



ARI NEWS

A newsletter of the Asia Research Institute, NUS



ARI PUBLIC LECTURE

by **Anthony Yu**

Carl Darling Buck Distinguished Service Professor in the Humanities and Professor of Religion and Literature in the Divinity School, University of Chicago.

10 November 2005, National Library of Singapore

The Historical and Comparative Study of Religion in a Chinese Context

Although the academic study of religion in Western culture began at the time of the European Enlightenment as a search for the 'scientific (wissenschaftlich)' understanding of religion not exclusively identified with Christianity, this particular tradition nonetheless decisively shaped the educational development of the West. After Christianity's ascension in the Roman empire, the medieval schools and major universities not only preserved and transmitted classical learning; they also served a religious goal by fostering the scholarly formation and teaching of Christian practices and beliefs articulated as theology, ecclesiastical history, biblical knowledge, and liturgics. That process helped render the Christian religion the dominant cultural force and unchallenged paradigm for religion in Europe and America. Within the scholarly community, moreover, that religion has often been privileged as a taxonomical norm, for measuring and understanding other religions.

Western scholarship thus refers frequently to Christianity as 'our religion' and, as Europe discovered different cultures and languages of the world, the traditions thereof as "other religion(s)." Such a bifurcated and problematic understanding of religion reflects also a double irony of historical development. When Christianity first entered Western civilization, its early communities took pains in distinguishing themselves from both Jewish and Gentile religions. After its successful conquest of Europe and transmission to America, the dominance of the faith sustained and even enlarged its claim to exclusivity and uniqueness, but such a claim arose also from the tradition's chance or purposive encounter with other faiths that led inevitably to comparison. The serious student of religion cannot, therefore, avoid the comparative method for defining religiosity and ascertaining its diverse manifestations in global culture.

Given such a history of the Western academy, how should the Chinese context affect the study of religion? The first point to be noted is that there was no social institution in Chinese civilization comparable to the Christian church endowed with financial, legal, sacerdotal, and eventually, political autonomy. This is not to deny that in different periods, the Daoist ecclesia and the Buddhist sangha wielded enormous influence in Chinese society. Secondly, despite the absence of such a religiously focalized community, the Chinese people as a whole have been active in all varieties of religious

activity. Archeological evidence reveals that Chinese religiosity, expressed in elaborate mortuary ritual and manipulation of the dead as a supreme source of transcendent power, was already well established in high antiquity. Crystalized as variant forms of ancestor worship, Shang theology welded this particular mode of religious belief and ritual as the core ingredient of royal power. Shang religion was thus preeminently a state religion because the king acted as his domain's liturgical representative and mediated to his people the favors obtained from the powers. Reciprocally, the religious authorization of state power through the worship of ancestors, Heaven, and a deified figure like Confucius remained constant throughout China's imperial history.

Thirdly, the reinforcement of state power through religious ideology was evident not only in the functional indispensability of the emperor but also in his progressive deification. Conferral of a series of titles such as the supreme ancestor (taizu, taizong) or high ancestor (gaozu) literally turns the sovereign into an oxymoronic being, a living ancestor, for his subjects. Unlike the tendency to internalize religious authority and transcendence, which some modern scholars discern in the monotheistic traditions, Chinese state religion tended to immanentize transcendence through the structures and terms of kinship. The Son of Heaven (tianzi), a god on earth who was absolute, also served as the sole basis of absolute state power.

This sketch of the Chinese religious context up till the modern era would help explain not only the disputations and conflicts dogging the three historical traditions of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism for much of Chinese history, but also why the imperial state could never remain neutral towards any form of religious movement that threatened its own religiosity. The PRC has long disowned the mythology of the imperial state cult but not the mystique of absolute state power. Therein lies one of the crucial and most vexing problems confronting the study of Chinese religions in our time.

(The complete webcast of this event is also available on our website at <http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/conf2005/101105pl.htm>)

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR PROFESSOR ANTHONY REID



January 2006

Navigating the global knowledge economy

The Singapore Government's initiative in investing five billion dollars in research over the next five years through the National Research Foundation (NRF) has focussed minds on global positioning in the knowledge economy. In the competition for comparative advantage in this new economy, one of Singapore's advantages is a leadership far-sighted enough to understand the importance of the research sector, and strong enough to deliver adequate resources to it. Undoubtedly this little red dot will continue to be one of the places to watch.

Economists seem agreed that knowledge must be added to the classical factors of production, labour and capital, in understanding the 'new growth' economies (Paul Romer et al). But, as a high-powered Washington conference on the subject last year put it, 'there is little shared understanding of knowledge as an economic factor despite its immense importance in the global economy' (National Academies, 2005). Its importance goes far beyond what can be patented or 'harvested' in the form of a particular medicine, microchip, or video. Networking, location, branding and marketing are as important in the knowledge industry as any other. Yet we are just at the beginning of understanding how these factors fit together.

The Social Science end of universities should not be disadvantaged in the expansion of the research sector. The advantages the leading world universities have in the knowledge game is only to a small degree dependent on specific scientific breakthroughs with patents to be harvested. It has much more to do with ability to attract the best minds as faculty and as graduate students across the whole spectrum of knowledge. The problems a globalising world is facing are not technological but dilemmas of growth, equity, cultural coherence, alienation and security (environmental, health, economic and psychological as well as physical). If the social sciences become marginalized in the new research push, it will have more to do with our habits of working individually, our failure to grasp the changes that are overwhelming us, or the communication gap across the 'two cultures', than with our importance in the knowledge economy per se.

