

# ARI *news*

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

## HIGHLIGHTS



### SPECIAL FEATURE

Demography: n; the statistical study of human populations



Second Inter-Asia Roundtable on Transnational Migration and Children in Asian Contexts

## FEATURE ARTICLE

# INTER-ASIA ROUNDTABLE 2010: Transnational Migration and Children in Asian Contexts





Professor Lily Kong

## Word from the Director

This is my last message as Director, and I would like to take the opportunity to share some of the highlights of the last three years, as well as to express my thanks to those who have contributed to ARI's development during this time.

In late 2009, ARI was named a research centre of excellence in Asia by the Rockefeller Foundation. While the Foundation used its own measures to derive that conclusion, I would suggest that several conditions are a measure of a research institute's excellence.

First, when increasing numbers of researchers from around the world seek to visit, affiliate and collaborate, it is an indication of the regard with which the institute is held. On this measure, the number of applications ARI received from all over the world for visiting and full-time positions has grown from 185 in 2008 to 263 in 2009 to 325 in 2010. The average success rate is less than 10%, given that the budget only allows for about 20-25 new fellows/visitors each year. During the same period, about 80 visitors spent varying lengths of time as visiting affiliates at ARI despite no funding support from the institute. More would have done so if space had permitted. On average, on a monthly basis, there was a visitor from an international or local organization/university wanting to learn about how ARI is organized and managed to achieve its success, and how some kind of institutional collaboration can be developed.

Second, when increasing numbers of researchers at the Institute achieve international recognition for their work, the institute has much to be proud of. Between 2008 and 2010, 17 research staff have been recognized for their significant contributions to scholarship in various ways. Some have been awarded distinguished professorships and honorary positions in other universities and organizations. Others

have received best book nominations. Yet others have been appointed to Boards of Management, editorial board roles, and various scientific committees of prominent local and overseas institutions. Many have delivered keynote addresses at conferences.

Third, a research institute is a vibrant one if it has a full program of activities, and is eager to support new research ideas and directions. From 2008-2010, ARI organized about 70 conferences and workshops, averaging about two per month. During the same period, more than 365 seminars, roundtable discussions, and public talks were held, that is, on average, there was one such activity every three days, stimulating dialogue and conversation. A new research cluster (STS) brought fresh directions, and some of the existing clusters adopted new foci (e.g. Asian Urbanisms, Asian Migration).

Fourth, in persuading others beyond the University that the work of the institute is worth supporting, ARI has been successful in making its "value proposition" clear. The Ford Foundation and the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation supported institutional programmes, while local sources such as the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, and Singapura Investments Holdings Pte Ltd supported research projects. International funding agencies have also supported research projects. Total external funding for the Institute exceeded S\$2.4 million between 2008-2010.

Fifth, a research institute seeks to make a difference if it continually tries to bring the work of its researchers to the world. In this regard, the publications of researchers at the institute continue to flow, and a new book series with ARI's imprint has been introduced, with the first book to be published in early

2011. In step with developments in new media, ARI podcasts and webcasts have become more frequent, and indeed, ARI lectures and seminars have been posted on YouTube. They, in addition to ARI's Working Papers, have most recently also been uploaded onto NUS iTunes U, which has allowed them to be downloaded to iPhones and iPad to listen/read on the go.

Sixth, a research institute that pays attention to developing young, upcoming scholars as much as it does to drawing established ones, is an institute that is committed to the future of scholarship. ARI has continued, and indeed, expanded the Asian Graduate Student Fellowship over the last three years, opening up the opportunities to graduate students from other parts of Asia beyond the earlier Southeast Asian focus. There were 25 PhD students supported by ARI during the same period. ARI also became one of the principal NUS partners with Harvard Yenching Institute (HYI) in 2009. ARI PhD candidates researching East and Southeast Asian studies under this programme are co-funded by HYI and will spend that time at the Harvard University or other US universities. ARI's undergraduate internship program expanded over this time, and went beyond bringing students from the City University of Hong Kong to bringing students from University of British Columbia and University of California at Berkeley. Colleagues have also begun to mentor undergraduate students at NUS in their Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme.

ARI has been nothing if not a buzz of ideas and activities in the last three years. This is due to the researchers who have been dedicated to their academic pursuits and committed to their intellectual calling. The administrative team has also provided excellent support to enable the work of the researchers. To all, I extend a big "thank you".

