not far away. As a corollary of this, the Symposium also allowed for discussion of some form of joint training for young archaeologists around the region.

ARI participation in the Conference Performance Studies International 15–18 June

The Performance Studies international (PSi) series having been launched by the Department of Performance Studies at New York University in 1995, this 10th conference (PSi #10) was the first of its annual conferences ever to be held in Asia. At PSi #10, Jennifer Lindsay spoke at the opening plenary session, together with Goenawan Mohamad, on issues of performance, performance studies, and translation, particularly as these are played out in Asia.

Jennifer also convened two ARI-sponsored panels focusing on performance and translation in Asia. The speakers were Prof Tan Sooi Beng (Universiti Sains Malaysia); A/P Pornrat Dhamrung (Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok), Prof. Ward Keeler (University of Texas), Dr Chua Soo Pong (Chinese Opera Institute, Singapore), Alfian Saat (writer, Singapore), Goenawan Mohamad (writer, Indonesia) and Jennifer Lindsay.

The papers will be published in a volume on performance translation edited by Jennifer Lindsay. ARI, together with the Substation and PSi, also sponsored a free public performance of Kuda Kepang (Javanese horse-trance dance) at the Substation on 16 June, performed by Singaporean group, Kesenian Tedja Timur.

Conference on Growth Dynamics of Mega–Urban Regions in Asia 24–25 June

This conference was the culmination of a project funded by the Andrew J. Mellon Foundation and coordinated by Professor Gavin Jones of ARI and Professor Mike Douglass of the University of Hawaii. Over the course of this two-year project, the growth dynamics of 6 Asian mega-urban regions – Jakarta, Bangkok, Manila, Ho Chi Minh City, Taipei and Shanghai – were studied, stressing the 1990-2000 period, for which detailed data were obtained for each mega-urban region from the respective population census.

Held at the Grand Plaza Parkroyal Hotel, the conference brought together 50 people, including: the research teams from each city; a number of researchers on urbanisation from the countries represented in the study, as well as from the United States, Canada, Australia, Singapore and Malaysia; planners from the cities included in the study; and graduate students from the countries included in the project.



They were all gathered to discuss reports on each of the individual mega-urban regions, along with comparative analyses and a report on livability analyses for the six regions, and their implications for planning. As well as this conference contributing to discussion of the planning issues for these mega-urban regions, a book is in the final stages of preparation.

Workshop on Transnational Religions: Intersections of the 'Local' and 'Global' 19–20 July

In recent years the notion of 'transnationalism' has emerged as a powerful, framing concept for understanding a variety of ties, linkages and alliances that connect widely dispersed communities in a complex network of interactions across national borders.

This workshop brought together a diverse group of scholars to reflect on how transnational processes exert an impact upon shifts and transformations in the religious domain in the Asia-Pacific region. After a keynote address, 'Religious Nationalism, Globalisation and Empire,' by Prof. Bryan Turner of Cambridge University, the workshop consisted of 7 sessions with a total of 14 papers, of which 9 were from overseas participants, and 6 from the National University of Singapore. Papers dealing with religion in Japan, Hong Kong, Philippines, Malaysia, UK, USA, Thailand and Singapore covered a range of substantive and theoretical problems exploring relations between religion and transnationalism.

The event attracted members of the public as well and in all about 50-60 participants attended the discussions. The conference dinner, held at the National University Museum, was capped by a musical performance by the Al-Wehdah Arabic ensemble.

