

# DISASTROUS PASTS

## NEW DIRECTIONS IN ASIAN DISASTER HISTORY



**21-22 NOVEMBER 2016**  
ASIA RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

**Organized by Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore; with funding support from the Singapore Ministry of Education grant on 'Governing Compound Disasters in Urbanizing Asia'.**

The aim of this conference is to explore the role played by disasters in the history of Asia. It will adopt an interdisciplinary approach, appealing to historians, social scientists and natural scientists with an interest in events and trends in the history of disasters, and what past disasters can teach us about present conditions. The conference will address the following five key themes:

**How did historic communities cope with disasters?** Historic communities living in hazard-prone areas were not simply victims. They developed a range of social and cultural responses to the challenges they faced. This conference will consider the various forms of vernacular technology, coping strategies, and systems of environmental knowledge that helped communities to avoid disasters and ameliorate their consequences. It will also examine how such responses have been challenged, transformed or eroded by social, political, and environmental change.

**How have perceptions of environmental hazards changed over time and varied between cultures?** This conference will consider whether the concepts that dominate contemporary discourse, such as disaster, resilience and vulnerability, can be considered transhistorical and transcultural, whether they have historical equivalents, or whether they are the product of particular epistemologies and ontologies. We will consider whether the emergence of discourses, concepts, or shared cultural memories of disasters conditioned the policy decisions and technological interventions taken in particular historical periods. Did people always think of disasters as disastrous, and if not how did this affect their responses?

**How can scholars develop cross-disciplinary dialogues to improve the understanding of disasters?** Given the dominant contemporary discourse of anthropogenic climate change and the corresponding increased risk of nature-induced disaster, the impetus for expanding multi-disciplinary approaches has never been greater. However, the separation of many fields of research across the sciences and the humanities, as well as contemporary disaster risk management, can lead to problems in research, dialogue, and funding. A better synthesis between disciplines, researchers and users, is therefore critical for improving approaches to environmental disaster risk management today. This conference will explore the case for a cross-disciplinary approach to disasters, past and present.

**How have environmental hazards interacted with famines in the history of Asia?** The links between disasters and subsistence crises are both complex and controversial. Whilst popular representations tend to emphasise the role that hazards such as floods and droughts played in generating famines, social scientists and historians have tended to concentrate more upon economic and political causation. This conference aims to foster greater dialogue between disaster studies and famine studies, two fields that study similar historical processes from very different perspectives. It will examine the dynamic interactions between environmental and social systems that are responsible for generating subsistence crises.

**How have epidemiological transitions and changes to public health influenced the outcome of disasters?** Health crises – epidemics, pandemics, and epizootics – have been amongst the deadliest forms of disaster in human history. Furthermore, a large number of those who have died as a result of geophysical or climatic hazards, such as floods, earthquakes, and droughts, have succumbed to disaster-related diseases. This conference will explore the interaction between disasters and health in the history of Asia. We will consider how the mortality profile of disasters has changed over time, and how changing social and medical responses to health risks have influenced the humanitarian consequences of hazards.

<b>21 NOVEMBER 2016 (MONDAY)</b>		
<b>09:00 – 09:15</b>	<b>REGISTRATION</b>	
<b>09:15 – 09:30</b>	<b>OPENING &amp; WELCOME REMARKS</b>	
<i>09:15</i>	<b>Prof Gregory Clancey</b>   National University of Singapore <b>Dr Chris Courtney</b>   National University of Singapore <b>Dr Fiona Williamson</b>   Asia Research Institute National University of Singapore	
<b>09:30 – 11:00</b>	<b>PANEL 1 – PERCEPTIONS OF DISASTER</b>	
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>Mike Douglass</b>   National University of Singapore	
<i>09:30</i>	<b>Gregory Clancey</b> National University of Singapore	Why Disaster?: Toward a Critical History of Disaster Studies
<i>09:50</i>	<b>Fiona Williamson</b> National University of Singapore	Floods, Cultural Memory, and Urban Development in Colonial Singapore
<i>10:10</i>	<b>Rebecca Jones</b> Australian National University	Slow Catastrophes: Exploring Adaptation to Drought in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Australia
<i>10:30</i>	<b>QUESTIONS &amp; ANSWERS</b>	
<b>11:00 – 11:30</b>	<b>TEA BREAK</b>	
<b>11:30 – 13:00</b>	<b>PANEL 2 – VOLCANIC COMMUNITIES</b>	
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>Bin Yang</b>   National University of Singapore	
<i>11:30</i>	<b>Greg Bankoff</b> University of Hull, UK	Living Under the Volcano: Mount Mayon and Co-volcanic Communities in the Philippines
<i>11:50</i>	<b>Alicia Schrikker</b> Leiden University, The Netherlands	Living with a Volcano: Mount Awu in Sangihe Besar, 1700-1900
<i>12:10</i>	<b>Sander Tetteroo</b> Leiden University, The Netherlands; and Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia	Interpreting Calamities: Private Charity and Government Responses to the c.1900 Central Java Famine and 1898-1899 Moluccan Earthquake Disaster
<i>12:30</i>	<b>QUESTIONS &amp; ANSWERS</b>	
<b>13:00 – 14:00</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>	

<b>14:00 – 15:30</b>	<b>PANEL 3 – HAZARDOUS ENVIRONMENTS</b>	
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>Joseph Christensen</b>   Murdoch University, Australia	
14:00	<b>Chris Courtney</b> National University of Singapore	From Burning Rivers to Fire from the Sky: Conflagrations in Modern Hankou, China
14:20	<b>Arupjyoti Saikia</b> Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, India	There Came Earthquakes! Earthquakes and Environmental History of India's North East
14:40	<b>Jeanine Dağyeli</b> Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin, Germany	The Fight against Heaven-Sent Animals: Dealing with Locust Plagues in the Emirate of Bukhara
15:00	<b>QUESTIONS &amp; ANSWERS</b>	
<b>15:30 – 16:00</b>	<b>TEA BREAK</b>	
<b>16:00 – 17:30</b>	<b>PANEL 4 – CROSS DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO DISASTER</b>	
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>Gerard Sasges</b>   National University of Singapore	
16:00	<b>Robert J. Wasson</b> National University of Singapore	Incubation of the 2013 Flood and Landslide Disaster in Uttarakhand, India: A Critical Role for History
16:20	<b>Rohan D'Souza</b> Kyoto University, Japan	Floods, Disasters and Re-tooling History: Can Cross-disciplinary Dialogues Help Policy- making?
16:40	<b>Adam D. Switzer</b> Nanyang Technological University, and Earth Observatory Singapore	Historical Coastal Hazard Events – Going Beyond the Tide Gauge: The 18 <sup>th</sup> Century Southwest Taiwan Tsunami and the 19 <sup>th</sup> Century Tacloban Typhoon in the Philippines
17:00	<b>QUESTIONS &amp; ANSWERS</b>	
<b>17:30</b>	<b>END OF DAY 1</b>	
<b>17:45</b>	<b>BUS TRANSFER</b> - From ARI to dinner venue	
<b>18:15 – 20:00</b>	<b>WORKSHOP DINNER</b> (For Speakers, Chairpersons & Invited Guests)	