## FEATURE ARTICLE

# Second Inter-Asia Roundtable on Transnational Migration and Children in Asian Contexts

2-3 August 2010

BY DR LAI AH ENG

While not always given significant attention, transnational migration in Asia has long affected the lives of children in complex and multi-faceted ways. With globalization, the increasing speed and volume of Asian migration and the multiplicity of migration pathways have meant that issues raised are rapidly becoming part of the experience of childhoods and children's lives. ARI's second Inter-Asia Roundtable 2010 on Transnational Migration and Children in Asian Contexts took up the challenge of developing critical accounts of children in migratory circumstances which capture the diversity of experiences in Asia. Five panels based on specific themes, each with a keynote paper and commentary, were organized: **children left behind by migrant parents, children migrating for work, children migrating for education, trafficked children, and international adoption of children.** Their discussions identified many significant/emerging trends and generated useful viewpoints. Two themes – trafficked children and the transnational adoption of children – are discussed below.

## Child Trafficking

In child trafficking for prostitution, forced labour, child marriage and other slavery-like conditions, the largest number of victims is believed to come from



Roundtable 4: Child Trafficking  
Discussion Leader: Sallie Yea Wilton, Department of Geography, National University of Singapore



South and Southeast Asia, with regional differences arising from ethnic, religious and cultural factors. The increase in international trafficking of children in the 1980s led to the 1989 Convention of the Rights of the Child (CROC) which recognises the unique vulnerabilities of children in relation to trafficking and the state's responsibility to protect them.

Susan Kneebone's paper "Trafficking in Children in South and South East Asia: More Degrees of Separation Needed" critically reviewed the conceptual frameworks and methodological approaches to researching child trafficking in Asia, and argued that much of the problems lie in the uncertainty and confusion over the notions of "child", "childhood" and the role of the "family" in Asian

*Do adopted children need to access their cultural and ethnic roots? If so, how? What aspects of open adoption advocated by practitioners can be introduced in inter-country adoption and what are the risks and benefits?*



Participants of Inter-Asia Roundtable 2010

contexts, and the depiction of trafficked persons as “victims” with no agency and situated between “vulnerability and deviance” rather than “survival and exploitation”. Furthermore the so-called “Asian values” such as filial piety and responsibility as much as gender inequality in many societies are associated with increases in trafficking of children, particularly girls. The paper also examined policy responses, such as the 2001 Trafficking Protocol and on “recovery and reintegration” programmes, arguing that the Protocol’s focus on prostitution fails to deal separately with the various issues of trafficking of children and has tainted programmes with a criminal justice “reform” approach – this in turn affects reintegration into family and community, while some programmes are inappropriately focused, such as detention shelters.

### **The Transnational Adoption of Children**

Since the late 1960s, the transnational adoption of children has emerged as a global phenomenon, particularly from the Global South to the Global North. Asian children figure prominently in the worldwide “diaper diaspora”. Peter Selman’s paper “Transnational Adoption of Children from Asia in the Twenty First Century” offered a historical tracing of the adoption of Asian children from various Asian countries (Japan, Korea, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, India, China) by parents in Western Europe and North America in the aftermath of World War 2 and since the 1950s. It also examined those countries where concerns have been raised about child trafficking and illicit procedures, and current issues

in the light of discussions at The Hague Special Commission in June 2010.

Many salient issues arise from this phenomenon of international adoption that has received both positive and negative reactions. The greatest good for the greatest number are posed by supporters vis-à-vis the risks and deprivation of adoptees’ opportunities to knowledge and access to birth families and ethnic-cultural-national origins and heritages as posed by critics. While adoptive families immediately benefit, for birth families it is a loss and many birth families relinquish their children only under severe economic, social and cultural circumstances. Arguably, international adoption can only be an immediate but not long term solution for sending countries, but if so what alternative placements can be adopted for children and those who need a family? Also, Asian sending countries need to ensure that transnational adoption is carried out according to the principles of the Hague Convention. For adopted children, do they need to access their cultural and ethnic roots? If so, how? What aspects of open adoption advocated by practitioners can be introduced in inter-country adoption and what are the risks and benefits? Finally, attention needs to be paid to the lucrative and largely unregulated business of facilitating adoption and to the greater role that Asian countries can play in protecting the best interests of Asian adoptees.

In conclusion, the Roundtable on Transnational Migration and Children in Asian Contexts examined many key themes and surfaced both timely and ground-breaking issues of conceptualization, methodology, content and policy in an area well known but little researched in Asia. It also served as a clear reminder to academics, government, civil society and communities to include the positions, roles and lived experiences of children in their work.