Workshop on The Post-Cold War International Order and Domestic Conflict in Asia 29–30 July

Many in Asia regard American hegemony as a condition for stability and prosperity in the region. However, American hegemony has interfaced in particular ways with numerous pre-existing sources of social and political conflict in many Asian societies. What is the overall effect of American hegemony on social and political conflicts in Asia? Does the American agenda promote democratisation, security and the emergence of markets in the region? Or does it tend to strengthen anti-democratic impulses in Asian societies, or exacerbate and complicate existing domestic conflicts? What is the relationship between post-Cold War American hegemony and neo-liberal economic globalisation? What have been the effects of 9/11? These were some of the questions examined during this workshop, a co-operative project between the NUS Department of Sociology, ARI, the Southeast Asia Research Centre (City University of Hong Kong) and the Asia Research Centre (Murdoch University). Comprising over 30 speakers and discussants, the workshop attracted a range of well-known scholars from East, Southeast, and South Asia, as well as Europe and Australia. A major edited volume is planned as the final product.

Workshop on Polarization and Politicisation along Lines of Religious Differences in Javanese Society 23–24 July

Held in Yogyakarta, this workshop brought together about 20 scholars, most of whom are collaborating in a project on the history of the Islamisation of Javanese society from the 14th century to the present. Funded by the Australian Research Council and the Asia Research Institute, scholars in Java are researching case studies in Kudus, Kediri, and Surakarta in the latest stage of that history, since the 1970s and particularly since the fall of the Soeharto regime. The most substantial research so far has been conducted on Surakarta (led by Drs Soedarmono) and Kediri (led by Mr Suhadi), industrial cities with rather similar histories down to the 1980s.

Both have long histories of tensions and conflicts between pious Muslims (putihan, santri) and nominal Muslims (abangan) from the 19th century, which became politicized in the early 20th century. As strong bases for the Indonesian Communist Party, both saw massive slaughters in 1965–6. Although both have a history of Chinese-Javanese conflict, continuing into the 1980s, from that time their histories have diverged. The working hypothesis is that the differences since the 1980s are rooted partly in the local history of Islam, partly in the quality of local political leadership and partly in the role of local commercial interests. These issues will be pursued in further research.

Symposium on New Scholarship on Champa 5–6 August



Photograph by Allison Diem

Twenty-two of the most prominent scholars of Champa from around the globe were brought together at this workshop to present their newest studies of Cham and Champa. These ranged from overviews and deconstructions of the entirety of Cham studies to date, through to studies of the emergence of early Champa, and the applicability of Wolters's Mandala and Bronson's upstream-downstream models in explaining the polities which grew up in the river basins along the coast of what is today central Vietnam. Other papers examined such topics as Chamic languages and their influence both from and on the surrounding Mon-Khmer languages, the apogee of the Champa polity and the ways in which Champa continued, even after the Cham capital fell to the Vietnamese in 1471.

The importance of Chinese sources in the construction of the Champa past was the subject of several papers. Other contributions included studies of Cham sculpture and architecture, calendars, and burial practices, as well as new research linking tile ends from third- and fourth-century Champa sites with those from Nanjing in China, as well as an overview. The importance of Champa ceramics and their origins elicited major debates during the gathering. The symposium was followed by a 7-day tour of the major Cham sites between Danang and Ho Chi Minh City.

Selected papers from the symposium are to be published in a volume tentatively entitled *New Scholarship on Champa*, under the editorship of Tran Ky Phu' o'ng and Bruce Lockhart. Details of participants and paper titles are available at: http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/docs/prog/pg_champa.pdf

Conference on Exploring Theravada Studies: Intellectual Trends and the Future of a Field

12 – 14 August

This conference on “Theravada Studies” was the first to focus on exploring the study of Theravada Buddhism per se. Gathering 21 presenters and over 50 international participants, the conference was oriented toward answering the following question: What does it mean to study “Theravada” Buddhism?

In his Opening Explorations the keynote speaker, Prof. John Holt, treated specific methodological and theoretical issues regarding the study of Theravada Buddhism past and present, especially focussing on the implicit and explicit impacts of the Weberian approach.

A first panel provided two different foci for other critical overviews: the word “Theravada” and the category of “ethics” in the study of Theravada Buddhism. Each subsequent panel related to a particular theme, by way of attending to individual case studies: the definition of religious identities (monks, novices and nuns), the writings of history (religious chronicles, history paintings), the role of Abhidhamma texts in Theravadin societies, etc.

