

English, into the *Royal Institute of Linguistics and Anthropology* at Leiden (the *Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*) which a... *Verhandelingen* (Transac... or Scien- my field- ation for my final... *aga Ilmu* ancement al thanks M. Koen- Radhie, Mr. Suha...



Among the Toraja who offered me significant support during my research, I wish to mention first of all the late Allo Rante, also called Ne' Sangga (he died December 16, 1974) and his nephew Bua'

# SHAPING INTELLIGENCE

# FROM THE BOTTOM

... the family Paleta and Pasaka, also... his son Thana Lebang and... one time to... minaa of Nonongan; from... Sorreng Palajukan of Buntao'; from Puang W. P. Sombolin... Puang Paliwan Tandilangi' of Sangalla'; from Misters J. S. S. Mangende', L. T. Tangdilintin, J. Jeho and Drs. C. Salombe, all of Ujung Pandang.

# UP

Investigations and the Role of Southeast Asia's Marginal Figures in the Production of Knowledge



13-14 May 2024

FIND OUT MORE AT [ari.nus.edu.sg/events/intelligence/](http://ari.nus.edu.sg/events/intelligence/)



Archiving the Underclasses  
an MOE Tier II Grant

**This workshop is part of the project “Archiving the Underclasses: Knowledge, Law, and Everyday Agency in Modern Southeast Asia”, funded by a Tier 2 grant from the Singapore Ministry of Education.**

This workshop gathers scholars to collectively consider the role of marginalized figures—including slum residents, borderland villagers, crime witnesses, and hired interpreters—in the collection of state intelligence. We view “intelligence” broadly, including not only the strategic information needed to defeat enemies in battle, but also the mundane or jealously-guarded knowledge held by marginal people and coveted by the state. Through our empirical research on a variety of Southeast Asian historical contexts, we argue that scholars must attend not only to the intelligence collection practices of authorities, but especially to the ways marginal figures molded that intelligence as they provided and translated testimony.

The workshop will build on the scholarly consensus that institutions transform knowledge as it is incorporated into the archives and similar collections. Our contribution is to show that information is also transformed—often dramatically—well before it ever reaches the halls of government or the shelves of archival repositories. With an empirical focus on Southeast Asia, our papers will redirect scholarly attention to the moments of contact in which information providers and information collectors engage with each other “on the ground”.

#### **WORKSHOP CONVENORS**

**Assoc Prof Maitrii V. AUNG-THWIN**

Asia Research Institute, and Department of History, National University of Singapore

**Asst Prof Matthew REEDER**

Department of History, National University of Singapore

**Ms Aishah ALHADAD**

Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore

## 13 MAY 2024 • MONDAY

<b>10:15 – 10:30</b>	<b>WELCOME REMARKS</b>
	<b>MAITRII V. AUNG-THWIN</b> , National University of Singapore <b>MATTHEW REEDER</b> , National University of Singapore
<b>10:30 – 11:30</b>	<b>PANEL 1</b>
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>AISHAH ALHADAD</b> , National University of Singapore
10:30	Giving and Gathering Information in Ambon: Untangling Interpretations in the Age of Modern Ethnography (c. 1880) <b>GENIE YOO</b> , Indiana University – Bloomington
10:40	Discussant's Comments <b>FAIZAH ZAKARIA</b> , National University of Singapore
10:50	Questions & Answers
<b>11:30 – 12:30</b>	<b>PANEL 2</b>
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>MATTHEW REEDER</b> , National University of Singapore
11:30	Ambivalent Relations or Inter-dependence?: American Missionaries and Karen Baptists in the Making of Mission Knowledge in Burma/Myanmar <b>HITOMI FUJIMURA</b> , Ehime University
11:40	Discussant's Comments <b>MAITRII V. AUNG-THWIN</b> , National University of Singapore
11:50	Questions & Answers
<b>12:30 – 13:30</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>
<b>13:30 – 14:30</b>	<b>PANEL 3</b>
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>HEMA KIRUPPALINI</b> , National University of Singapore
13:30	Letters to America: American Merchants, Intelligence and Knowledge Production on/in Nineteenth-century Southeast Asia <b>KENG WE KOH</b> , Nanyang Technological University
13:40	Discussant's Comments <b>DONNA BRUNERO</b> , National University of Singapore
13:50	Questions & Answers