*The summary of papers and panel discussions will be published in a policy brief booklet, which will be available free of charge in due course. Those who are interested please contact ARI at [arisec@nus.edu.sg](mailto:arisec@nus.edu.sg).*



Welcome Remarks by Robbie Goh, Deputy Director, Asia Research Institute & Department of English Language & Literature, National University of Singapore

[www.ari.nus.edu.sg/calendarofevent.asp](http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/calendarofevent.asp)

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

**2 – 3 December 2010**

Contact persons for further details:  
**Dr Liang Yongjia**  
 arilyj@nus.edu.sg  
**Prof Kenneth Dean**  
 Kenneth.dean@mcgill.ca

The study of Chinese popular religion has so far failed to develop sufficient historical depth or good methods for comparative regional analysis. This workshop explores the relationships between Daoist ritual and Chinese popular religion, moving beyond general discussions of the applicability of Axial age transitions in early Chinese religion to the study of specific historical transitions in the early modern age. By making connections between the study of Daoist ritual and popular Chinese religion, the workshop will demonstrate the ways and means of studying regional forms of Chinese popular religion historically.

## Religious Studies in Asia

**16 – 18 December 2010**

Contact persons for further details:  
**A/P Robbie Goh:**  
 arigohbh@nus.edu.sg  
**Dr Andrea Marion Pinkney**  
 sasamp@nus.edu.sg

The workshop will bring together speakers to discuss the evolution of Religious Studies in Asia, focusing on conditions specific to particular countries and educational systems in South, East, and Southeast Asia. Invited scholars will each present a completed essay at the workshop, after which the editors will work toward a strong collection of essays on the subject. The volume is not intended to be a country-by-country survey of Religious Studies programs and research. Ideally, each essay will ground one or more abstract/theoretical concerns, involving critical exploration of normative issues as well as empirical studies, within a more concrete/historical context.

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

**6 – 7 January 2011**

Contact persons for further details:  
**A/P Gregory Clancey**  
 hisgkc@nus.edu.sg  
**Dr Connor Graham**  
 ariccg@nus.edu.sg  
**Dr Philip Cho**  
 aripccs@nus.edu.sg

This workshop mobilizes an interdisciplinary team of academics and distinguished overseas collaborators to deepen understanding of the social, historical and cultural aspects of biotechnology in Singapore, the Asian region and globally. This project involves three tracks of work:

1. The context of biotechnology in Asia through developing a rich picture of the existing network, origins and key policies and threats;
2. The products, key objects and media, environment and work done in Asian biotechnology institutes;
3. The politics, ethics, organisation and future challenging developments in Asian biotechnology. This workshop will report on work done during the first six months of the project and develop ongoing project work.

## Decentralization and Urban Transformation in Asia

**10 – 11 March 2011**

Contact persons for further details:  
**Dr Michelle Miller**  
 arimam@nus.edu.sg  
**A/P Tim Bunnell**  
 geotgb@nus.edu.sg

This multidisciplinary conference explores the relationship between different forms and degrees of decentralization and urban change in Asia. Young and established scholars, policymakers, planners, legislators, architects and development practitioners will speak on the interplay between decentralization and urban change in Asia. These will include empirical case studies and theories within comparative Asian contexts, and what lessons might be learned from Asia for urban transformations in other parts of the world. Some questions that will guide the conference proceedings are: How has decentralization changed the role and functions of local administrations in Asian cities?; In what ways has decentralization transformed the built environment of urban spaces and the lived environments of city residents?

## Shifting Boundaries of Care Provision in Asia: Policy and Practice Changes

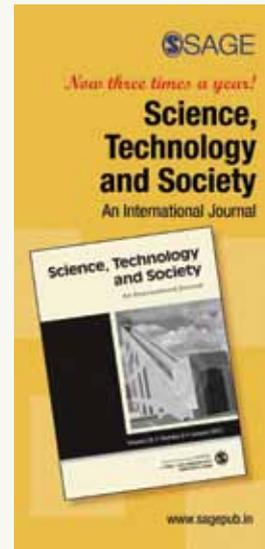
**14 – 15 March 2011**

Contact persons for further details:  
**Dr Zhang Yanxia**  
 arizyx@nus.edu.sg  
**Prof Jean Yeung**  
 ariywj@nus.edu.sg

The main objectives of this conference are (1) to examine how the boundaries' of care provision for the elderly and young children have shifted between the family, state, market, and voluntary sector over time and across different national contexts in Asia; (2) to examine how recent policy changes in elderly care and child care in different regions and countries of Asia influence these boundaries' shifts and vice versa; and (3) to explore the implications of these recent changes in care provision for social stratification by class and gender in Asia. Some themes to be discussed are: Concepts, theories, methodologies of care research in Asia; Institutional frameworks and policies related to elderly care and child care.