In his Closing Explorations, Prof. Frank Reynolds reflected on the future of Theravada Studies, referring to the various discussions over the span of the conference and offering an analytical and methodological framework for Theravada Studies as a “field,” giving attention to the world of Pali texts and ideas, the importance of ritual, art, music, and many other issues.

The programme for the conference and abstracts of papers can be viewed at: <http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/conf2004/theravada.htm>

Workshop on Collaborative Studies on Asian Marriage

28 August

Bringing together researchers working on issues related to the changing demographic patterns in Asian marriage, this workshop’s objective was to discuss possibilities of carrying out collaborative research across the Asia region. On-going research projects that were presented included studies in Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, Timor Leste, and various parts of Indonesia. There was also a presentation on the present status and key findings of the comparative marriage study between Thailand, Philippines and Vietnam.

Discussion centred on the definition of marriage, reasons contributing to delayed and non-marriage, and the extent of masking of undocumented marriage by statistics showing delayed or non-marriage.

Possibilities of using data from the Indonesian Family Life Survey and the Fourth Malaysian Population and Family Survey were presented and discussed. After an open discussion session on research priorities and presentation of a tentative research proposal highlighting key research questions, the workshop ended on a high note with an agreement to proceed toward a collaborative research proposal, with a follow-up workshop to elaborate the details of this proposal, and to establish a network of researchers working on this theme.

Workshop on Southeast Asia and the Middle East: Islam, Movement and the Longue Durée

17–18 August

Ties between Southeast Asia and the Middle East have been extremely important in the past seven to eight centuries, but there has been a noticeable paucity of historiography on this particular trans-regional dialogue. This increasingly has become apparent in published studies of the historical period, but it is also true in large degree in the contemporary world. To address this lacuna, a workshop was held at the Asia Research Institute in mid-August, 2004, to explore the long-term nature of contact between Southeast Asia and the Middle East. The workshop brought together a collection of scholars working on a broad spectrum of questions having to do with Islam and movement between these two arenas across the width of the Indian Ocean, and with history over what Fernand Braudel called the “longue durée”.

Islam was one of the two foci of this academic gathering. The second focus of the meeting was movement itself - the very act of travel between the Middle East and Southeast Asia over time. How were these two culture areas connected in the formative centuries of contact? How did the colonial age change these connections? How are the two regions connected today? Have the means of civilisational dialogue changed, or are old forms still in operation? Has Islam always been the central organising principle of these contacts? What are the mechanisms of communication between these two culture areas, and how have they evolved over time? The workshop problematised these and many other dimensions of contact between Southeast Asia and the Middle East, over the past several centuries and today.

Conference on Comparative Health Policy and Reforms in East Asia

7–8 September

This conference was jointly organised by the Asia Research Institute, East Asian Institute, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and Faculty of Medicine. NUS Provost, Prof. Tan Chorh Chuan, noted that this was the first time that four diverse entities in the university have worked together in organising such an event. In his keynote presentation, Paul Gertler (World Bank) gave evidence from an Indonesian study on the importance of investing in health care quality. Miguel Gonzalez-Block (World Health Organisation), who gave the second keynote presentation, focused on the importance of carrying out comparative research to evaluate health reforms. Although the underlying focus was health economics, the papers presented were multi-disciplinary in approach. The papers, widely representative of countries in the region, were organised into four main themes: health care reform in transitional economies (China, Vietnam), achieving universal coverage and equity (Indonesia, Thailand), challenges of social insurance (Japan, Korea, Taiwan), and balancing the public/private mix (Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore). There were also papers that highlighted cross-cutting issues and provided comparative analyses, giving an overall perspective upon health care reforms in the region.