A more serious danger is the tendency of funding organisations to favour downstream research with a quick payoff rather than capacity-building in fundamental research on the most pressing global problems. This handicaps scientists in addressing the most important problems, as much as it distorts social science research into short-term problems faced by governments and corporations.

The answer in both cases is the same. Research administrators must ensure that their teams include both types of work, and that each values the other. Good research in every field emerges when short-term empiricists are talking to long-term visionaries; when institutions are strong enough to provide both funding for fundamental research and a career-path for those engaged on short-term projects. The NRF strategy may at best make this possible.

The dot in the middle

The IT revolution has been heralded as causing 'the death of distance'. It has made it possible for once-marginal mini-states like Ireland, Finland and New Zealand to flourish in the new economy. Singapore's distance from the world's great libraries and research labs is no longer a serious handicap.

On the other hand, location gives Singapore's social scientists a challenging research field and a vital perspective on global debates. Unlike many scientists, their research data will be vitally affected by their Asian location. But we face always the choice whether to be primarily Asianists in stressing the particularities, or universalists in fine-tuning the nature of essentially global phenomena. Should we publish in Asian Studies or discipline journals? Should ARI be 'Asian' or '[in] Asia'? Should our ambitions for new NRF initiatives be better understanding of Asia's differences, or of global processes?

Once again the answer must be both. While it is difficult for an individual scholar to be equally plugged into global debates and particular language and cultural traditions, our institutions and our research projects must bring in both. It is precisely the *particulars* of Asia that are vitally transformed by globalising pressures. As a critical Asian research hub we add value to both the Asian and local studies by bringing in the global, and vice versa.

Whichever way the money falls, the Singapore research community will be usefully galvanised by the discussion that has begun about what should be funded. May the process build more bridges than walls.

RECENT ARI EVENTS

Workshop **The Body: Cosmos and Canvas**

18 November 2005

This one-day workshop, organized by ARI and supported by the NUS Centre for the Arts was held on at the NUS Museum Ng Eng Teng Gallery where, notably, an exhibition on sculptures of the human body was ongoing. The workshop was conceived on the premise that many of the most pressing moral problems of the modern world were related to changes in human embodiment, giving rise to the view that we live in a 'somatic society'. It debated that the political and cultural complexity of the modern notion of the body is a product of changes in medical and biological sciences, at the same time the study of the body becoming increasingly multi-disciplinary.



The workshop brought together scholars from various departments and faculties of NUS and abroad. Presentations were made on subjects such as the 'Rise of Somatic Society' by Brian Turner (ARI) in the concluding plenary; and in sessions like 'The Colonial Body' by Zheng Yangwen (ARI), Habibul Khondkar (Sociology), and Laavanya Kathiravelu (ARI); in 'The Sacred and the Corporeal Profane' by Fiona Graham (Japanese Studies), Pattana Kitiarsa (ARI), Kevin Tan (Alberta, Canada); in

'The Flesh and the Stone' by Li Shiqiao (Design and Environment), Jennifer Jarman (Sociology); and in 'The Body of Ethics' by Justine Burley (Science and Engineering), Wong Mee Lian (Medicine), Rachel Safman (Sociology). The welcome address was given by the Director of NUS Centre for the Arts, Ms Christine Khor, who expressed her happiness in collaborating with ARI. The opening address was given by Prof Alan Chan, Acting Director of ARI. Wide-ranging discussions across disciplines generated ideas for future collaborations and conferences.

Workshop **East Asian Pop Culture: Korean and Japanese TV Dramas**

8–9 December 2005

Part of a larger project on East Asian Popular Culture of the Cultural Studies Cluster at ARI, the workshop focused on how Korean and Japanese TV dramas were being received in different East Asian locations, and how their 'messages' were decoded by different audiences. The presentations and the discussion covered the political economy and current state of drama in the television industry in East Asia, and the role of the Korean state in the initiation of Korean pop culture as an export industry which developed subsequently into the 'Korean Wave'.

Participants also deliberated on the impact of Korean TV drama in Japan. In particular, the series *Winter Sonata*. Specifically, they looked at the emergence of middle-age housewives as not only Korean TV drama consumers but also as media activists and cultural brokers between the two countries. They also considered the shifting positions of resident Koreans in Japan as a result of the positive reception of Korean TV drama. Also commented upon were unavoidable negative reactions, or 'backlash', that such a massive cultural 'invasion' inevitably generates, both at home in Korea and in Japan. The workshop brought together scholars from across East Asia to speak about the production and consumption practices in Korean and Japanese television dramas based on research carried out through the comparative audience researches in Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore. It was an excellent opportunity for discussion and exchange and the participants felt that it was a very useful exercise.



RECENT ARI EVENTS

Forum

Discovery Channel's "The History of Singapore"

13 December 2005

This forum provided Singaporeans in general and the NUS community in particular an opportunity to reflect on how the story of the nation was being told to themselves as citizens and as mass culture consumers. It examined how the history of Singapore was being rewritten on the Discovery Channel. A panel of speakers that included Dr Derek Heng, an academic historian; sociologist Dr. Nirmala Purushotam; Ms Tan Pin Pin, an award-winning documentary filmmaker and an ARI alumni; and Dr Kevin Tan, a lawyer and President of the Singapore Heritage Society made critical commentaries on the rewriting of Singapore history into popular culture through the docu-drama.