## ARI SPECIAL FEATURE

# A Perfect Match



After spending 15 years as a senior scientist at the National Institute of Science, Technology and Development Studies, New Delhi, I joined Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in 1997 to rejuvenate a Centre for Studies in Science Policy (CSSP) which has a full departmental status in the School of Social Sciences (SSS). This is an interdisciplinary graduate studies centre designed to teach and research in the emerging discipline of science, technology and society studies (STS). I served two terms of two years each as Chairperson of the Centre during the decade 1997-2007. It was a phase of academic challenge and as well as an opportunity to design and write courses to organise M.Phil and Ph.D programmes while I was given the task to recruit four young faculties in the field of STS. Over the decade, CSSP emerged as a leading graduate studies STS Centre in Asia which currently has some 37 graduate students on its rolls. After spending a decade in teaching and research, I joined ARI in mid-August 2008 by taking extraordinary leave from JNU, where I continue to hold a tenured position as a professor in science policy. It was indeed a very good opportunity to obtain this research position at ARI for two years and three months to work in STS. Research initiated and carried out at ARI will enable me to publish two books/monographs in the near future. At the same time, it was indeed a good break in many ways as I was able to strengthen my STS research base, develop new collaborative links and initiate new research themes during my tenure at ARI.



**Professor V. V. Krishna**  
Visiting Senior Research Fellow,  
Asia Research Institute, National  
University of Singapore & Professor  
in Science Policy, Jawaharlal  
Nehru University, New Delhi

Visiting Professor, United Nations  
University - Institute of Advanced  
Study, Yokohama, Japan

Editor-in-Chief,  
Science, Technology & Society

Contrary to my initial fear of being intellectually isolated in a small City State of Singapore, the STS cluster at FASS and ARI led by Greg Clancey emerged as a vibrant and intellectually stimulating group during my tenure. Five new faculties in STS joined sociology, history, philosophy, new media studies and political science departments of NUS. My interaction with these new colleagues and particularly with Greg Clancey provided a very congenial and most fruitful intellectual habitat for

me at NUS. Over the last two years, working with STS cluster resulted in two important outcomes or projects. In collaboration with Greg and other colleagues, we were able to successfully put together a million dollar research grant proposal to explore biotechnology and biomedical life forms in Asia. The project is being funded by MOE and the Office of the Deputy President, NUS, for undertaking research in about 16 to 17 research sites in Asia. I am involved in one of the main components of this large project relating to mapping the drug discovery, innovation and policy context of biotechnology in Asia. Three Asian Genome Institutes will be taken up for undertaking case studies in Delhi, Singapore and Beijing. Research initiated at ARI on this project will be pursued from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, when my tenure at ARI comes to end in 2010. The other important outcome has been the professional boost given to Science, Technology and Society – An International Journal (Sage Publications). With Greg Clancey joining the journal as one of the two Editors and me taking over as the Editor-in-Chief, we plan to increase the frequency from its current two to three issues per year. In the coming years, we are hopeful that our collaboration will go a long way to professionalise the STS field in Asia, particularly in SE Asia and South Asia and at

*The rise of Asia in the global knowledge-based economy in the last decade is closely associated with the rise of knowledge institutions of higher learning and scientific research.*

the same time provide a new intellectual medium for research publications and dissemination.

During my tenure at ARI I was able to pick up three research themes which will occupy my intellectual and research life in the coming five years or so. The *first* is on India and China relating to science, technology and development. The last decade witnessed the rise of China and India as important global players in the world economic system. Quite diverse socio-political and economic strategies were adopted in the organisation of science and technology institutions and promotion of higher learning over the last five decades. Despite varying strategies, they shared similar goals of building national scientific and technological capacities towards development and economic growth in the post-war period. I have initiated research at ARI to explore how science, technology and innovation capacities in the last five decades led to the rise of India and China as leading innovation systems in Asia. I was able to complete a part of the manuscript for a volume at ARI.