Workshop on Health Care in Malaysia

9–11 September

This workshop was convened to discuss various issues related to rapid changes in the Malaysian economy and society with far-reaching consequences for the health care sector. For the first day and a half, paper presentations on health policy, health care financing and expenditures, and privatisation elicited heated discussion on the direction in which health care policy was heading. Points of contention included the true level of health expenditures, whether this level was high or low, the public/private mix, taxation vs. social insurance, and whether financing was the most important problem.

From the second part of the second day onward, discussion shifted to civil society responses and various particular aspects of health care. Issues of equity were raised, particularly during the sessions devoted to the estate sector, indigenous peoples, and the elderly. There were also paper presentations on health care in Sarawak, the politics surrounding traditional Chinese medicine, women's access to healthcare, and state responses to HIV/AIDS. The issues debated in this workshop reflected international health care policy debates on the roles of government and the private sector, equity and access, and social solidarity in financing.

Seminar Snapshots: A lively exchange over tea at Asia Trends 2



(L to R): **Prof Shih Choon Fong**, *President, NUS*; **Prof Anthony Reid**, *Director, ARI* and **Mr Chan Soo Sen**, *Minister of State for Education and Community Development and Sports*.

Upcoming Events (Oct 2004 – Feb 2005)

29–30 Oct 04	Northeast Asia in Maritime Perspective: A Dialogue with Southeast Asia
7–8 Jan 05	New Perspectives on Political Reform and Charter Change in the Philippines
17–18 Feb 05	Political Election as Popular Culture

ASIAN METACENTRE

for Population and Sustainable Development Analysis

New Staff and Visitors



Nguyen Thanh Liem (*Postdoctoral Fellow*)

Nguyen Thanh Liem is a demographer and sociologist with particular interests in demography – migration in particular, health, the effects of economic development on these processes, and social policies. He received his master and doctoral degrees in sociology from Brown University, following his undergraduate degrees in economics (Demography concentration) and sociology from the National Economic University and the National University for Social Sciences and Humanities of Vietnam respectively. His work experience covers a wide range of topics, mostly related to migration and health. He has worked on migration in Ghana with comparisons to Vietnam and plans to continue his work on migration and health across countries on a larger scale.

Paul J. Boyle (*Visiting Professor*)

Paul Boyle was a Visiting Professor from 12–18 February 2004. He is currently Director of the Social Dimensions of Health Institute and Professor of Human Geography at the University of St Andrews. He is also Director of the Longitudinal Studies Centre–Scotland (LSCS), and associate Director of the Census Interaction Data Service (CIDS), which provides access to origin – destination flow data from the national census. He is also co-editor of the journal *Population, Space and Place*. Paul Boyle's research interests include geographical health and demographic issues including accessibility to healthcare in Scotland. He has also published widely on migration including work on the effects of family migration on women's careers and modeling migration flows.



Yasuhiko Saito (*Visiting Scholar*)

Yasuhiko Saito was Visiting Scholar at the Asian MetaCentre from 15–28 July 2004 and 30 September –7 October 2004. He is a Research Associate Professor at the Center for Information Networking, Nihon University, Japan. He holds a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Southern California. His areas of specialization are demography and issues of aging and health. His current work is on methodological issues of health expectancy calculation, health expectancy in Japan, Asia as well as in the US. He is heading a longitudinal study of Aging in Japan.

Recent Seminars and Conferences

Public Seminar on “The Future of India”

5 July 2004

Prof Tim Dyson (*Development Studies Institute,
London School of Economics*)

The talk summarised results of a recently published study on *Twenty-first Century India* by Prof Tim Dyson. The study constitutes a fully integrated account of population, economy, human development and the environment, and builds on new demographic projections using data from the 2001 census. Most importantly, the projections incorporate both inter-state migration and the role of HIV/AIDS. The study also explores the administrative and political dimensions of future population growth.