<b>22 NOVEMBER 2016 (TUESDAY)</b>	
<b>09:15 – 09:30</b>	<b>REGISTRATION</b>
<b>09:30 – 11:00</b>	<b>PANEL 5 – SUBSISTENCE AND DISASTERS</b>
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>Seung-joon Lee</b>   National University of Singapore
09:30	<b>Kathryn Edgerton Tarpley</b> San Diego State University, USA <i>'Rice of the Immortals' or Poison? Famine Foods in Late-Qing, Nationalist, and Mao-Era China</i>
09:50	<b>Mark Baker</b> Yale University, USA Priority Politics and Wartime Starvation: The Case of Henan, 1942-43
10:10	<b>James Francis Warren</b> Murdoch University, Australia Disasters, Food Shortages and Famine in the Philippines since the 17 <sup>th</sup> Century
10:30	<b>QUESTIONS &amp; ANSWERS</b>
<b>11:00 – 11:30</b>	<b>TEA BREAK</b>
<b>11:30 – 13:00</b>	<b>PANEL 6 – HEALTH AND DISASTERS</b>
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>Michelle Miller</b>   National University of Singapore
11:30	<b>Robert Peckham</b> University of Hong Kong Fatal Repetitions: SARS and the Disasters to Come
11:50	<b>José Siri</b> United Nations University, Malaysia Urbanization, Environmental Change and Health in Asia
12:10	<b>Boumsoung Kim</b> Hiroshima Institute of Technology, Japan Ultraviolet Utopia? Irradiating Interwar Japan with Invisible Sunlight
12:30	<b>QUESTIONS &amp; ANSWERS</b>
<b>13:00 – 14:00</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>
<b>14:00 – 14:45</b>	<b>FILM SCREENING &amp; DISCUSSION</b>
	<b>WASEB [NATION]</b> by Ali Nobil Ahmad 22 minutes   Language: Urdu/Saraiki (with English subtitles)
<b>14:45 – 15:45</b>	<b>ROUNDTABLE &amp; CLOSING REMARKS</b>
<i>Moderator</i>	<b>Gregory Clancey</b>   National University of Singapore
<b>15:45</b>	<b>END OF DAY 2</b>
<b>16:00</b>	<b>BUS TRANSFER</b> - From ARI to Tembusu College
<b>16:15 – 17:30</b>	<b>BOOK LAUNCH &amp; COCKTAIL RECEPTION AT TEMBUSU COLLEGE</b> (For Speakers, Chairpersons & Invited Guests)
	Launch of <i>Natural Hazards and People in the Indian Ocean World</i> , a Palgrave Series in Indian World Studies collection edited by Greg Bankoff and Joseph Christensen. Chapters include contributions from Anthony Reid, Jim Warren, and Alicia Schrikker. For more details, see: <a href="http://www.palgrave.com/us/book/9781349948567">http://www.palgrave.com/us/book/9781349948567</a>
<b>17:45</b>	<b>BUS TRANSFER</b> - From Tembusu College to hotel

## Why Disaster?: Toward a Critical History of Disaster Studies

**Gregory Clancey**

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Since the 1950s, some social scientists with an interest in natural disasters have been attempting to make “disaster studies” a distinct scholarly field, with its own theories, methodologies, and eventually lessons. The applied version of this initiative, even more successful as an interdisciplinary field, is “disaster management”. My paper will present a critical history of this project, and suggest some of its contradictions, limitations, and even lost possibilities. If “disaster” is the sudden and (usually) unexpected breakdown of theories, methodologies, and lessons in the form of social and physical infrastructures (including knowledges) then with what authority do we build new structures on such ruins? And what are the stakes in doing so? Are “learning practical lessons” the purpose of studying disasters, or is it legitimate to conclude through such study that practical lessons cannot be learned. How have (and might) different goals, terms, time frames, and even disaster types influenced our analyses and/or narratives? These seem particularly rich questions for historians to explore, given that so many of us are now drawn to disaster as a topic or theme, but have been skeptical of (or actively left out of) “disaster studies” projects, and perhaps for good reason. Do we join or resist, cooperate or critique? Finally, how might writing about natural disaster even transform historiography, which has long been resistant to nature as a full actor in its narratives, let alone an agent of political and social change?

**Gregory Clancey** has been writing about disasters since completing a PhD dissertation on Japanese earthquakes in 1998 at MIT’s Programme in Science, Technology, and Society (STS). This became *Earthquake Nation: The Cultural Politics of Japanese Seismicity* (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 2006) which won that Edelstein Prize from the Society for the History of Technology (SHOT) in 2007, and was selected as “one of the 11 best books about science” on the UC Berkeley Summer Reading List in 2009. He has more recently been an academic consultant to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) following the Fukushima nuclear accident, working to incorporate STS perspectives into the curricula of Japanese medical education. Clancey is an Associate Professor in the Department of History and the Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore (NUS), where he leads the STS Cluster, and is concurrently Master of Tembusu College, also at NUS.

## Floods, Cultural Memory and Urban Development in Colonial Singapore

**Fiona Williamson**

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Historic records are increasingly considered significant for understanding nature-induced disasters, especially impact, risk, and adaption. Such records not only provide evidence as to the frequency and scale of past weather events, but critical context as to how communities responded and adapted for future generations, if at all. In many historic Asian cities, floods were simply a fact of everyday life. Living with floods was the norm, rather than the exception to the rule for most of the nineteenth century. Except in the most extreme cases, shop owners opened for business as usual and people went to work as expected.