The *Second* is the collaborative research network to explore the changing structure of universities and their impact on economy and society in the Asia-Pacific region. The rise of Asia in the global knowledge-based economy in the last decade is closely associated with the rise of knowledge institutions of higher learning and scientific research. Three features stand out and are indicative of the trend. The first is the tremendous growth of "human and knowledge capital" made possible by teaching and research excellence in the leading universities. Historically speaking, most leading universities in Asia have been performing these roles so as to make an impact on their societies and economies. However what is of significance is the development of a second feature of coupling teaching/research with innovation and at the same time forging university-private sector links with various actors in national systems of innovation (NSI). Universities are being re-positioned as frontiers of innovation in this NSI, given that most new technologies (biotechnology, nano, new materials, ICTs etc.) have become science-based. The third is the impact of globalisation or globalisation of innovation and the emergence of "new knowledge sites" now extended to the Asian region. ARI's



## *The last decade witnessed the rise of China and India as important global players in the world economic system.*



broad based multi and interdisciplinary research platform provided a very congenial climate to evolve a collaborative project involving 12 to 14 STS scholars in 10 countries of Asia-Pacific region. In collaboration with Professor Seeram Ramakrishna, Department of Engineering, NUS, a manuscript of 10 country case studies is nearing completion for publication through NUS Press by mid 2011.

The *Third* is the theme on climate change and low carbon innovation in the Asia-Pacific. During my tenure at ARI, I was invited by the United Nations University – Institute of Advanced Study, Yokohama, Japan, as Honorary Visiting Professor for three years to work on science, technology and sustainable development. Given the importance of climate change and the impact it is likely to have in the Asia-Pacific region, I have also used my tenure at ARI to explore research agenda to embark on a future project. All through 2008 and run up to the Copenhagen Conference in December 2009, I have found in NUS and Singapore a vibrant intellectual space for discourse on climate change. After a good deal of literature review and initial assessment, it has become clear that much of the climate related problems is most likely to be in the area of energy related sectors (transport, housing, electric power in building and industry for instance) as it will contribute to over 55 to 60% of GHG emissions even up to 2030 or even 2040 in the Asia-Pacific region. Among various themes and topics related to energy and climate change, the theme/topic on low carbon innovation, technology transfer and capacity building in Asia is being shortlisted for exploring clean coal technologies and renewable technologies (wind, solar and bio-energy). I hope to capitalise and further develop on my research initiatives at ARI through productive collaborations and interactions with colleagues at NUS in the coming years.

## ARI SPECIAL FEATURE

# Demography: n; the statistical study of human populations

The journal *Demography*, a flagship journal in the field of demography, prints in big bold letters in the cover page of every issue the following: “Demography: n; the statistical study of human populations”; in case, I suppose, any demographer forgets the importance of statistics in demographic analysis. While statistics is important to demographic analysis, most demographers, except those working on formal (mathematical) aspects, think of demography as population studies, which includes the study of cause and consequence of population change. To explain population change, demographers draw from a variety of fields in the social sciences (including economics, sociology and anthropology) and from biological and health sciences. Demography understood in this sense is a truly interdisciplinary endeavour to understand population change without any disciplinary dogma.

My first research work as a student of demography involved calculating fertility rates in African countries. In common with other scientific endeavours, a significant task in demographic analysis involves the rather tedious, but essential and vital, task of assembling the data and calculating the appropriate measures. But this is just a starting point of demographic research, which typically tries to explain particular demographic patterns, including, for example, marriage, fertility, mortality or migration.

I have worked on several aspects of fertility in Central Asia and South Asia, both independently and in collaboration with other researchers. In two papers published during my stay at ARI, I examined fertility in India. The first paper was an attempt to understand the reasons behind the substantial regional variations in fertility in India. While in much of south India fertility has fallen below or near replacement, fertility continues to be high in the north. The second paper looked at the timing of first birth in India.



**Premchand Dommaraju**  
Postdoctoral fellow, ARI,  
September 2008- August 2010

Assistant Professor, Division of  
Sociology, Nanyang Technological  
University (since September 2010)



Mother and child in Tamil Nadu

*Despite the valorisation of “love” in Indian cinema, marriage is still traditional and arranged.*

Union formation and dissolution is another area that interests me. I use the broad term union formation to include formal unions (marriages), cohabitation or other forms of partnerships. In a work that I started while at ARI and which is ongoing, I am looking at marriage patterns in India. Despite the valorisation of “love” in Indian cinema, marriage is still traditional and arranged. But the Indian marriage system is not unchanging, of course. To mention one change, new communication methods have brought new possibilities for selecting spouses while still maintaining the traditional emphasis on caste endogamy.