The forum examined the documentary from different angles of history as narrative and as myth making. The panelists pointed out some of the many historical inaccuracies in the film, and the liberties that were taken in the depiction of reality. It drew a large crowd comprising members of the public as well as academics. Amongst them were many history teachers who were concerned with the impact the

documentary would have on students should it be used in History or National Education lessons and as teaching resource. In this context, the forum seemed most concerned with the need to teach the young Singaporeans to be critical, and the difficulty of achieving this within the confines of the national curriculum.

Workshop

Pensioners on the Move:

Social Security and Trans-Border Retirement Migration in Asia and Europe

5–7 January 2006

Jointly organised by Asia-Europe Foundation, Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, and Asia Research Institute, held at Furama River Front Hotel, Singapore, the aim of this workshop was to investigate the issues of social security and trans-border migration of retired people in Asia and Europe. It compared the specific policies and legal frameworks which enabled or obstructed the geographical movement of the elderly, and explored the strategies, behaviour, and implications which would condition the options and choices the migrants faced. More specifically the workshop discussed the relationships between states and the notion of 'social citizenship', state regulations on migration and the remittance of pensions, and the ways in which national identity is challenged and/or reinforced. It also explored the elderly migrants' sense of 'home' and 'family' with regard to social security and residential strategies, and investigated the emerging 'transnational household' as a result of the movement of the elderly.



Gavin Jones (ARI), Enrico Todisco (Sapienza, Italy), Attila Meleg (Statistical Office, Hungary) spoke in the session on 'Demographic Trends and Retirement Migration'; Dietrich Thranhardt (Munster, Germany), Mika Toyota (ARI), Didier Bigo (Sciences Po, France) presented papers on 'Ageing, Labour Shortages and State Strategies'; Chee Heng Leng (ARI), Kalus Sievking (Bremen, Germany) made presentations in the session on 'Health Policy, Care and State Strategies'; Espeth Guild (Radboud, The Netherlands), Louise Ackers & Peter Dwyer (Leeds, UK) presented in the session on 'Legal Regulations and Retirement Migration'; Shimji Yamashita & Mayumi Ono (Tokyo, Japan), Mari Shimamura (Japan) spoke at the session on 'Gender and Long-stay Tourism in Asia'; Vincente Rodriguez (Inst. Econ. Geog., Spain), Karin Weiss (Applied Studies Potsdam, Germany) made presentations in the session on receiving country studies on 'Retirement Migration'; and Anita Bocker (Radboud, The Netherlands), Hein de Haas (Oxford, UK), Anita Quigley (Ethnic Communities Council, Western Australia) presented papers on 'Return Migrants, Post-retirement Migrants and Social Security'. Topics and areas for future collaborative research were also discussed among the participants. An article on the topics discussed during this workshop will be published in the IAS Newsletter (March 2006 Issue).

NEW ARI MEMBERS

Research Fellows

Prof Chen Shiwei

Prof Chen joins ARI for the duration of 2006 as a Visiting Senior Research Fellow within the Open Cluster. Prof Chen is Associate Professor of History and Chairperson of the Asian Studies Program at Lake Forest College in the U.S. He obtained his Ph.D. at Harvard University in 1998 in Modern Chinese History. Before joining the faculty of Lake Forest College, Prof Chen held teaching positions at Peking University (1985-89) and Cornell University (1998), where he taught various courses on late Qing and Republican Chinese history. A recipient of many distinguished awards, Prof Chen's scholarship has been published in a variety of international journals, including *Modern Asian Studies*, *Twenty-First Century* and *China Scholarship*. At ARI, Prof Chen plans to revise his book manuscript on the history of Academia Sinica, modern China's leading institution of advanced research.



Prof Martin Jacques

Prof Jacques commenced a four month stay at ARI as a Visiting Senior Research Fellow on January 11th 2006. During his time at ARI with the open cluster, he will be working on a book on Asian modernity and how to understand the nature of an emergent China. The book will be published by Penguin in the UK and Harper Collins in the US. Over the last year he has been a visiting professor at the International Centre for Chinese Studies at Aichi University, and at Ritsumeikan University in Japan, and a visiting professor at Renmin University in Beijing. He is a visiting research fellow at the London School of Economics and is based in the UK. He is a columnist for the Guardian newspaper and has written for many newspapers in the UK and globally. He has written several books, was deputy editor of the Independent newspaper, and has made many TV programmes for the BBC.



Prof Kim Soyung

Prof Kim is a Professor of Cinema Studies at the Korean National University of Arts. She has also taught at UC Berkeley and UC Irvine. Her publications include *Specters of Modernity: Fantastic Korean Cinema* (Korean) and *Cinema: Blue Flower in the Land of Technology* (Korean). She has co-edited an Asian cinema special issue of *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* (2002) with Ashishi Rajadhyaksha. Her essays have been translated into Japanese, French, Italian and English. An independent filmmaker, she completed the *Women's History Trilogy* in 2004 (a two-disc DVD set is available at www.yeondvd.com), which was screened at the Yamagata, Hong Kong, Pesaro and other film festivals. During her tenure as a Senior Visiting Research Fellow at the Cultural Studies Cluster in ARI, Prof Kim will work on an English version of *Specters of Modernity: Fantastic Korean Cinema*.