<b>14:30 – 15:30</b>	<b>PANEL 4</b>
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>MAITRII V. AUNG-THWIN</b> , National University of Singapore
<i>14:30</i>	Potency and Paperwork: Verifying the Supernatural and Managing the Miraculous in the Bureaucratic Reports of Early Bangkok <b>MATTHEW REEDER</b> , National University of Singapore
<i>14:40</i>	Discussant's Comments <b>BRYAN GOH</b> , National University of Singapore
<i>14:50</i>	Questions & Answers
<b>15:30 – 16:00</b>	<b>AFTERNOON TEA</b>
<b>16:00 – 17:30</b>	<b>PUBLIC SEMINAR 1</b>
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>MATTHEW REEDER</b> , National University of Singapore
<i>16:00</i>	Making the Pearl of the Orient: The Place of Penang in the Crosswinds of Empire(s) between the 18th and 20th Centuries <b>BERNARD Z. KEO</b> , Geneva Graduate Institute
<i>17:00</i>	Questions & Answers
<b>17:30</b>	<b>END OF DAY 1</b>
<b>18:30 – 20:00</b>	<b>WORKSHOP DINNER</b> (For Presenters, Discussants and Organisers Only)

## 14 MAY 2024 • TUESDAY

<b>10:30 – 11:30</b>	<b>PANEL 5</b>
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>AISHAH ALHADAD</b> , National University of Singapore
10:30	Our Kind of Traitor: Communist Defectors as Intelligence Sources during the Malayan Emergency, 1948-1960 <b>BERNARD Z. KEO</b> , Geneva Graduate Institute
10:40	Discussant's Comments <b>SIMON CREAK</b> , Nanyang Technological University
10:50	Questions & Answers
<b>11:30 – 12:30</b>	<b>PANEL 6</b>
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>MATTHEW REEDER</b> , National University of Singapore
11:30	Keeping Neighbors' Troubles at Bay: The Internalization of the "Asian Revolution" through Intelligence Gathering and Immigration Control in British Malaya, 1925-1930 <b>KANKAN XIE</b> , Peking University
11:40	Discussant's Comments <b>LIN HONGXUAN</b> , National University of Singapore
11:50	Questions & Answers
<b>12:30 – 13:30</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>
<b>13:30 – 14:30</b>	<b>PANEL 7</b>
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>AISHAH ALHADAD</b> , National University of Singapore
13:30	Gathering Social Intelligence: A Survey of Research Papers from the University of Malaya's Social Studies Diploma Programme <b>CHI TIM HO</b> , Singapore University of Social Sciences
13:40	Discussant's Comments <b>HEMA KIRUPPALINI</b> , National University of Singapore
13:50	Questions & Answers
<b>14:30 – 15:30</b>	<b>CLOSING REMARKS</b>
	<b>MAITRII V. AUNG-THWIN</b> , National University of Singapore <b>MATTHEW REEDER</b> , National University of Singapore
<b>15:30 – 16:00</b>	<b>AFTERNOON TEA</b>
<b>16:00 – 17:30</b>	<b>PUBLIC SEMINAR 2</b>
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>MATTHEW REEDER</b> , National University of Singapore
16:00	Prayers and Prescriptions from Rim to Rim: Manuscripts, Mobility, and Trans-Temporal Networks of Power across the Indian Ocean <b>GENIE YOO</b> , Indiana University – Bloomington
17:00	Questions & Answers
<b>17:30</b>	<b>END OF WORKSHOP</b>

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## **Giving and Gathering Information in Ambon: Untangling Interpretations in the Age of Modern Ethnography (c. 1880)**