Many commentators have noted the positivistic slant in demography and its close association with policy. Most topics of interest to demographers have strong policy relevance. This emphasis on policy means that demographers should not only be good analysts but also be able to communicate with a wider policy audience, be it governments, international agencies or the public. For over the last forty years, Prof Gavin Jones, leader of the Changing Family in Asia cluster at ARI, has exemplified this spirit of demography as both an academic discipline that contributes to the understanding of population change and as a tool that informs policy making. As a demographer, I was indeed fortunate to have been mentored by him and to have had the opportunity to work with him at ARI.



**MR MOHAMED SHAMRAZ ANVER**

has commenced a 2-year appointment as Research Assistant with effect from 11 June 2010. He obtained his Bachelor (Hons) Degree in Computing from NUS. At ARI, he will be

working on the Asian Biopoleis project, which aims to understand the social, historical and cultural aspects of biotechnology in Asia.



**DR INGRID HOOFD**

has commenced a 6-month appointment under the FASS Writing Semester Scheme for Assistant Professors with effect from 1 July 2010. She is from the Department of Communications and New Media Programme,

NUS. At ARI, she will complete a book manuscript tentatively titled "Activism @ the Speed of Thought: How Left-Wing Techno-Resistances Comply With Neoliberal Globalisation", and will also draft another book project on techno-capitalist acceleration and its relationship to the transformation of higher education in Southeast and East Asia.



**DR VIJAY DEVADAS**

has commenced a 3-month appointment as Visiting Senior Research Fellow in the Cultural Studies cluster with effect from 2 August 2010. Dr Devadas is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Media, Film & Communication,

University of Otago, New Zealand where he teaches media and cultural studies. He is co-editor of the international journal *borderlands* and has recently published on the media & the war on terror, new media & democracy, and Tamil cinema. At ARI, Dr Devadas will be working on two projects: the first examines the relationship between cinema and migrant workers from South Asia in Singapore; the second explores the political documentaries of Anand Patwardhan.



**PROF THONGCHAI WINICHAKUL**

has commenced a 2-year appointment as Principal Research Fellow in the Open Category with effect from 2 August 2010.

He is currently a Professor in the Department of History, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA, teaching both undergraduate and

graduate courses. His research interests are in cultural and intellectual history of early modern and modern Thailand and Southeast Asia (the 19<sup>th</sup> century to early 20<sup>th</sup> century), especially the encounters between Southeast Asian societies and the West.

His research project at ARI is "Knowing Thaiself: the foundational knowledge of Siam in modern Siam".



**A/P JULIA HUANG**

has commenced a 1-year appointment as Visiting Senior Research Fellow in the Religion and Globalisation cluster with effect from 10 August 2010.

Julia Huang is Associate Professor of Anthropology at National Tsing Hua University, Hsinchu, Taiwan. She has authored several articles on Taiwanese Buddhism, globalization, and gender. Her recent book is *Charisma and Compassion: Cheng Yen and the Buddhist Tzu Chi Movement* (Harvard University Press, 2009), which examines the development and organization of a transnational Buddhist NGO that originated in Taiwan and has expanded within the Chinese diaspora.

At ARI, she will work on turning her ethnographic research in Malaysia into a book manuscript.



**A/P LEO CHING**

has commenced a 1-year appointment as Visiting Senior Research Fellow in the Cultural Studies cluster with effect from 10 August 2010.

Prof Ching is currently Associate Professor and chair of the Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at Duke University, USA. He obtained his PhD in Literature from the University of California, San Diego. His research interests include colonial and postcolonial studies, East Asian cultural studies, and theories of globalization. While at ARI, Prof Ching will be working on a book manuscript on the discourse of anti-Japanism in postwar postcolonial Asia and popular culture.



**DR CONNOR GRAHAM**

has commenced a 7-month appointment as a Research Fellow in the Science, Technology, and Society Cluster with effect from 24 August 2010.

## New ARI Members

Dr Graham obtained his PhD in Information Systems from the University of Melbourne. His research focuses on the use of everyday technologies in people's lives, technologies of leadership and the role of ethnography in design. While at ARI, his main role will be organising the first Asian Biopoleis Conference in 2011 and developing his work through this project. His work will also involve developing two other projects: (1) studies and histories of life in Singapore through walking and; (2) death, grieving and memorialisation in the era of digital technologies.



### **DR ALFRED JOHN MONTOYA**

has commenced a 1-year appointment as a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Science, Technology and Society Cluster with effect from 2 September 2010.

Dr Montoya received his PhD in Anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley. His work is on shifts in modes of governance around HIV/AIDS epidemic prevention and control in Southeast Asia. While at ARI, Dr Montoya will be working on a book manuscript and journal articles as well as undertaking research involving tracing the circulation of technologies and models of epidemic prevention and control in Southeast Asia.