Panel Discussion on “Population Issues in Singapore, Japan and Scotland”

26 July 2004

A/Prof Paulin T. Straughan (*Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore*), Prof Yasuhiko Saito (*Center for Information Networking, Nihon University*), Prof Paul Boyle (*University of St. Andrews*)

This panel discussion pulled together demography and sociology experts on various population issues spanning across Singapore, Japan and Scotland. Paulin Straughan provided insights into Singapore's baby woes due to declining fertility and the need for the construction of a pro-family workplace from a sociological perspective. Yasuhiko Saito discussed ageing and health expectancy issues arising from demographic changes in Japan, while Paul Boyle provided a comparative perspective of fertility decline and ageing in Asia with studies in Europe, Scotland in particular. About 30 participants engaged in lively discussions of ageing and fertility issues in Asia.

International Conference on “Demographic Window and Healthy Ageing: Socioeconomic Challenges and Opportunities” 10–11 May 2004, Beijing, China

In developing countries, the rapid ageing of the population is often viewed as an obstacle to the implementation of significant social policies and social security benefits (retirement pension plans, sickness insurance or medicare). A commonly held view is that populations in developing countries age faster than those in developed countries; and the faster the ageing, the heavier the burden to society. Although this statement is true, the forecasted population ageing in developing countries will remain modest for the next two or three decades in comparison with the ageing level already reached in developed countries.

In many developing countries, ageing is paradoxically accompanied by a substantial decrease in the dependency ratio. This ratio - the ratio of dependent young and elderly to the adult population - first declines with the fall in fertility before later increasing as the population ages.

Public Seminar on “Are We Living Longer, Healthier Lives?” The Concept and Application of Health Expectancy to Japan 30 September 2004

Prof Yasuhiko Saito (*Center for Information Networking, Nihon University*)

In many parts of the world, mortality has been declining and life expectancy has been increasing. If we equate overall population health to life expectancy, then we might conclude that we have been witnessing improvements in population health over the years. However, life expectancy is not a good measure of population health any more in the developed countries. Life expectancy is increasing, at the same time the number of elderly with chronic diseases and disabilities is also increasing. Recently,



The rapid and significant fall in fertility together, with the still modest increase in the number of old people, modifies the age structure of the population in favour of young adults: resulting in what might be termed a “demographic window”.

As a result, working-age adults will support a relatively low social burden for the next two or three decades. Vigorous debates occurred during the conference, in particular on the opportunities created by the demographic window.

While scholars took different sides on the issue of efficacy of “pay as you go” pension programmes, participants generally agreed that ageing has been one of the key issues on the agenda of industrialized countries for over twenty years, and has moved into the list of top priorities for the rest of the world.

a summary measure of population health, “health expectancy” has gained attention in the academic and policy making community. Health expectancy combines measures of mortality and morbidity. In the seminar, the concept and application of health expectancy were introduced. Both life expectancy and the estimated health expectancy for Japan between 1992 and 1998 increased but the proportion of healthy life expectancy to total life expectancy appeared to have decreased. However, the results from an on-going study comparing health expectancy between late 1980s and late 1990s reveal mixed results. Some of the differences come from the difference in question wording and treatment of institutionalized population.

Forthcoming Events

International Workshop on Asian Transnational Families 2–4 February 2005, Singapore

This Asian MetaCentre workshop, co-organised with Department of Geography, NUS, in association with Asia Pacific Migration Research Network (APMRN); and International Geographical Union (IGU) Commission on Population and Vulnerability

An exponential increase in international migration over the last two decades is one of the main drivers of contemporary social change in Asia. The extent and depth of the impact that these migration flows of unprecedented volume and complexity within and out of the Asian region have wrought on the basic fabric of Asian society is clearly visible when we examine the “institution” of the “family”. In the context of shifting global patterns of immigration and

settlement as well as a range of more fluid migrations which may be transnational, circular, or multiple, the “transnational family” as a “new” form of living arrangement in which familial relations may reside and develop is becoming more common across a wide spectrum of society.