Prof Lee Ying Hui

Prof Lee is from the National Chi Nan University, Taiwan and is at ARI as a Visiting Research Fellow. She has been studying the relationship between China and southeast Asian Chinese communities for nearly fifteen years. Her two monographs and other major publications revolved around the overseas Chinese policy of the Chinese Nationalist Government from 1912 to 1949 and the issue of identity politics. Her recent focus is to explore in depth the activities and influence of the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party over the Chinese overseas communities in Singapore and Malaya during and after the Sino-Japanese War of 1937-1945. This is a joint research project with Associate Professor Huang Jianli of the Department of History, National University of Singapore. She is looking forward to exchanging ideas with other scholars in ARI and further its research China-Southeast Asia interactions.



Prof Madiraju Madhava Prasad

Visiting Senior Research Fellow Prof Prasad is Professor of Film Studies in the Centre for European Studies, Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad, India. He also teaches in the Cultural Studies Programme of the Institute. His publications include a book on Indian cinema, entitled *Ideology of the Hindi Film* (Oxford UP, 1998), and essays in film and cultural studies. During his stay in ARI with the Cultural Studies Cluster, he plans to complete a manuscript on the topic of film stars and politics in South India. He has already published a few papers on this subject and now wishes to expand these into a monograph.



Dr Stephen Teo

Dr Teo, research Fellow obtained his PhD in Cinema Studies at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University, in 2003. His thesis on the martial arts genre in Chinese cinema won an Innovation Award from RMIT. He has designed and taught a course in Asian cinema at RMIT. Dr Teo is the author of *Hong Kong Cinema: The Extra Dimensions* (London: British Film Institute, 1997) and *Wong Kar-wai* (London: BFI, 2005). He has published numerous articles on Hong Kong and other Asian cinema in film journals and book anthologies. His forthcoming publications include *Johnnie Gets His Gun: The Action Films of Johnnie To and King Hu's A Touch of Zen*, both for the Hong Kong University Press. He is an invited member of the editorial board of the Hong Kong University Press's 'New Hong Kong Cinema' series. As part of the Cultural Studies Cluster at ARI, Dr Teo will conduct research with a view to publishing a book on the film industry and film culture of Singapore. He will investigate its historical and current developments, and the role of major companies such as Shaw Brothers and Cathay in establishing Singapore as a nexus of film production and distribution in the region, with a focus on the industry's connections with Hong Kong and China.



Assistant Professors

Dr Priyambudi Sulistiyanto

Dr Sulistiyanto will be with ARI through June 2006 under the Writing Semester Scheme. Dr Sulistiyanto is an Assistant Professor with the Southeast Asian Studies Programme in NUS. His primary research interests are on reconciliation and forgiveness in post-Suharto Indonesia and local politics in Kotagede, Central Java. His publications include a book, *Thailand, Indonesia and Burma in Comparative Perspective* (Aldershot: Ashgate, UK, 2002) and an edited volume (with Maribeth Erb and Carole Faucher), *Regionalism in Post-Suharto Indonesia* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005). He has also published in *Third World Quarterly*, *Kasarinlan*, *Dignitas*, and *Inside Indonesia*. While at ARI he plans to develop a manuscript on the politics of reconciliation and forgiveness in Indonesia and, with Maribeth Erb, to organize a workshop on Pilkada (local district elections) in Indonesia.



NEW ARI MEMBERS

Assistant Professors

Dr Eric Thompson

Dr Thompson will be at ARI through June 2006 under the Writing Semester Scheme. He is Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at the National University of Singapore. Dr Thompson holds a Ph.D. in Sociocultural Anthropology from the University of Washington (Seattle) and has been a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at the University of California Los Angeles. His research interests include the social and cultural effects of urbanism in rural Malaysia, cultural identity and subjectivity, information technology and scholarly networks in Southeast Asia, and the cultural evolution of ASEAN regionalism. His book *Unsettling Absences: Urbanism in Rural Malaysia*, is forthcoming with Singapore University Press and University of Washington Press. While at ARI, his primary focus will be drafting a manuscript on *Associating Southeast Asian Nations: ASEAN as a Cultural Project*. The work is the culmination of research in nine countries over the past two years.



Postdoctoral Fellows

Dr Birgit Bräuchler

Before joining ARI, Dr Bräuchler was part-time lecturer at the Department of Social Anthropology and member of the Graduiertenkolleg (postgraduate program) Postcolonial Studies, both at the University of Munich, Germany. Her research interests are, among others, cyberanthropology, religious and ethnic conflicts and the revival of tradition. For her PhD, she did research on the expansion of the Moluccan conflict (Eastern Indonesia) into the Internet. Her thesis 'Cyberidentities at War: The Moluccan Conflict Online' was published at transcript, Bielefeld, in January 2005. She has also published articles about the Moluccan cyberspace and its actors such as the Laskar Jihad, a Muslim fundamentalist group in Indonesia. During her stay at ARI with the Cultural Studies Cluster, she will finalize publications on her PhD topic as well as start her new research project on the revival of tradition in Eastern Indonesia. She plans to do literature research at ARI, conduct field research in Indonesia and prepare some first publications on the topic (among others a co-edited volume on the revival of tradition worldwide).



Postdoctoral Fellows

Dr Jennifer Connolly

Dr Connolly completed her PhD in Anthropology at the New School for Social Research in 2004. Her dissertation, entitled 'Becoming Christian and Dayak: A Study of Christian Conversion among Dayaks in East Kalimantan, Indonesia', examines the cultural meaning and social consequences of Christian conversion in Indonesia. Prior to joining ARI, she was a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Religion, Conflict, and Peace-building Program at the Kroc Institute of Peace at the University of Notre Dame. At Notre Dame her research focused on the role of religion in the creation of a civil public sphere. As a member of ARI's Religion and Globalisation Cluster, she will be working on journal articles and preparing her thesis for publication.