### **DR MAUREEN HELEN HICKEY**

has commenced a 1-year appointment as a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Migration Cluster with effect from 6 September 2010. She holds PhD and MA in Geography from the University of Washington. Her dissertation

research focused on the Bangkok automobile taxi industry and on the working conditions and shifting identities of the Northeastern Thai male migrants who drive cabs for a living. At ARI, her research will focus on the role of internal migration and of identity politics in shaping the ongoing crisis within Thailand.



### **DR MOHAMAD NASIR TAMARA TAMIMI**

has commenced a 3-month appointment as a Visiting Senior Research Fellow in the Religion and Globalisation cluster with effect from 15 September 2010.

Dr Nasir Tamara is the Chairman of the Indonesian International Scholars Association (Ikatan Ilmuwan Indonesia International, I4). He served as National Coordinator for Target Millenium Development Goals for UNDP Jakarta office and was also Senior Adviser for United Nations Support Facility for Indonesian Recovery (UNSFIR)/UNDP.

At ARI, he will continue his study on Islam and Politics focusing on globalization and violence in the name of religion.



### **A/P MARIAM BEEVI LAM**

has commenced a 3-month appointment as a Visiting Senior Research Fellow in the Cultural Studies cluster with effect from 1 October 2010.

She is currently Associate Professor of Comparative Literature and Southeast Asian Studies at the University of California-Riverside, USA. She obtained her PhD and MA in Comparative Literature from the University of California-Irvine.

At ARI, she will be working on completing her manuscript *Surfin' the Cold Wave: New Circulations of Cold War Culture and Global Capital* by examining comparative Vietnamese and Cambodian film and cultural educational development from 1975 to the present.



### **DR JØRGEN KOREN CARLING**

has commenced a 3-month appointment as a Visiting Research Fellow in the Asian Migration cluster with effect from 1 October 2010. Dr Carling is Senior Researcher in the migration

team at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) in Norway, and Programme Leader for PRIO's division on Ethics, Norms and Identities. His research covers two broad themes; migration processes, with a focus on migration aspirations, involuntary immobility and human smuggling; the micro-level dynamics of migrant transnationalism, including remittance-sending and transnational parenthood. While at ARI, he will be working on a project entitled "Theorizing Risk, Money and Moralities in Migration".



### **MS JENNIFER CHUNN LUNG-KWAN**

has commenced a 1-year appointment as a Research Associate with effect from 12 October 2010. Ms Chunn recently completed her Masters degree at the University of

Washington. At ARI, Ms Chunn will be working on the research project, "Estimating and Projecting Urbanisation and City Growth" funded by the Global Asia Institute with Prof Gavin Jones (PI) and Dr Alkema Leontine (co-PI) from the Department of Statistics and Probability.

**Prof Chua Beng Huat** gave a keynote address on "Global Capitalism, Middle Class and the Shape of the New Mega Cities of the Region" at the *International Conference on Civic Spaces*, University of Indonesia and University of British Columbia, Depok, Jakarta, Indonesia, on 4 August 2010.

In September 2010, he was also appointed to the Advisory Board of *Asian Studies Review*, the official journal of the Australian Association of Asian Studies.

**A/P Gregory Clancey** was appointed Master of Tembusu College, which will be one of the first two residential colleges to open in University Town, NUS, in 2011.

**Prof Gavin Jones** gave the keynote address on "Population and Development" at the *XVII Brazilian National Meeting of Population Studies*, held in Caxambu, Brazil on 20-24 September 2010.

**Prof Lily Kong** gave a keynote address on "China/Geography in the 21st Century: A Cultural (Geographical) Revolution?" at the conference on *China and the Future of Human Geography*, Guangzhou, China, 26-28 August 2010. This conference was jointly organized by The Department of Geography, University of Oregon, and The School of Geography and Planning, Sun Yat-sen University.

She also gave a plenary address on "Transnational Mobilities and the Making of Creative Cities", at the *Pacific Worlds in Motion Conference II*, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 2-5 June 2010.

**Dr Lai Ah Eng** gave a keynote address titled "Embracing Diversity, Building Community" at the *Racial Harmony Forum for Educators* organised by The Singapore Ministry of Education on 1 July 2010.