This international workshop on “Asian Transnational Families” gives emphasis to the following interrelated themes:

- Family Projects and Politics
- Citizenship and Exclusion/Inclusion
- Family Care-giving and Affection
- The “Other” Transnational Family
- Gender Identity and Generational Change

More details at <http://www.populationasia.org/Events.htm>.
Enquiries: Please contact Ms Verene Koh (popnasia@nus.edu.sg)



INTERVIEW WITH MERLE RICKLEFS

What prompted you to write a book on Islam in Java?

I've been working on Javanese history since the 1960s. At that time, the history of Java was still little known. There was work coming out by H.J.de Graaf on the 17th century, but the 18th and 19th centuries were largely unknown, except for work on colonial activities. There was also an implicit consensus that Islam was marginal to the main stream of Javanese culture and history, and I guess I just absorbed that view, too. I first went to Indonesia for research in 1969 and much that I saw in Central Java then was consistent with that impression. But over the years two things happened. First, Javanese society itself changed and the influence of Islamic ideas, norms and leaders became more obvious. Second, my own research persuaded me that there was more to this story in the past.

I spent a long time working on the Kartasura period, from the 1670s to 1740s. One of the books that came out of that research was *The Seen and Unseen Worlds in Java, 1726-1749: History, literature and Islam in the court of Pakubuwana II*, which I published in 1998. That turned out to be a period when the kraton (palace) was the centre of a major Islamizing push, led by a wonderful Sufi lady called Ratu Pakubuwana. She was the king's grandmother and had been a major influence in the court since the early years of the 18th century. In the course of that research, I found materials that also persuaded me that the legends about Sultan Agung a century before being a major Islamizing figure – legends I had always been sceptical about – were evidently true. So the idea that Islam was marginal, and that the kraton should be seen as a kind of non-

Islamic end to the cultural scene in Javanese history, just no longer held water for me.

By then I felt that we probably had enough material on most periods except the mid-19th to early 20th centuries to try to put together a general history of the Islamization of Javanese society, including the barriers and opposition to that Islamization, from the beginnings in the 14th century to the present. I thought that important and could see that nobody else was going to do it, so I decided to have a go. I got a couple of research grants and off I went.

By the way, it's not 'a book on Islam', as you put it. It's three books. The first one is in press and should be out before the end of the year. Its title is *Mystic Synthesis in Java: A History of Islamization* from the 14th to the early 19th centuries. The second book is what I am trying to write while at ARI. It will cover 1830-1930. The third book, down to the present, will have to wait a few more years; I'm still doing the research for that.

How does your time at ARI fit into continuities and longer term plans for the future?

As I said, ARI has given me a chance to get through the backlog of material for book No.2 and to start drafting it. The provisional title is *Polarizing Javanese Society: Islamic and other Visions c. 1830-1930*. I think I should get the main chapters drafted before I finish here, but there are days when I think that might prove to be overly optimistic. I've got 5 drafted so far. If you'll excuse me, Ed, I'd better get back to it!

ARI Scholarships

ASEAN Research Scholarships

The Asia Research Institute invites applications from non-Singaporean ASEAN citizens enrolled for an advanced degree at a university in an ASEAN country for consideration as ASEAN Research Scholars. These fellowships are offered to students working in the Humanities and Social Sciences on Asian topics, and will allow the recipients to be based at NUS for a period of three months, where the scholars can make full use of the resources held in the NUS and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies libraries.

For more information, please refer to the webpage at: <http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/aseanscholars2005.htm>

ARI PhD Scholarships

The Asia Research Institute is offering Ph.D. scholarships from August 2005 in interdisciplinary areas 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 could also be within other faculties within NUS. Interested applicants are required to submit their application to ARI by 30 November 2004,

For more information, please refer to the webpage at: <http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/scholarships2005.htm>



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