Dr Patrick Daly

Dr Daly completed his PhD in Archaeology at the University of Oxford in 2002, and has subsequently worked as an Assistant Professor at An-Najah National University, Nablus, in the occupied Palestinian Territories. He has just finished a British Academy fellowship at the University of Cambridge, during which time he conducted field research in Sarawak, East Malaysia. His research focuses upon the relationships between social practice and material culture, with particular reference to change brought about by foreign intervention, occupation, and colonization. He has worked on several large research projects in Europe and the Middle East investigating the impact of Roman occupation on indigenous populations at the fringes of the empire, and for the past five years has been focusing increasingly upon later prehistoric cultural interaction around the South China Sea from a ceramics perspective. Furthermore, he has an active interest in the relationship between cultural heritage management and politics in contemporary situations. He will use his time at ARI, as part of the China-Southeast Asia Interactions Cluster, to publish the results of his research in Borneo, as well as to prepare a volume on cultural heritage and conflict.



Dr Arianne Gaetano

Dr Gaetano recently completed her PhD in Anthropology at the University of Southern California. Her dissertation, entitled "Off the Farm: Rural Chinese Women's Experiences of Labor Mobility and Modernity in Post-Mao China," analyzes the intersection of gender and migration through an ethnographic study of rural migrant women working in Beijing's informal sector. She is also the co-editor (with Tamara Jacka) of *On the Move: Women and Rural-to-Urban Migration in Contemporary China* (Columbia University Press, 2004). As a member of the Migration Cluster at ARI, she plans to revise her thesis for publication and further her research into the significance of migration for gender relations and ideologies, including gendered conceptions of space and mobility, moral agency and value, and citizenship and rights, in China.



Dr Leong Chan-Hoong

Dr Leong graduated with a PhD in Psychology from Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand in 2005. A psychologist by training, he specializes in acculturation research – the study of psychological and socio-cultural changes as a result of contact with people from another culture. He will be working under the Migration Cluster and in the coming year he intends to study Singaporean's perceptions of foreigners in Singapore. He has published research papers in the *Journal of Cross Cultural Psychology*, the *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *Progress in Asian Social Psychology* and the *Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology*. Prior to joining ARI, Dr Leong was a Teaching Fellow at Nanyang Technological University, where he lectured a course on intercultural communication and competency.



Dr Myoe Maung Aung

Dr Maung graduated from the University of Mandalay, received his M.A. from the International University of Japan, his Ph.D. in Political Science and International Relations from the Australian National University. His research fields are the politics and international relations of the Southeast Asian region in general and the government and politics of Myanmar in particular. He has most recently worked on the security and foreign policy issues of Myanmar. As a visiting fellow at the Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies, Singapore, from 2001 to 2002, he produced a monograph entitled "Neither Friend Nor Foe: Myanmar's Relations with Thailand since 1988". He has taught international relations and comparative politics at the University of Mandalay. During his stay at ARI as part of the China-Southeast Asia Interactions Cluster, he will be preparing a manuscript on Myanmar's relations with China since 1948.



NEW ARI MEMBERS

Administrative Staff and Research Assistants

Ms Rina Yap

Ms Yap has a Bachelors Degree in Arts and Social Sciences from the National University of Singapore. Prior to joining ARI, she worked as an Assistant Manager (Communications) at the National Kidney Foundation. She has more than 8 years of event management experience and has been involved in the conceptualization and development of communication strategies to help control brand image and message.



Ms Shamala Sundaray

Ms Sundaray was conferred an M.A. in English Studies by the National University of Singapore in April 2005. Her dissertation looked at the pragmatic inferential abilities of typically developing children and autistic children. She has a Postgraduate Diploma in Education and has taught in both secondary schools and a local polytechnic. Her research interests are in child language acquisition, communication disorders, language attrition, and multilingualism. While at ARI, she will assist Professor Brenda Yeoh as the Research Assistant for the Asian Migration Cluster.



ARI RECOGNITION

Professor Anthony Reid delivered a keynote lecture on 1 December 2005 on 'Paranoia, Foreign Ideas and Conspiracy Theory: Does Anti-semitism help us understand Southeast Asia and the Chinese?' at a conference on the 'History of the Jews and anti-semitism in the former Dutch Indies and in Indonesia, within the context of SE Asia', sponsored by the Foundation for the Chair of Jewish Studies, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam.

Professor Binod Khadria delivered the keynote address, 'Employment Overseas', at the Parallel Session 'Indians in the Gulf' of the 4th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2006 (Expatriate Indians Day) conference. The event was organized by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, Government of India, jointly with the Government of Andhra Pradesh, and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry, at Hyderabad, 7-9 January, 2006.

Professor Brenda Yeoh was invited to give a public lecture for The Centre for East and South-East Studies at Lund University, Sweden, 23 November 2005 on Gender, Migrants and the Nation-State: The Case of Foreign Domestic Workers in Singapore. Professor Yeoh was appointed Head, of the Southeast Asian Studies Programme, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, NUS

Professor Bryan Turner gave a keynote lecture on 'The Globalisation of Human Rights' at Yonsei University, Korean Sociological Association Meeting on 21 October 2005. He also gave a keynote speech on 'The New Xenophobia' at an international conference on Islam, Human Security and Xenophobia held from 25-26 November 2005 in Melbourne. He gave a lecture to the Centre for Asian Research at Murdoch University Australia on 29 November on 'State Formation and Citizenship in Asia'. He also gave a public lecture to the Institute of Advanced Studies at the University of Western Australia on 30 November on the topic 'The End of Multiculturalism'.