This paper takes the colonial city of Singapore c.1800-1930 as a case study for investigating responses to historic floods. By using a combination of meteorological and narrative historic records, it will explore how floods contributed to that city's changing urban fabric and became inscribed into Singapore's popular memory and culture. It will also examine the possibility of a culture shift in the early twentieth century, whereby urban inhabitants became less inclined to accept flooding as inevitable and, expected the government to play a larger role in prevention.

**Fiona Williamson** received her PhD in History from the University of East Anglia in 2009. Since then she has been working as a lecturer in the UK and in Asia, as well as working with the UK Meteorological Office on a series of projects relating to historic weather. Her current research focuses on the interconnections between flooding and urban development in Singapore and colonial Malaya. Her published and forthcoming work examines a range of issues connected to disasters, extreme weather, and the history of meteorology.

## Slow Catastrophes: Exploring Adaptation to Drought in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Australia

**Rebecca Jones**

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Drought is a key feature of the Australian climate, which has helped to shape soil, flora, fauna, topography and human history. The social, economic and emotional impact is profound, but droughts' recurrence and tenacity means that people have, in the long term, found ways to adapt. This research focuses on the deliberate, conscious, creative, varied and at times surprising coping strategies of farmers, who are amongst the people most profoundly influenced by extreme weather.

This environmental history applies psychological and socio-ecological concepts of resilience to exploring droughts in the past. While I take a long view of drought, from the 1870s to the present, this paper focuses particularly on the exceptionally dry decades between 1890 and 1950. Social historical sources provide a window into cultural, social and agricultural change over time and, from this, a rich picture of the lived experience of adaptation emerges. While the impact of, and responses to, drought share much with other types of environmental adversity, droughts are slow catastrophes which occur over months and years rather than days and weeks; they lack clear beginning and end and have no tangible cause or catalyst. Reactive responses during drought helped people in the short term but the way people lived their lives before, after and in between drought contributed most to fundamental resilience. The way people understood drought and integrated it into their lives, as well as their practical, physical and emotional responses promoted (as well as hindered) adaptation to drought.

**Rebecca Jones** is the author of *Slow Catastrophes: Living with Drought in Australia*, a portrait of drought adaptation in Australia from the 1870s to the present. This will be published by Monash University Publishing in early 2017. Her research interests include environmental history, agricultural history, Australian history, interdisciplinary history and rural mental health and wellbeing and she has research background in both history and rural health. Rebecca has just commenced comparative research exploring adaptation to extreme weather in nineteenth and twentieth century Australia, the Canada and California. She is at the Australian National University in the School of History and Centre for Environmental History.



## **Living Under the Volcano: Mount Mayon and Co-volcanic Communities in the Philippines**

**Greg Bankoff**

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Rich volcanic soils have long attracted human settlements which have traded the risk of eruption against the benefits of higher agricultural yields. Yet little research has been done on the manner in which societies have normalized the risks and adapted to living in close proximity to volcanoes, or how those modifications, in turn, might have influenced the effects of an eruption and the consequent hazards. That is how people have co-evolved with volcanoes, to create “co-volcanic societies”. Mt. Mayon, in southern Luzon is among the most active of volcanoes in the Philippines, having erupted at least 49 times over the last four centuries. This paper offers a preliminary examination of a number of interrelated questions to do with how societal responses to volcanoes have developed over time, the differing impact of historical eruptions on communities, the role of politics and religion in influencing community vulnerability and resilience, the way progressive human modifications of the landscape affect volcanic hazard, and the manner in which painfully learnt human adaptations to volcanic risks are eventually ignored and cause societal maladaptations.

**Greg Bankoff** works on community resilience and the way societies adapt to hazard as a frequent life experience. For the last 25 years, he has focused his research primarily on the Philippines seeking to understand how societies, both past and present, have learnt to normalize risk and the manner in which communities deal with crisis through a historical sociological approach that combines archival analysis with fieldwork, community mapping, interviews and focus groups. An historical geographer, he is Professor of Modern History based at the University of Hull and has published extensively including approximately 100 referred journal articles and book chapters. His most recent publications include co-authoring The Red Cross’s *World Disaster Report 2014: Focusing on Culture and Risk* and a companion, coedited volume entitled *Cultures and Disasters: Understanding Cultural Framings in Disaster Risk Reduction* (2015).

**Living with a Volcano:  
Mount Awu in Sangihe Besar, 1700-1900**

**Alicia Schrikker**

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Mount Awu on the island of Sangihe besar is an active volcano, and at times its eruptions have had disastrous consequences for Sangirese society. Despite these experiences people continued to inhabit the island and to live with risk. Sangirese folk tales written down in the 19<sup>th</sup> century emphasize Awu's capricious character. This paper looks at the historical eruptions of 1711, 1812, 1856 and 1892, and ask the question what it meant to live with a volcano that erupts so frequently. How is society shaped by the volcano? In the period 1700-1900 human society on the island underwent various changes. Colonialism, Christian mission, logging and agricultural expansion are four factors that potentially influenced the relationship between the islanders and the volcano. The second question this paper asks is how these developments in human society influenced the volcanic activities. By raising these two question this paper seeks to understand in what way human society and the volcano were co-constitutive in shaping the disasters of 1711, 1812, 1856 and 1892.

**Alicia Schrikker** obtained her PhD (with distinction) in 2006 with a study of Dutch and British colonial intervention in Sri Lanka between 1780 and 1815. From 2006 to 2011 she worked as project coordinator and lecturer at Leiden University and since 2012 she is appointed as a lecturer in Colonial and Global history at Leiden University. After the publication of her thesis she further developed her interest in colonial interaction in Asia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with a particular focus on sites of negotiation and colonial engagement, such as post-disaster sites. Between 2012 and 2014 she was involved in the interdisciplinary project "Representing Catastrophe" that focused on colonial and postcolonial island Southeast Asia and the Caribbean. She has been editor and subsequently editor-in-chief of *Itinerario, Journal of European Expansion and Global Interaction* (CUP) between 2006 and 2016. Since 2016 she is the editor of the open access journal *BMGN, Low Countries Historical Review*.