**Genie YOO**

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In this essay, I will explore two separate sources together: a nineteenth-century colonial administrator's printed ethnography of Ambon and his unnamed Ambonese intermediary's original report and collection of notes used for the ethnography. Sometime in the early 1880s, a young Ambonese student who had attended the Dutch colonial civic school in Ambon drafted a report for the island's newly appointed Resident General Johann G.F. Riedel (1832-1911). Titled "The Customs of Ambon," this handwritten manuscript contained the unnamed mediator's descriptions of the beliefs and traditions of the Ambonese people, ranging from marriage rules to the building of communal meeting houses and indigenous boats. It also included a plethora of information about ritual spiritualists' methods of healing and sickness: a constellation of beliefs resembling supernatural etiology bridging the realm of the seen and unseen, the magical and the medicinal. After Resident J.G.F. Riedel read the report, he integrated parts of it into his own ethnographic account of the eastern archipelago. How were the supernatural and spiritual elements integrated into a modern ethnography and how did the emergence of secular and autochthonous interpretations for both indigenous and colonial figures introduce changes to descriptions of everyday existing practices? This essay will read closely along and against the grain of these two sources to tease out subtle changes in interpretation in the process of information giving and information gathering.

**Genie Yoo** is Postdoctoral Fellow for the Mellon Foundation-funded Sawyer Seminar at Indiana University – Bloomington. She works at the intersection of history of science, medicine, and religion, and is trained in the early modern and modern history of island Southeast Asia, with a focus on Maluku in eastern Indonesia. She received her PhD in History at Princeton University in Fall 2022.

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## **Ambivalent Relations or Inter-dependence?: American Missionaries and Karen Baptists in the Making of Mission Knowledge in Burma/Myanmar**

**Hitomi FUJIMURA**  
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Modern Christian missions produced a set of knowledge about people in Southeast Asia through a massive volume of journals, letters, articles, and books. However, missionaries' textual powerfulness often contradicts their physical vulnerability in fields, causing them to leave their stations and become dependent on local converts. American Baptist missionaries in colonial Burma were feeble with diarrhea, fever, and infectious diseases and frequently returned to America. Under such circumstances, they had to rely upon the Karen native pastors to lead both in daily preaching and providing first-hand information on the 'success' of the Karen mission. By analyzing the two Baptist periodicals in English and Sgaw Karen in the 1850s, this paper reveals that the reports by 'indigenous' Karen converts, which contained the nuanced tension between lowlanders and highlanders among themselves, became crucial in accumulating first-hand insights on Karens in Burma.

As another ambivalence of knowledge production, this paper also shows how Karen Baptists respectfully credited missionary writings of the nineteenth century in later periods. Contrary to the academic scholars' dismissive critique of mission-contextualized documents and missionary's dominant positions, the Karen Baptist community glorifies the achievements of their American 'great teachers,' referring to their work as the most reliable sources of their past. By attending to the complex matrix of the (re)production of knowledge, this paper revisits the typical understanding that missionaries get the upper hand in knowledge production while litigating local voices. Instead, it suggests that the Karen Baptists' agency let the missionaries be historical authorities under the ambivalent mission relationship and the local political context.

**Hitomi Fujimura** is a Lecturer at Ehime University (Japan) and specializes in the Christian history in colonial Burma. Her PhD dissertation explores the relation of the Baptist experiences to the claiming of Karen ethnicity, based on various Sgaw Karen historical sources. Contrary to the oft-explanation, which heavily relies on missionaries' and colonial officers' one-sided narratives, that Karens' claim in the 1880s was the mere result of Western missionaries' modernization project, the Karen Baptists' experiences, including their taking the lead in their missions, the years-long student life in the post-Civil-War America, and being subjects of the American racism and federal census, contoured their motive for a political claim. Her research interest has recently extended to gender, religiosity, and transnational religious networks in Colonial Burma. Fujimura's articles and reviews appear in various journals, including *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, *The Journal of Burma Studies*, and *Asian Studies Review*.