Professor Chua Beng Huat was appointed a member of the Advisory Panel on Poverty Reduction in Asia Pacific, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), from October 2005.

Professor Gavin Jones was re-elected as Chair of the Council of CICRED (Comité International de Coopération dans les Recherches Nationales en Démographie, or Committee for International Cooperation in National Research in Demography) for a four-year term. CICRED is based in Paris, and has a membership of more than 600 demographic Centres around the world.

Dr Geoffrey Wade gave a keynote speech entitled 'The Zheng He Voyages: A Reassessment' to a conference convened in Bangkok on 25 November 2005 to commemorate the 600th anniversary of the first voyage by Zheng He to Southeast Asia and the 30th anniversary of the establishment of formal Thailand-PRC diplomatic relations. The conference was organized by The Foundation for the Promotion of Social Sciences and Humanities Textbook Project and the Toyota Foundation.

Professor Binod Khadria and Dr Nicola Piper

On 5 October 2005 the Global Commission on International Migration presented its final report to the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the UN member states. The report is likely to determine the future directions of research and policy on international migration in a significant way across the world. ARI's contribution to this report is noteworthy as background papers by Prof Binod Khadria and Dr Nicola Piper make an integral part of its 'supporting evidence':



Regional Studies no. RS6, 'Migration in South and South-West Asia' by Binod Khadria.

Thematic Paper no. TP10, 'Gender and Migration' by Nicola Piper.

ASIAN METACENTRE FOR POPULATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS

Recent Workshop

International Conference on 'Female Deficit in Asia: Trends and Perspectives'

5–7 December 2005, Singapore

The Asian MetaCentre recently hosted the conference on 'Female Deficit in Asia: Trends and Perspectives', which was co-organised by the CEPED-CICRED-INED in France. The conference discussed policy and methodological issues concerning the exacerbation of discrimination against women amidst rapid fertility decline and economic growth. The conference further examined the future implications of male-dominated populations in Asia.



29 papers were presented at this conference which was attended by about 60 participants from more than 15 countries including Singapore, France, India, Bangladesh, Georgia, The Netherlands, Canada, China, Australia, USA, UK, Sweden, Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia and Taiwan.

Forthcoming Conferences and Workshops

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

20–22 March 2006, Phuket, Thailand

The Asian region has experienced remarkable demographic, social, economic, political and environmental changes in the last decade. Sustaining developmental advances, however, will require continued efforts to alleviate poverty, increase gender equity, improve health, develop more efficient and equitable strategies of resource allocation, and safeguard the natural environment.

This international conference explores the above issues through theoretical considerations and fresh case studies in the context of Asia. The aim is to highlight, understand and assess the most critical population issues for sustainable development in the new millennium.

International Workshop on 'Sexuality and Migration in Asia'

10–11 April 2006, Singapore

Co-organised with Royal Holloway, University of London

The workshop will address the gap in the current literatures on various forms of sexual intimacy that occur as a result of migration, and also shape and reshape migration processes, with empirical reference to the Asian context.

For registration to attend the conferences or updates on the conference, please refer to the website at www.populationasia.org/Events.htm or email the Secretariat at popnasia@nus.edu.sg.

Recent Publications

Global Networks Special issue on 'Asian Transnational Families'

Edited by Brenda S.A. Yeoh, Shirlena Huang and Theodora Lam

The articles in this special issue were first presented as papers at an International Workshop on Asian Transnational Families in February 2005. The workshop was organised by the Asian MetaCentre and the Department of Geography, NUS.

Asian Population Studies Special issue on 'The Demographic Window of Opportunity'

Volume 1, Number 2, July 2005
Edited by Angelique Chan, Wolfgang Lutz and Jean-Marie Robine

The papers published in this special issue were first presented at an International Conference on 'Demographic Window and Healthy Aging: Socioeconomic Challenges and Opportunities' co-organised by the IUSSP Scientific Longevity and Health, the Asian MetaCentre, and two other centres (Centre for Healthy Aging and Family Studies, and the China Center for Economic Research) at Peking University on 10–11 May 2004.

NEW BOOKS



Anthony Reid (2005)

Asal Mula Konflik Aceh: Dari Perebutan Pantai Timur Sumatera hingga Akhir Kerajaan Aceh Abad ke-19. Trans. by Masri Maris. Jakarta: Yayasan Obor.

Indonesian Translation of *The Contest for North Sumatra: Atjeh, the Netherlands and Britain, 1858–1898* (1969).



Y.S. Lee and Brenda S.A. Yeoh (eds.) (2005)

Globalisation and the Politics of Forgetting, London: Routledge.



Guillaume Rozenberg (2005)

Renoncement et Puissance: La Quête de la Sainteté dans la Birmanie Contemporaine. Éditions Olizane: Genève

Guillaume was a postdoctoral fellow at ARI from 2003–2004 where work on this book was completed.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

International Conference on Naming in Asia and Global Change, 23–24 Feb 2006

The cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary study of personal names holds the key to a number of important issues, including the definition of personal identities, the position of the individual in society, religious and cosmological representations, social change, gender and history. In Asia, a great variety of personal naming systems are present. The colonial period and subsequent pressures of globalization are reflected in various systems of naming, typically intended to combine some link with indigenous practice (tenuous in some colonial cases), ethnic identification, legibility to government, and utility within a globalising system. While the link between surnaming and modernisation in European history is beginning to be explored, the ground is still

more fertile in Asian and comparative terms. Much further ground must be covered before we can establish typologies and trends, and relate changes in the naming systems to social and political changes among the enormous diversity of Asian naming.