## **Interpreting Calamities: Private Charity and Government Responses to the c.1900 Central Java Famine and 1898-1899 Moluccan Earthquake Disaster**

**Sander Tetteroo**

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My paper will analyze disaster charity in late colonial Indonesia. Official government policy was for minimal government contributions beyond emergency aid to victims of major disasters. Its limited willingness to contribute financially to post-disaster recovery meant that private charity was to carry the lion's share of the burden of financing relief. In the first part of my presentation I briefly outline the differences and similarities between famine policy and natural disaster policy in the Netherlands Indies, using the examples of the famine that devastated parts of Central Java in the early 1900 and the earthquakes that struck the Moluccan islands of Ambon and Ceram in 1898 and 1899 respectively. My focus will be on the respective roles and responsibilities assumed by the colonial state and civil society.

The second part of my presentation analyzes the 1919 eruption of the Kelud volcano nearby Blitar, East Java which caused at least 5.0000 deaths East Java. The eruption triggered local and colony-wide charity initiatives as well as a major fundraising effort in The Netherlands. Unique to the Kelud eruption was that for the first time, it triggered an extensive, cooperative response among Indonesia's burgeoning indigenous civil society: trade unions, nationalist movements and religious organizations united in an effort to demonstrate commitment to aiding the disaster's victims. Among these, leadership was assumed by the nascent nationalist Sarekat Islam organization. I will draw on colonial archives and Dutch and indigenous press to analyze the various actions undertaken to relieve victims and aid their recovery, focusing on the different meanings the disaster had for Dutch and indigenous relief organizers.

**Sander Tetteroo** (1988) obtained his BA and Research MA degrees from Leiden University. He graduated cum laude in Colonial and Global History on a thesis titled "Famine in the Netherlands East Indies, c. 1900-1904." He is currently a PhD candidate in a joint program of Leiden University and Gadjah Mada University. The working title of his research project is "Calamitous Indonesia: Aid to Victims of Natural Disasters and Internal Conflicts (c. 1900-1965)". His research interests are in the histories of poverty, famine and disaster, humanitarianism and victimhood and colonial policy-making.

## **From Burning Rivers to Fire from the Sky: Conflagrations in Modern Hankou, China**

**Chris Courtney**

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This paper examines the changing nature of fire disasters in modern Hankou. In the nineteenth century the city was notorious for its frequent catastrophic conflagrations. Narrow streets lined with wooden buildings, dense squatter settlements, and ports choked with junks and sampans, caused blazes so intense that on occasions they crossed rivers to burn down neighbouring cities. In spite of the profound transformation of the urban landscape in the twentieth century, Hankou continued to suffer regular conflagrations. Rather than indicating the incapacity of the local population to overcome a perennial hazard, these disasters demonstrated the changing human relationship with fire. Increased globalisation and industrialisation transformed the urban fire regime. At the same time that novel technologies and practices were enhancing fire prevention, Hankou was being filled with a range of highly flammable industrial materials. There was also a technological arms race between municipal governors and military arsonists. The former fought valiantly to make the city less flammable, whilst the latter employed ever-more sophisticated weapons to burn Hankou down. This culminated in 1944, when the US air force used incendiary bombs to level much of the city. By tracing the history of conflagrations in Hankou, this paper demonstrates how fire, a seemingly historically consistent hazard, was actually always changing. Fire evolved in response to the shifting material and political environment.

**Chris Courtney** is a research fellow in the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, and at Gonville and Caius College, University of Cambridge. His previous research focused upon the social and environmental history of flooding in China. His forthcoming monograph is provisionally entitled *The Nature of Disaster: The 1931 Central China Floods* (Cambridge University Press, 2017). His current research focuses upon the social history of disease in China and the Chinese diaspora. In particular, he is examining the impact of pandemic influenza upon the Chinese world, and also the effect of beriberi on Chinese migrants in Southeast Asia.

## There Came Earthquakes! Earthquakes and Environmental History of India's North East

**Arupjyoti Saikia**

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At least in recent past two major earthquakes (1897 & 1950) had left behind deep environmental and social impacts on the human and non-humans as well as nature of India's northeast. The massive seismic disturbance of 1897 played a crucial role in shaping the physical history of this region. Seismologists agree that this earthquake holds a 'prominent place among the great earthquakes of the world'. Another earthquake in 1950 disturbed region's physical setting. Similar earthquakes in the past had upset the region and redefined its physical environs. Essentially, the region has historically been host to a number of major earthquakes. What changes were brought in to the landscape by these natural disasters? Floods, landslides, fissures, sand vents and artificial river dams were some of the key factors that one can pay attention to while addressing the above question. How did the local communities respond to the crisis? What happened to their agricultural fields? What happened to the non-humans? The government lacked resources and experiences to deal with such devastating earthquakes. Did these natural disasters disappear from the local communities' memories or at least from the perspectives of the policy makers? By the early twenty-first century India has embarked on construction of large numbers of river dams in the Brahmaputra river system by ignoring the geological and ecological uncertainties conditioned by the history of earthquakes. The policy-makers assume that the risk behind these projects is worth-taking given the economic gains to be made out of it. This paper is an attempt to write an environmental history of the earthquakes in the region.

**Arupjyoti Saikia** is Professor in History at Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati. He earned his PhD in History from University of Delhi. He was a Post-doctoral Fellow at Yale University (2011-12). He is also Member, Scientific Steering Committee, IHOPE and Associate Editor of *Conservation and Society*. He was Visiting Fellow at the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla in July, 2015. Saikia was awarded Srikant Dutta Award by Nehru Memorial the Nehru Memorial Museum & Library (NMML), New Delhi for his book *A Century of Protests: Peasant Politics in Assam since 1900* (Rutledge, 2015). He has also authored *Forests and Ecological History of Assam, 1826-2000* (Oxford University Press, 2011) and *Jungles, Reserves, Wildlife: A History of Forests in Assam* (2005). He has published articles in *Studies in History, Indian Economic & Social History Review, Indian Historical Review, Economic and Political Weekly, Modern Asian Studies, Journal of Peasant Studies, Conservation and Society* etc. His forthcoming monograph is *The Turbulent River: An Environmental History of the Brahmaputra* (Oxford University Press).