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**Letters to America:  
American Merchants, Intelligence and Knowledge Production on/in  
Nineteenth-century Southeast Asia**

**Keng We KOH**

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Histories of late eighteenth and nineteenth century Southeast Asia have largely been seen from the perspective of European colonial archives and records, especially the Dutch and British East India Companies and their colonial successors. From the late eighteenth century onwards, American merchants had been making their inroads into maritime Southeast Asia. This study examines the roles of American merchants in Asia in shaping knowledge about the region through their letters back home and other writings. These correspondences, sometimes mixing the intimate with intelligence, also provided important insights into the role of mercantile networks in the production of knowledge about Southeast Asia from the ground prior to 1898.

**Keng We Koh** is Assistant Professor at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Nanyang Technological University since 2014. He had previously served as a curator in the Dr You-Bao Shao Center for Overseas Chinese Documentation and Research in Ohio University Libraries (2007-2010), and as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Asian History in Seoul National University (2011-2014). He was also the head of the Southeast Asia program in the Department of Asian Languages and Civilization in Seoul National University (2013-2014). His main interests are in Southeast Asian and World History, business history, the history of migration, and the history of Maritime Asia. He is also very interested in the comparative histories of religions and the intersections of religion with the abovementioned fields.



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## Potency and Paperwork: Verifying the Supernatural and Managing the Miraculous in the Bureaucratic Reports of Early Bangkok

**Matthew REEDER**

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The rapid growth and specialization of Siam's hierarchy of officials from the late eighteenth to the end of the nineteenth centuries seems to represent, in Weberian terms, a trend toward "rationality." In the domain of Thai history writing, we might even date the triumph of rationality to 1901, when Prince Damrong systematically expunged accounts of anomalous occurrences from the historical record of the dynasty's first reign. Yet, throughout the nineteenth century, this vast, nascent bureaucracy remained singularly interested in Siam's supernatural resources. After all, it was still widely believed that the proper management of miraculous phenomena would ensure the longevity of the kingdom, and that the appearance of abnormal occurrences presaged the downfall of the previous one (the kingdom of Ayutthaya, 1351-1767). This paper examines the clash between the "supernatural" and the "rational"—including Thai-language attempts to put these metaphysical categories into words. It considers three cases of unnatural happenings to which Siam's officials responded by interrogating marginal figures such as commoners, provincials, and foreigners: (1) the record of a legal inquiry into a young village woman whose body was allegedly possessed by a dead princess, (2) a report summarizing an elderly provincial official's instructions on how to manage the miraculous qualities of the Buddha's footprint shrine, and (3) a petition by court officials, largely drawing on "rumors," to expel powerful, but capricious, palladia captured from other kingdoms. In each case, the paperwork can be read against the grain, revealing the agency of subaltern figures in shaping the production of "supernatural" knowledge.

**Matthew Reeder** is Assistant Professor at the National University of Singapore, and a historian of Southeast Asia and its global interconnections. Before that, he was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, and an Assistant Professor at Yale-NUS College. He received his doctorate from Cornell University, where his dissertation earned the Messenger Chalmers and Lauriston Sharp prizes. His current book project examines ethnicity and politics in Siam (Thailand) and its mainland neighbors from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries.

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## PUBLIC SEMINAR 1

### **Making the Pearl of the Orient: The Place of Penang in the Crosswinds of Empire(s) between the 18th and 20th Centuries**

**Bernard Z. KEO**

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From its earliest years, the island of Penang has always been a place of movement and mobilities. The Pearl of the Orient, as it came to be known, was and continues to be a site for the circulation of goods, people, capital, knowledge, and culture. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the island became home to a cosmopolitan population of settlers and sojourners who came from all over the world, bringing with them new connections, new products, new ideas, and new cultures which helped constantly remake the port-city of George Town. This paper sheds light on the under-examined place of Penang in world history during the age of empires, with a particular focus on how the island became entangled within a dizzying array of networks that stretched across Asia and far beyond it. Going beyond the conventional focus on more prominent port-cities like Batavia, Hong Kong, Manila, Shanghai, and Singapore, I demonstrate the importance of reconsidering the place of 'regional' entrepôts like Penang which had a far more crucial role in global history than has previously been recognised. The paper focusses on the role of one community in particular, the Peranakan Chinese, and their role in building and expanding their own professional and personal networks as well as the complex ways in which they leveraged and appropriated the city's connections across the British, Dutch, and Japanese empires. Exploring these intra-, trans-, and extra-imperial networks reveals a richer and more complex history of the island-state not only in relation to how it fit within global processes and events over the course of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries but how it helped shape these developments as well.