REGISTRATION: To attend as an observer, please email your name, affiliation/organization, contact number and email address to Ms Valerie Yeo at ariyeov@nus.edu.sg by Friday, 10 February 2006. For enquiries, please contact: Charles Macdonald, CNRS, France, c.macdonald@wanadoo.fr; Zheng Yangwen, ARI, Singapore, arizyw@nus.edu.sg Anthony Reid, Director, ARI, aridir@nus.edu.sg. Secretariat: Ms Rina Yap (ariymjr@nus.edu.sg)

The Unravelling of Civil Society: Religion in the Making and Unmaking of the Modern World, 22–24 March 2006

The growth of religious and ethnic diversity as a consequence of porous, global labour markets and population flows, the partial erosion of state sovereignty, the emergence of flexible citizenship, legal pluralism and multiculturalism, the spread of fundamentalism, and the growth of popular religious movements are important and characteristic aspects of globalisation. The conference will examine how states and societies manage the social and political complexity of globalisation, religious diversity and cultural pluralism, and hence respond to diasporic cultures, conflicting religious identities, cultures and communities. The conference will consider such issues as emerging religious conflicts related to fundamentalism, the evolution of citizenship and human rights, the creation of nation-state identities and the sources of both religious tolerance and violence. The conference will consider theoretical discussions of religion and globalization, and empirical case studies (both historical

and contemporary) of globalization, politics and religion. There will be major plenary lectures by invited speakers and shorter presentations of work in progress, both theoretical and empirical. It is anticipated that a publication will result from the conference.

Principal speakers include: Akbar Ahmed (The American University, Washington), Peter Beyer (University of Toronto), Anna Gade (Oberlin College, ARI Senior Research Fellow), Mark Juergensmeyer (University of California, Santa Barbara), Duncan McCargo (University of Leeds, ARI Research Fellow), Bryan Turner (ARI Research Leader) and Joseph B. Tamney (Ball University).

For enquiries kindly contact: Ms Manjit Kaur (arimkks@nus.edu.sg)

INTERVIEW: PROFESSOR ALAN CHAN



Professor Alan Chan, Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, was Acting Director of ARI in 2005, while Director Anthony Reid was on sabbatical. Below are excerpts from an interview conducted on the 13th of January 2006 with Professor Chan about his tenure at ARI.

You were involved in the initial establishment of ARI a few years ago, and recently you had the chance to be the Institute's Acting Director for a few months. Has ARI turned out to be what you had envisioned it to be?

ARI has certainly established itself very nicely on the academic scene; it's gratifying to see how it has grown from a concept to what it is today--a thriving community of researchers with a growing reputation. The support of the President and the Provost has been instrumental and I hope NUS will continue to support research on Asia, which is important in its own right and is an area in which NUS can distinguish itself internationally.

As Acting Director, what were your main responsibilities?

The research agenda was pretty well set when I arrived; so my work was to ensure that things go according to plan. Besides looking after the day-to-day administration of the Institute, I tried to contribute to streamlining certain processes and procedures in such areas as budget, recruitment and performance appraisal. It was actually quite challenging especially because we have so many short-term researchers at the Institute. I should thank ARI's administrative team, especially Connie who handles HR matters, Kristy, and the event management team, for making my stay at ARI a pleasant one.

What challenges do you think ARI faces in the near future?

ARI has now established a name for itself and is poised to scale even greater heights, in becoming truly a centre of excellence for Asia research. I think ARI needs to address three sets of issues. One is to balance research activity with research outcome. The former is a necessary condition for the latter, but it seems to me that it is not a sufficient condition. The Institute prides itself in organising a large number of conferences, meetings and so on, which are good and necessary. But in the next phase of ARI's development, I think more attention may have to be given to ensuring that these activities translate into high impact research outcomes. It's much easier said than done, of course; every research institute faces the same problem. If people are stretched, if we simply move from one conference to the next, it may be difficult to generate high impact publications.

A second major challenge would be in working more closely with NUS departments and programmes. Faculties and Schools have their teaching and research needs and priorities and ARI must work creatively to craft a "win-win" formula, to use the jargon; otherwise, we will not be able to optimize the research strengths already in NUS. More joint appointments, I think, would be beneficial to both ARI and the Faculties, although it is not easy to work out such arrangements.

A third set of issues that ARI must address is in the area of funding. ARI is fortunate in that it is supported by a core budget. It is probably the only Institute that comes under this kind of financial arrangement in the University. There is a need for this, if we want to promote Asia research. But I think in the next phase of ARI's development, it will increasingly need to go outside of the university to find funding support for its research projects. It's not just money; it's also good to reach out to the community and to get support from the community. My view is that ARI should seek endowment support, rather than relying on what is often called 'soft-money' on a project basis. Project funding rarely goes beyond three years, but three years is a very short time for a research programme. You would need a longer time frame to build and sustain a programme, and to do that kind of work, we should probably look for endowment support. I don't think we have explored the community enough. In Singapore there are possibilities. There are local organizations and individuals who are interested in Asia because we are Asians.

What are your plans now?