## **The Fight against Heaven-Sent Animals: Dealing with Locust Plagues in the Emirate of Bukhara**

**Jeanine Dağyeli**

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The late 19th and early 20th centuries were a time of crisis and change for Central Asian societies. The establishment of Russian colonial rule in the region, internal strife, mismanagement, and increasing pressure on resources all added to a climate of uncertainty, vulnerability, and rural exodus. Land reclamation, change to cash crops, trophy hunting and war led to the deterioration of a fragile ecosystem and encouraged outbreaks of agricultural pests. Travel accounts, newspapers and other sources talk about a cumulation of locust plagues especially in the eastern parts of the Bukharan Emirate during this period. Large swarms infested these regions for years and destroyed most of the crop, making the population dependent on grain imports. Locusts were a well-known pest, although land use practices largely seem to have prevented this kind of long-term outbreaks; dealings with the insects, once they appeared, ranged from destruction of the grubs to praying and the use of anti-locust amulets. Locust combat was controversial: Like other kinds of natural disasters which were beyond human control, locusts were perceived as heaven-sent visitation – turning a combat into an anti-divine activity. The fight against locusts reached a political dimension around 1900 when the Russian colonial administration tried to pressurise the Bukharans into using modern insecticide and blamed their superstition for the resistance they met. This paper will examine the reciprocal effects of changes in land management and pest outbreaks, and the controversies of locust combat between traditional responses, colonial demands and religious conceptualisations.

**Jeanine Dağyeli** studied Central Asian Studies, sociology and Islamic Studies at Friedrich-Alexander-University, Erlangen (Germany) and Humboldt-University, Berlin where she graduated with a master thesis on contemporary folk medicine in Kyrgyzstan. In 2008, she received her doctorate on crafts' manuals of conduct (risala) from the same university. Jeanine Dağyeli has worked at Martin-Luther-University in Halle (Germany), the Institute for Oriental Manuscripts, Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan and Free University (Berlin). Currently, she is a research fellow at ZMO in Berlin with a project on the moral economy of land and water in the Emirate of Bukhara. Her research interests include (historical) anthropology of Central Asia, resource access, anthropology of labour, folk medicine, and burial and commemoration rites.

## **Incubation of the 2013 Flood and Landslide Disaster in Uttarakhand, India: A Critical Role for History**

**Robert J. Wasson**

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Knowledge has been recognized as an essential component of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), but often does not take into account the precursors of disasters that evolve over decades or even centuries. These precursors and their interactions will not be obvious to those who take a shallow time perspective. Deeper historical accounts of the incubation of disasters, the confluence of threats and human vulnerability, can provide explanations that can lead to more effective governance design. This approach is applied to the 2013 hydroclimatic disaster in the Indian State of Uttarakhand, showing, *inter alia*, that some of the causes of vulnerability can be traced to governance changes about a century ago. This and other examples of the study of disaster incubation should motivate applied historians (and archaeologists) to work with specialists in flood hydrology and geomorphology, human geography, disaster governance, political science, and political economy.

Prior to joining NUS in 2011 Professor **Robert J. Wasson** was Director of the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies, Dean of Science, and Head of the Department of Geography and Human Ecology at the Australian National University, then Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and International at Charles Darwin University, Australia. He has taught and researched at Sydney University, Macquarie University, University of Auckland, Monash University, and the Australian National University. He was trained in geomorphology with interests in: causes of change in river catchments; environmental history; extreme hydrologic events; cross-disciplinary methods; and the integration of science into policy He has done research in Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, Timor Leste, Malaysia, India, Nepal, Pakistan, China, Myanmar and Thailand. His current research is focused on flood risk over long periods in India and Thailand.

## Floods, Disasters and Re-tooling History Can Cross-disciplinary Dialogues Help Policy-making?

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'Floods' invoke a striking conceptual pause in modern disaster research. In contrast to the simple civil engineering inspired belief that floods are about rivers raging through channel overflow, recent studies in diverse disciplines have suggested otherwise. The need to understand flooding as but one element in a fluvial-behavioral-complex involving erosion, deposition, drainage and connectivity between an array of organisms. Consequently, floods are not merely calamitous events but more correctly grasped as geological process and more meaningfully as an unravelling dynamic biological pulse rather than a destructive hydraulic flow.

This sharp conceptual shift in how both floods and river behavior are being ecologically re-conceptualized has been paralleled by the dramatic reworking, through the course of the 1970s, of the idea of the 'natural disaster' itself. Simply stated, in a slew of disciplines (notably environmental history, critical geography and environmental anthropology) the natural disaster is no longer held to be an objective force of Nature. Instead, the natural disaster event is viewed as being inextricably implicated, embedded, entangled and defined by cultural landscapes.

Given the above perceptual shifts, this paper will review how differing histories over 'flood control', 'flood management', 'living with floods' and 'floods-as-process' are urging for a dramatic reconsideration of the 'problem of floods' in South Asia. Can cross-disciplinary dialogues over floods in South Asia reshape the existing status quo in the world of policy-making for mitigating disaster impacts?

**Rohan D'Souza** is Associate Professor at the Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies (Kyoto University). He is the author of *Drowned and Dammed: Colonial Capitalism and Flood Control in Eastern India (1803-1946)*, Oxford University Press, 2006. He has co-edited with Deepak Kumar and Vinita Damodaran, *The British Empire and the Natural World: Environmental Encounters in South Asia*, Oxford University Press, 2011 and has also edited *Environment, Technology and Development: Critical and Subversive Essays*, Orient Black Swan, 2012. Rohan D'Souza is midway through his current book project titled *The Great Hydraulic Transition in South Asia*, which explores how British civil engineering views about nature and ideologies about private property were coupled to assemble the idea of river control in nineteenth century colonial India. He is also studying the deeper theoretical implications of contemporary climate change discourses for the writing of environmental histories on South Asia.