**Bernard Z. Keo** is Assistant Professor of International History and Politics at the Geneva Graduate Institute. A political historian by training, he specialises in the intertwined processes of decolonisation and nation-making in the post-World War II period. His further research interests include the Malayan Emergency, urban life in the port-cities of Southeast Asia, and transnational networks across the Malay World. He also teaches and researches in the digital humanities, having been part of the team that built Virtual Angkor, a digital education platform which was awarded the Roy N. Rosenzweig Prize for Innovation in Digital History from the American Historical Association in 2018, the Mediaeval Society of America's Digital Humanities and Multimedia Studies Prize in 2021.

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## **Our Kind of Traitor: Communist Defectors as Intelligence Sources during the Malayan Emergency, 1948-1960**

**Bernard Z. KEO**

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Over the course of the Malayan Emergency, the espionage apparatus of the colonial Malayan state was reconfigured from a disjointed and ineffective operation into a comprehensive and productive machine for the developing intelligence on the Malayan Communist Party (MCP). This transformation—and the centrality of timely and accurate intelligence in enabling the suppression of the communist insurgency—has conventionally been explained within the scholarship as the outcome of reforms implemented by Director of Operations Lieutenant General Harold Briggs and his successor Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templer. Yet, these accounts have paid limited attention to the nature of this intelligence, how it was produced, and the implications it had on the strategies deployed by security forces as the conflict continued.

This paper addresses this relative lacuna in the literature through its investigation of the production of knowledge about the MCP and the Malayan populace more broadly by Special Branch, the government's primary intelligence-gathering organisation during the Emergency. In particular, it focusses on Communist defectors who co-operated with Special Branch. Most commonly, these individuals furnished information on MCP operations and assisted in the development of government propaganda but some went further, going so far as to become interrogators who assisted in questioning former comrades who were captured or surrendered to government personnel, or returning to the jungle to 'turn' other guerrillas. As this paper will demonstrate, these defectors played a critical role in generating intelligence for government forces to act upon, thus shaping not only knowledge production but consequent actions as well.

**Bernard Z. Keo** is Assistant Professor of International History and Politics at the Geneva Graduate Institute. A political historian by training, he specialises in the intertwined processes of decolonisation and nation-making in the post-World War II period. His further research interests include the Malayan Emergency, urban life in the port-cities of Southeast Asia, and transnational networks across the Malay World. He also teaches and researches in the digital humanities, having been part of the team that built Virtual Angkor, a digital education platform which was awarded the Roy N. Rosenzweig Prize for Innovation in Digital History from the American Historical Association in 2018, the Mediaeval Society of America's Digital Humanities and Multimedia Studies Prize in 2021.

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## **Keeping Neighbors’ Troubles at Bay: The Internalization of the “Asian Revolution” through Intelligence Gathering and Immigration Control in British Malaya, 1925-1930**

**Kankan XIE**  
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In the mid-1920s, many anti-colonial and anti-imperialist riots broke out in China and the Dutch East Indies, reportedly led by the Communist Parties of the two places. Although it is commonly believed that the Moscow-based Communist International (Comintern) “influenced” the two revolutions—at least by categorizing them as belonging to the same “Asian Revolution”—the riots were not connected in the sense that the two movements had closely coordinated with one another. However, many coincidences occurred in China and Indonesia during this relatively short period, which significantly shaped how the British colonial authorities perceived communism and regarded it as a quintessentially “external threat.”