My term as Vice-Dean, FASS doesn't end until December 2006. There is plenty that needs to be done in the Faculty, in both research and graduate studies, which are in my portfolio. I also continue to chair the Faculty promotion and tenure committee. The challenge for me is how to do research at the same time. Last semester was a period of 'administrative overload', and I'm quite behind in my research. I'm teaching one graduate module this semester, and I hope to clear at least some of my research 'debts'!

ARI 4th GRADUATE WORKSHOP RELIGION AND TECHNOLOGY IN CONTEMPORARY ASIA

19–20th January 2006

**Shaw Foundation Building,
National University of Singapore**

**Convenors: Dr Francis Lim, Dr Jacob Ramsay
Facilitator: Prof Bryan Turner**

Historically, the spread of religion has always been closely linked to the growth and proliferation of new technologies. However, the ways in which new technologies impact on the experience of the sacred and the divine in contemporary Asian societies is scarcely documented or understood. For two days, twelve graduate students from around the world presented papers on the historical, social, cultural and political relations between technology and religion in the Asian context.

Professor Bryan Turner started the event with his keynote lecture, 'Religion as the Technology of the Soul'. The following workshop saw two historical papers exploring the issue of technology and religious identity formation. Kristian Petersen (Colorado) highlighted the importance of the press in the translation of Islamic texts into Chinese, thereby allowing the Chinese Muslims to fashion a distinctive identity as members of Chinese literati and as learned Muslims. Nurfadzillah Yahaya (NUS) showed how wealthy Arabs in early 20th century Singapore, through ownership of steamships, became 'pilgrimage brokers' for the Hajj pilgrimage.

Three participants presented on the 'Islamisation' of knowledge in contemporary Indonesia. Latifah (EFI) discussed a genre of popular Islamic teen fiction that seeks to instill Islamic values in its readers, while A. Budiyanto (Gadjah Mada) presented a semiotic analysis of the conversion of secular consumer icons into recognizably religious ones. Daromir Rudnyckj (Berkeley) examined how meaning is engendered in a steel factory as religious reforms aspire to reconcile Islam with scientific knowledge.



The impact of recent developments in communication technology on religious conversion and experience constituted another important theme at the workshop. Ngo TT Tam (Leiden) showed that the radio—as an effective communication tool and emblem of modernity—has been crucial for the rapid spread of Christianity among the Hmong in Vietnam. For many other Protestant Christians, however, the Internet is the 'new face of global Christian evangelism' (Jayeel Cornelio, NUS), whereby the building of online communities, not territorial ones, is the focus of missionary effort.

Several papers suggested that technology, rather than displacing religion, has instead re-configured people's relationship with the divine. In fact, the sacred has been made immanent through technology, as argued by Anton Sevilla (Ateneo de Manila). Joseph Cruz (NUS) demonstrated that, in the megachurches in Singapore and the Philippines, technology is used to structure religious experience as a spectacle to be consumed by the middle class. This is also seen in the way by which churches in Medan try to reach out to the younger generation (Limantina Sihalo, Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Abdi Sabda, Medan, Indonesia).

The potent confluence of the technological and the religious in shaping the political was illustrated by two case studies. In Taiwan, the Presbyterian Church helped shape the public debate on Taiwanese identity through effective use of print and cyber media (Zheng Zhenqing, Beijing). In the Philippines, according to Lawrence Santiago (NUS), the widespread practice of text messaging was analogous to the 'prayers for justice, truth and freedom' during the 'People's Revolutions', and hence empowered the Filipinos in their struggle for political power in the public sphere.



Together, the workshop papers convincingly demonstrated that the technological and the religious often intersect with the political, thereby pointing to the complex relationships between spirituality, social and identity formation, sovereignty and power.



WORKSHOP on Religious Commodification in Asia 24–25 November, 2005 National University of Singapore

What theoretical implications can be drawn for the study of religions when traditional Asian religious beliefs and institutions turn their focus to material prosperity, and religions compete with each other in a 'market of faiths'? How do people and religious institutions in Asia adjust to, and negotiate with, the penetration of global market forces?

These were some of the questions addressed at the Religious Commodification in Asia workshop, organised by Pattana Kitiarsa, Bryan Turner, and Vineeta Sinha of the Religion and Globalisation Study Group. The event brought together leading anthropologists and sociologists from Australia, Canada, China, India, Indonesia, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Singapore, and the USA who are researching on the current convergence between market economy and religious traditions in Asia. During the 2-day event, a total of 21 papers presented the latest research on prosperity cults and marketized spiritualities in Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Chinese religions, spirit cults and forms of popular religion. Among the many highlights were two keynote addresses: Robert P. Weller (Boston University)

spoke on "Asia and the Global Economies of Charisma", and Bryan Turner (National University of Singapore) on "New Spiritualities, the Media and Global Religion: da Vinci Code and the Passion of the Christ." A film entitled, "Spirits and Gods: the Vegetarian Festival in Phuket", was also screened during the workshop.

Scholars found numerous instances of Asian religious traditions embracing market forces, resulting in what Weller calls the "global economies of charisma", or what Marc Askew (Victoria University, Australia) characterises as the "proliferation of symbolic economy". While religions negotiate with the global market economy through different ways in diverse cultural settings, in Asia they strongly manifest the same 'this-worldly' concerns over issues such as the problem of money—as noted by Jean DeBernardi (University of Alberta)—as well as good health, good fortune and blessings for the good life. From India and Southeast Asia to China, such concerns constitute one of the most visible forms of religious beliefs and practices in Asia today.