## Historical Coastal Hazard Events – Going Beyond the Tide Gauge: The 18<sup>th</sup> Century Southwest Taiwan Tsunami and the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Tacloban Typhoon in the Philippines

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The historical archives of Southeast Asia are in equal parts frustrating and intriguing. The fragmentary history of the region, marred by conflicts and various periods of colonial rule can occasionally yield valuable information into the history of past hazards such as floods, tsunamis, typhoons and volcanic eruptions. In the first example several disparate historical records from southwestern Taiwan allude to a disastrous tsunami coast sometime late in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. However despite consistent reports from southwest Taiwan no corroborative historical reports exist for neighboring shorelines in China or northern Philippines and a plausible source of this tsunami has never been identified. We compared a series of numerical models of tsunamis generated from different sources (earthquake, volcano and submarine-mass-failure) and our results indicate that a submarine-mass-failure on the upper portion of the continental slope offshore from southwestern Taiwan is the likely source of the 18<sup>th</sup> century event. Neither the large megathrust earthquake from the Manila trench, nor a submarine volcanic eruption from the northern Luzon Arc can explain the physical phenomena described in the historical records. A similar event today could generate large (>10 m), but very local tsunamis that would affect the city of Kaohsiung and the Taiwan Nuclear Power Plant No. 3, at the southern tip of Taiwan. In the second example we consider the historical records of typhoons in Tacloban, Leyte, Philippines a city all but destroyed by super typhoon (ST) Haiyan in November 2013. Here historical records, point to a comparable predecessor to ST Haiyan, in 1897 (Ty 1897). A typhoon that took a similar path, almost parallel to ST Haiyan but about 10-15 km farther north and produced storm surges exceeding 4 m in Tacloban with a 7 m maximum at that is eerily comparable to ST Haiyan. Additionally the 1897 death toll reflects a similar fatality rate given the massive population growth between the two events. The historical record clearly shows that ST Haiyan's storm surge was not unprecedented and implies that historical studies may have better prepared the coastal communities affected and questioning the proposed causal link between ST Haiyan and recent global climate change. Both these events typify the knowledge that can be gleaned from historical archives and underline the importance of understanding the dynamics and impact of historical events as a bridge to developing long term records as reference frames for future coastal planning and hazard management.

**Adam D. Switzer** is a coastal scientist with interests in coastal geomorphology and coastal hazards. He is a former National Research Foundation (NRF) Singapore Fellow (2010-2015) and is currently a Nanyang Assistant Professor (NAP) in the Asian School of the Environment (ASE) at Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and Principal Investigator at the Earth Observatory of Singapore (EOS).

## **‘Rice of the Immortals’ or Poison? Famine Foods in Late-Qing, Nationalist, and Mao-Era China**

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This paper examines change and continuity in the selection, conceptualization, and state-sponsorship of “famine foods” in late-Qing, Nationalist, and Maoist China. It employs as case studies the following severe famines that struck North China under three markedly different regimes: the North China Famine of 1876-79, the Henan Famine of 1942-43, and the Great Leap Famine of 1958-62. Continuities that cut across the three periods include the particular non-grain foods – beginning with tree bark and wild plants and extending to white clay (*Guanyintu*) and in extreme cases human flesh – consumed at the local level, and a tradition of elite involvement in identifying and endorsing items that could relieve starvation. The terms used to describe survival foods changed significantly, however, as did the rationale for promoting such foods. Moreover, as twentieth-century Chinese modernizers championed the use of science and technology in disaster prevention and relief, state-run health and scientific agencies played an increasingly active role in testing and promoting recipes for non-grain foods. This trend reached its zenith during the Great Leap Famine, when the government launched a “Food Substitute” (*daishipin*) campaign that aimed to address food shortages without reducing the amount of grain procured from the countryside. Chinese Communist Party leaders heralded the production and distribution of non-grain items like Chlorella and synthetic foods such as artificial meat and milk, but in the end the Food Substitute Campaign both failed to prevent mass starvation and resulted in a rash of poisoning cases.

**Kathryn Edgerton-Tarpley** (Indiana University PhD, 2002) is Associate Professor of History at San Diego State University. Her research focuses on changing conceptualizations of disaster in late imperial and modern China. Her first book, *Tears from Iron: Cultural Responses to Famine in Nineteenth-Century China*, was published by the University of California Press in 2008 (Chinese edition, 2011). Most recently she has published articles on the Yellow River Flood of 1938-47 and the Henan Famine of 1942-43 in the *Journal of Asian Studies*, *Agricultural History*, and *Social Science History*. Her current book project traces change over time by comparing state and popular responses to three major famines that struck North China’s Henan Province in the late-Qing, Nationalist, and Maoist periods.

## **Priority Politics and Wartime Starvation: The Case of Henan, 1942-43**

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This paper compares the role of the Chinese Nationalist and Japanese occupation authorities in the Henan Famine of 1942-43, when between one and two million people suffered starvation-related deaths and three million people fled their homes. It begins by exploring how the marginal place of Henan in both the Nationalist and Japanese war efforts led to isolation and a lack of inputs for this battered and divided region. Next, it compares grain requisitioning in Nationalist-held and Japanese-occupied areas during the drought year of 1942, arguing that the systematic Nationalist procurement of grain had more serious overall effects than the sporadic Japanese grain raids, but that the latter left some areas with even worse nutritional deficits. The paper then examines the relief effort, showing that both the Nationalist and occupation-collaborationist states had the logistical capacity to provide large-scale assistance for Henan's civilians, but did not do so. Nationalist attention did belatedly turn to Henan in spring 1943, but the fatal drift in the relief effort during the winter meant that this assistance came too late for many. In occupied territory, there were scattered instances of relief but little systematic aid beyond ensuring adequate supply for their urban command center at Kaifeng. The final part of the paper offers some preliminary comparative observations between Henan and other wartime famines in Ukraine, Bengal, Greece, and Tongkin. Although the state role in creating these very different food crises varied, in each case military strategic calculations placed a contemptuously low value on civilian lives.

**Mark Baker** is a PhD Candidate in History at Yale University, where he is writing a dissertation entitled "Making Cities, Making Countryside: Zhengzhou, Kaifeng and the Henan Hinterland, 1906-1961". This project explores how changing understandings of urbanism affected rural-urban relations and the connections between these neighboring cities in Henan Province. It argues that changes in the local economic, institutional and discursive structures of urbanism during the Republican period paved the way for both the rural-urban divides of the People's Republic and the moving of the provincial capital from Kaifeng to Zhengzhou in 1954. Mark Baker has been awarded grants by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (UK), the American Council of Learned Societies, and Yale University's MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies. In 2014-15 he was a visiting research student at Zhengzhou University and is currently a Dissertation Prize Fellow at the Council on East Asian Studies at Yale.