The impact of such coincidences was especially evident in Malaya. On the one hand, the enormous Chinese population—with a large proportion of newcomers—made the government worry that the anti-imperialist sentiment in China would spread to Malaya through immigrant groups. On the other hand, the communist uprisings across Indonesia profoundly alarmed the British authorities, who shared similar security concerns with their Dutch counterparts, as colonial governments on both sides believed that such political disturbances must be handled with strict measures. Moreover, British authorities were anxious about the possibility that Chinese and Indonesian revolutionaries would join each other in anti-colonial struggles. Having realized that Malaya provided an ideal environment for such cooperation, the British took preemptive actions to crack down on communism, which laid an essential foundation for the joint Anglo-Dutch anti-communist measures in the following years. This paper explores how British officials made sense of the “neighbors’ troubles” and internalized the “communist threat” in Malaya through intelligence gathering and immigration control. Specifically, the paper shows how British anti-communist actions were closely associated with racial profiling, which disproportionately targeted marginal groups such as Hainanese laborers and Muslim pilgrims.

**Kankan Xie** is Assistant Professor of Southeast Asian Studies at Peking University. His research and teaching deal with various historical and contemporary issues of the broadly defined “Nusantara” (Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore), particularly the region’s leftwing movements, the intersection of colonialism, nationalism and decolonization, as well as China-Southeast Asia relations during the Cold War. His current research, funded by China’s National Social Science Foundation and the Institute of Overseas Chinese History Studies, focuses on the history of Indonesian leftism and the Chinese diaspora. Xie has published in *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, *Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia*, *Journal of Indonesian Social Sciences and Humanities*, *Dongnanya Yanjiu*, and *Nanyang Wenti Yanjiu*.

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## **Gathering Social Intelligence: A Survey of Research Papers from the University of Malaya's Social Studies Diploma Programme**

**Chi Tim HO**

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From 1952 to the early 1970s, students studying for a social studies diploma in the University of Malaya in Singapore (University of Singapore from 1962) collected precious information and insights into Malayan (separated later into Malaysian and Singaporean) society and economy. They were compiled into research papers that continue to serve as invaluable windows into post-war social and economic conditions. These papers reflected the social and economic issues of society then (as represented by the student and the supervising teacher). The papers can roughly be organised into (1) social structures of particular communities; (2) physical locales and social institutions; (3) trades and vocations; (4) traditions and culture; (5) contemporary social issues and related policies and processes. They supported nascent social services and policy in late colonial Singapore. In doing so, they highlighted some of the fundamental social concerns of an individual or household living in Singapore, such as family, housing, health, and employment. These papers reflected the drive to collect more local knowledge and data on the lesser-known aspects of Malayan society and economy. Indeed, they were the earliest organized attempts to document social and economic conditions, attempts that were moreover guided by one of the earliest interdisciplinary curriculums in Singapore. My paper provides a survey of a selection of these research papers, the programme and students who produced those papers, and presents ways on how this "archive" of research papers and knowledge can be used to further historical and contemporary perspectives of Singaporean society.

**Chi Tim Ho** is Senior Lecturer in the College of Interdisciplinary and Experiential Learning at the Singapore University of Social Sciences. He is a historian of Singapore and Southeast Asia, with research interests in the histories of social welfare, colonialism/imperialism, and public history. Ho has published on various aspects of Singapore's history including social services, nation-building, and archival research. He has also supported public history projects as a curatorial researcher for the Malay Heritage Centre.

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## PUBLIC SEMINAR 2

### **Prayers and Prescriptions from Rim to Rim: Manuscripts, Mobility, and Trans-Temporal Networks of Power across the Indian Ocean**

**Genie YOO**

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This presentation explores networks of devotion across time and space, by tracing one Islamic prayer and its Malay prescriptions across the Indian Ocean world. Pious sensibilities manifested themselves in manuscripts that contained a combination of vernacular prescriptions and the sacred prayer of 'Akasah, in localities where "Malay" communities developed, most notably in South Africa and Sri Lanka, as early as the seventeenth century and as late as the twentieth. This presentation demonstrates how fragmentary similarities and differences between four select prayer books were linked to centuries-long diasporic and generational connections, indirect linkages that impelled subtle and drastic change while retaining themes of protection in health, livelihood, and war, especially under colonial rule. Analyzing these manuscripts together in a close reading of their convergences and divergences, this presentation traces a trans-local and trans-temporal history of networks of power from one oceanic rim to another, from the seventeenth to the twentieth century. As I argue, their fragmentary yet pervasive presence across these oceanic spaces speaks to the historical emergence of an indirect yet undeniable network of power through religious practice, a connection that mobilized the power of Islamic prayer and supplication, and the explication of their uses and efficacy, in the language of the homeland's vernacular lingua franca.

**Genie Yoo** is Postdoctoral Fellow for the Mellon Foundation-funded Sawyer Seminar at Indiana University – Bloomington. She works at the intersection of history of science, medicine, and religion, and is trained in the early modern and modern history of island Southeast Asia, with a focus on Maluku in eastern Indonesia. She received her PhD in History at Princeton University in Fall 2022.

## ABOUT THE ORGANISERS & DISCUSSANTS

**Aishah Alhadad** is Research Associate with the Inter-Asia Engagements Cluster in the Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore, and to the “Archiving the Underclasses: Knowledge, Law, and Everyday Agency in Modern Southeast Asia” MOE Tier II grant project led by Associate Professor and Principal Investigator (PI) Maitrii Victoriano Aung-Thwin. She holds an MA in Southeast Asian Studies from the National University of Singapore. Her interests in gender relations, Islamic feminism, and antiracism have led her to center and care for gender, sexual, and racial minorities in Singapore in her writing, research, and community work.

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**Maitrii V. Aung-Thwin** is Associate Professor of Myanmar/Southeast Asian history and Convener of the Comparative Asian Studies PhD Program at the National University of Singapore (NUS). He is also concurrently Deputy Director at the Asia Research Institute at NUS. His current research is concerned with nation-building, identity, public history, infrastructure, and Buddhist networks in South and Southeast Asia. His publications include *A History of Myanmar since Ancient Times: Traditions and Transformations* (2013), *The Return of the Galon King: History, Law, and Rebellion in Colonial Burma* (2011) and *A New History of Southeast Asia* (2010). Assoc Prof Aung-Thwin served on the Association of Asian Studies Board of Directors (USA) and he is currently a trustee of the Burma Studies Foundation (USA), and editor of *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*.

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**Donna Brunero** is Senior Lecturer in the Department of History at the National University of Singapore. She teaches and researches on the British empire in Asia and maritime history, and the intersections between the two. This has led her to publish on a diverse range of topics including: British visions of its maritime empire in *Empire in Asia: A New Global History (Vol 2)* co-edited with Brian P. Farrell (2018) and on family life on the China coast in *Life in Treaty Port China and Japan* co-edited with Stephanie Villalta-Puig (2018). She is Co-PI (with Brian P. Farrell) for the MOE project, *Friction and Order: Great Powers and Globalizing China, 1854-1949*. For *Friction and Order*, she is investigating *The Times* Peking correspondent G.E. Morrison and his entanglements in diplomatic and military circles c.1900-1917.

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**Simon Creak** is a historian of modern Southeast Asia and Associate Professor of History at the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. His research focuses on the cultural and political history of nationalism, regionalism, socialism and the Cold War, particularly in Laos and Southeast Asia as a whole. He is the author of *Embodied Nation: Sport, Masculinity, and the Making of Modern Laos* (Hawaii, 2015) and co-author of *Historical Dictionary of Laos* (Rowman & Littlefield, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. 2023). Simon’s current research explores the history and politics of the Southeast Asian (SEA) Games, the region’s largest sports event, and local perceptions and experiences of the Cold War. He is also a co-investigator on the MOE-funded project “Archiving the Underclasses: Knowledge, Law, and Everyday Agency in Modern Southeast Asia”, of which this workshop is part.

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**Bryan Goh** is a doctoral candidate at the Department of History at the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor. He works on Catholicism in Modern Southeast Asia, with a particular interest in how the Catholic Church handles issues of magic, superstition, and ‘misbehavior’ among converts. His previous works center on community formation, memory, and heritage among Teochew-Catholics in Singapore. Bryan is also Senior Tutor with the Department of History at the National University of Singapore.

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