## Disasters, Food Shortages and Famine in the Philippines since the 17<sup>th</sup> Century

**James Francis Warren**

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This paper explores why so many people have starved in the Philippines when typhoons, floods and drought have occurred since the 17<sup>th</sup> century and governments of the day have been unable to provide relief. Why, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, are millions of Filipinos still living in the shadow of hunger? This paper draws attention to the causes and consequences of food shortages and famine and the relationship between climatic and weather factors, especially storms, floods and drought, and food supply (ownership and exchange), regional characteristics and social structure. In examining famines over time, I stress the structural links between food shortages, the nature of Filipino peasant societies and the weather factor. In addition, I explore the developing historical relationship between economic and political changes and societal group inequality, involving the loss of entitlements that become more explicit in times of famine. I also examine the lingering impacts of climate variability and extreme weather-typhoons, floods and drought- linked to past and present famines. Filipino farmers have not vanquished famine. Destitution and death from disasters and famine were all continual and familiar experiences under both Spanish and American rule, and remain so to the present day.

Emeritus Professor **James Francis Warren** has held positions at Australian National University, Yale University and as a Professorial Research Fellow at the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University and the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. He has been awarded grants by the Social Science Research Council and the Australia Research Council and is a Fellow of The Australian Academy of the Humanities. Professor Warren's major publications include, *The Sulu Zone, 1768-1898* (1981); *Rickshaw Coolie: A People's History of Singapore, 1880-1940* (1986); *At the Edge of Southeast History* (1987); *Ah Ku and Karayuki-San: Prostitution and Singapore Society, 1870-1940* (1993); *The Sulu Zone, the World Capitalist Economy and the Historical Imagination* (1998); *Iranun and Balangingi: Globalization, Maritime Raiding and the Birth of Ethnicity* (2001); and *Pirates, Prostitutes and Pullers Explorations in the Ethno- and Social History of Southeast Asia* (2008). In 2003, he was awarded the Centenary Medal of Australia for service to Australian society and the Humanities in the study of Ethnohistory, and in 2013, the Grant Goodman Prize in Historical Studies.

## Fatal Repetitions: SARS and the Disasters to Come

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What can past epidemics teach us about disease outbreaks to come? Writing in the Preface to the seminal volume *Emerging Infections: Microbial Threats to Health in the United States* (1992), the editors Joshua Lederberg and Robert Shope noted that in the wake of HIV/AIDS it was their hope that “lessons from the past will illuminate possible approaches to prevention and control of these diseases in the future.” This paper re-evaluates such claims of a cumulative disaster-mitigating knowhow and explores the role of analogy in the construction of a serviceable history. Focusing on other epidemics in East Asia after the appearance of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in 2003, the paper shows how such outbreak episodes have invariably been framed through analogies with SARS. At the same time, in the discourse of epidemic preparedness, the value of the past is defined primarily through its relevance to the future. The paper argues that this functionalist deployment of history and the construal of past epidemics as latent analogies for disasters-to-come have constrained our understanding of the complex variables that are producing and driving infectious diseases across the region.

**Robert Peckham** is Associate Professor in History and co-Director of the Centre for the Humanities and Medicine at the University of Hong Kong. His current research focuses on histories of epidemics and pandemic control, and he is currently engaged in a major research project on the development of disease surveillance technologies funded by the Research Grants Council of Hong Kong. Since 2008, he has held visiting fellowships at the London School of Economics, the University of Cambridge, and King’s College London. His articles have appeared in numerous edited collections and journals, including *Economy and Society*, *Global Public Health*, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, *Journal of Public Health*, and *Modern Asian Studies*. His most recent book is *Epidemics in Modern Asia* (Cambridge, 2016).

## Urbanization, Environmental Change and Health in Asia

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The parallel forces of urbanization and environmental change are reshaping the human condition. In no region is this as apparent as in Asia, where massive urban populations are juxtaposed with large and growing climate risks. This confluence drives complex urban systems with profound consequences for health and wellbeing. Moreover, urban growth, planned and unplanned, is happening in areas and ways that increase health risks in Asia, particularly for the poor and disadvantaged. The history and potential future of Asian urban disasters suggest an important role for systems approaches to urban design, development and management to improve health in the region.

**José Siri** is a Research Fellow at the International Institute for Global Health, United Nations University. His work focuses on improving decision-making for urban health through the application of systems approaches, which both illuminate complexity and foster needed inter- and trans-disciplinary linkages. Dr Siri trained in ecology and systematics at Cornell University, and then earned a Master of Public Health and PhD in epidemiology at the University of Michigan. He completed his postdoctoral work at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis outside Vienna, Austria.

## Ultraviolet Utopia? Irradiating Interwar Japan with Invisible Sunlight

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This presentation would investigate how ultraviolet radiation was imagined, consumed and supplied in Interwar Japan. For example, the image of ultraviolet rays in Japanese mass-media changed from “devil radiation” in the 1910s to “the blessings of sunlight” by the late 1920s, hand-in-hand with the advent of vitamin D. While medical experts were primarily interested in the invisible radiation as a treatment for tuberculosis and rickets, makers of electrical and/or medical devices saw an opportunity to sell artificial sunlamps, and authors of popular science articles aimed to promote the diffusion of ultraviolet knowledge. Within the social context of the time, the assumed targets of this newly advanced knowledge and technology were, more or less, the female and/or immature populations. Notably, nationalistic discourses fostered the current of the time; while mothers and children were required to contribute to a “healthy nation”, it was emphasized that ultraviolet artifacts “made in Japan” had been developed. While the lack of sunlight, or “ultraviolet dystopia,” was leading to mystic, mythic, and/or nationalistic critiques against “modern” society, it was also accompanied by the worship of “modern” technology, which reproduced or even surpassed the sun. Referring to works by such authors as William Boyd, Simon Carter, and Daniel Freund, which show parallel and/or earlier situations in Europe and America, this talk would shed some light on ultraviolet fever in Japan and its historical meanings.

**Boumsoung Kim** is a historian of science with degrees from Seoul National University (BA and MSc) and the University of Tokyo (PhD). He has primarily worked on the history of Earth sciences in modern Japan, which was published as *Beyond Local Science: The Evolution of Japanese Seismology during the Meiji and Taishō Eras* (Tokyo Univ. Press, 2007, in Japanese). Recently, he has been interested in ultraviolet radiation in modern Japan because these invisible rays might visualize the dynamic interactions between techno-science and social/cultural/political terrains. Dr Kim now teaches at Hiroshima Institute of Technology and sits on several editorial boards for journals such as *East Asian Science, Technology and Society* and *Historia Scientiarum*.

## DOCUMENTARY SCREENING

### ***Waseb [Nation]***

Language: Urdu/Saraiki, with English subtitles (22 minutes)

#### **Ali Nobil Ahmad**

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In 2010 catastrophic monsoon floods led to the worst natural disaster in Pakistan's history, displacing 20 million people and killing thousands. *Waseb* documents the response of one heavily affected community to these events. Investigative in scope but poetic in style and format, the film charts experiences of escape, survival and political mobilization through interviews with local people in the months following the disaster. The screening will be prefaced by an introduction in which the filmmaker will discuss the relevance of the film to the conference themes, focusing on its content, form and the processes of its making. Depending on time constraints, topics covered might include: 1) The role of culture, tradition, religion, history, vernacular poetry/language and orality in community coping strategies 2) Agency among communities affected by disaster 3) The role of image-making/media practice as a methodology in representing and studying disasters 4) Complexities of causality, consequence and culpability in the context of this case study and others.

**Ali Nobil Ahmad** is a Fellow at the Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin where he researches Pakistan's political ecology. He has lived and worked in Pakistan, the United States and Italy, where he did a PhD in History. In 2014 he was Visiting Professor of South Asian Studies at Brandeis University, and has previously been recipient of the Guardian's Scott Trust Bursary for Journalism. In 2011, he was co-curator of 'Winds of Change: Cinema from Muslim Societies', a festival of films and talks at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London. He has authored and edited peer reviewed books, chapters and articles on migration, political ecology, film and media studies. *Waseb* is his debut film. It has been selected for screening at numerous venues including the Ethnografia film festival in Paris the forthcoming 2016 Social Justice Film Festival in Seattle.



## ABOUT THE CHAIRPERSONS

**Bin Yang** is an associate professor of history at the National University of Singapore. His dissertation "Between Winds and Clouds: the Making of Yunnan (Second Century BCE–Twentieth Century CE)" was awarded the AHA 2004 Gutenberg-E Prize and published by Columbia University Press in 2008. He has published research articles in *Modern Asian Studies*, *The China Quarterly*, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, and *Journal of World History*. He is interested in both Chinese history and world history.

**Gerard Sasges** joined the Department of Southeast Asian Studies at NUS in 2012. He completed a PhD in the Department of History at the University of California at Berkeley in 2006. From 2002 to 2011, he directed the University of California's Education Abroad Program in Hanoi, Vietnam. His work uses the concept of development to explore the intersection of science and technology, economics, society, politics, and culture in colonial and post-colonial Vietnam. He is the author of the collected volume, *It's a Living* (NUS Press, 2013) and his articles have appeared in the *Journal of Vietnamese Studies*, *South East Asia Research*, the *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, and *Modern Asian Studies*.

**Joseph Christensen** holds a BA and PhD from the University of Western Australia. He is a postdoctoral fellow at the Asian Research Centre, Murdoch University, where he works in the fields of maritime and environmental history. He is co-editor of *Historical Perspectives of Fisheries Exploitation in the Indo-Pacific* (2014).

**Michelle Miller** is a Senior Research Fellow in the Asian Urbanisms Cluster at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. She previously taught in the Master of International and Community Development program at Deakin University and on subjects related to participatory approaches to development at Charles Darwin University. Her current research is thematically centered on environmental disaster governance, urban change, decentralization and citizenship and belonging. She has authored, edited or co-edited a number of books including: *Rebellion and Reform in Indonesia: Jakarta's Security and Autonomy Policies in Aceh* (Routledge, 2009); *Autonomy and Armed Separatism in South and Southeast Asia* (ISEAS, 2012); *Ethnic and Racial Minorities in Asia: Inclusion or Exclusion?* (Routledge, 2012); (with Tim Bunnell) *Asian Cities in an Era of Decentralisation* (Routledge, 2014); and (with Mike Douglass) *Disaster Governance in Urbanising Asia* (Springer, 2016).

**Mike Douglass** is Professor and Leader of the Asian Urbanisms Cluster at the Asia Research Institute and also Professor at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore. He received his PhD in Urban Planning from University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). He is Emeritus Professor, former Chair of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning and former Director of the Globalization Research Center at the University of Hawai'i. He previously taught at the Institute of Social Studies (Netherlands) and at the School of Development Studies, University of East Anglia (UK). He has been a Visiting Scholar/Professor at Stanford University, UCLA, Tokyo University, Thammasat University and the National University of Singapore. With a professional focus on urban and regional planning in Asia, he has lived and worked for many years in Asia both as an academic and as a staff of the United Nations. He has also advised university programs on planning education in Asia and the U.S. His current research focuses on globalization and liveable cities, creative communities, disaster governance, and global migration.

**Seung-joon Lee** is currently Assistant Professor of History at the National University of Singapore. He graduated from Korea University where he received both his bachelor's and master's degrees in Asian history. He moved on to obtain a PhD in modern Chinese history from the University of California at Berkeley. He is the author of *Gourmets in the Land of Famine: the Culture and Politics of Rice in Modern Canton* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011) and has published several more articles including "Taste in Numbers: Science and the Food Problem in Republican Guangzhou, 1927-1937", *Twentieth-Century China* Vol 35, no. 2 (April 2010) and "Rice and Maritime Modernity: the Modern Chinese State and the South China Sea Rice Trade", in Francesca Bray, Dagmar Schafer and Edda Fields-Black eds. *Rice: a Global History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming). His research focuses on the social, cultural, and political history of food production and consumption in modern East Asia. He is currently preparing a manuscript of his second book, tentatively titled *Total War and Food Science in Modern China, 1931-1958*.