**Dr Maznah Mohamad** gave 3 keynote addresses: "The Rise of Bureaucratic Islam and its Implications for Political Reforms in Malaysia", at the Centre for Muslim States and Societies, University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia, 1 July 2010; "Modern Sharia in Malaysia: Behaving Women, Privileged Men, Two Sides to a Coin", at the Asian Studies Women's Forum, *Asian Studies Association of Australia (ASAA) 15th Biennial Conference*, Adelaide, Australia, 8 July 2010; "Like a Shady Tree Swept by a Windstorm: Reconstructing the Modern Malay Through Social Texts of Dissent", at the *ARI-MBRAS Lecture*, Singapore, 25 September 2010.

**Prof Venni V. Krishna** gave a keynote address on "Low Carbon Innovation in Asia: Capacity Building, Technology Transfer, and Regional Co-operation", at the *International Research Workshop*, University of New South Wales, Sydney, 6-8 September 2010. He was also appointed Honorary Visiting Research Fellow at University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia for a 3-year period with effect from 8 September 2010.

**Prof Jean Yeung Wei-Jun** (Principal Investigator) received funding of S\$100,000 from Singapura Investment Holdings Pte Ltd. and a match fund of another S\$100,000 from MOE for her research project on "Chinese Children's Sociopsychological Development".

## CLUSTER NEWS

# The Science, Technology, and Society (STS) Research Cluster

Since its creation in 2009, the Science, Technology, and Society (STS) Research Cluster has successfully bid for two University Level research grants. "Asian Biopoles: Biotechnology and Biomedicine as Emergent Forms of Life and Practice" (PIs Gregory Clancey, Ryan Bishop) is a MOE Tier 2 Academic Research Funded project with additional support from the Division of Humanities and Social Sciences and Asia Research Institute. This project aims to trace the historical trajectories of Asian biotechnology, the networks of collaboration and influence through Singapore, Asia and beyond and connections between scientific content and the context of biotechnology and biomedical initiatives in Asia.

The project "Mapping the Technological and Cultural Landscape of Scientific Development in Asia" (PI Philip Cho) charts the shifting centres of scientific research in Asia and their evolving global networks within the context of different understandings of scientific revival in Asia and the Middle East. The cluster has also grown through the recruitment of four research staff: Shamraz Anver (Research Assistant), Sorelle Henricus (Research Assistant), Alfred Montoya (Postdoctoral Fellow) and Connor Graham (Research Fellow). The group will be further strengthened with the arrival of Professor Mike Fischer from MIT in December for a two-month visiting senior research fellowship.

## Transnational Labour Migration, Remittances and the Changing Family in Asia

27 – 28 July 2010

The workshop, which was convened by Hoang Lan Anh and Brenda Yeoh, was a joint effort of ARI and the CHAMPSEA Project team under the Asian MetaCentre for Population and Sustainable Development Analysis. The key objective of

the workshop was to investigate how family structures and relations mediate the use and distribution of remittances sent by transnational labour migrants as well as how economic outcomes of migration trigger changes in family structures and relations. The thirteen papers presented at the workshop covered a wide geographical and thematic range, revealing significant social transformations that Asian families are going through as a result of transnational labour migration. A selected number of workshop papers will be published in a special issue of a journal.

## East Asian Perspectives on Legal Order

26 – 28 August 2010

The workshop brought together over thirty distinguished scholars of legal and political thought from Asia, Europe, and North America to explore the potential for non-western legal theories to advance contemporary studies of political theory while questioning many of the accepted "universals"

informing such studies. Anchoring the theme of the conference, the first two papers considered conceptions of the idea of law that differ from typical Eurocentric conceptions of positive and natural law as evidenced in traditional Chinese legal terminology as well as the prospective development of East Asian legal thought. The conference organizers, Terry Nardin and Ernest Caldwell, are editing the papers for publication as mini-symposia in legal and political theory journals.

## Global Urban Frontiers: Asian Cities in Theory, Practice and Imagination

8 – 9 September 2010

This workshop was organised by the Asian Urbanisms cluster and co-sponsored by the NUS Global Asia Institute (GAI) and ARI. Over 120 people attended the event which sought to foreground ways in which urban transformations in Asia speak critically to Euro-American-centred urban theory. Three main themes

emerged, each of which will form the basis for a set of published papers. The first and main theme of inter-Asia urban connections and mobilities includes 10 papers which form part of a proposed special issue of *Urban Studies* to be edited by all four workshop organisers (Tim Bunnell, Daniel Goh, C. P. Pow and Lai Chee Kien). The second and third publication plans are for journal special sections on urban informality and on urban politics, targetting *International Development Planning Review* and *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* respectively.

## Proselytizing and the Limits of Religious Pluralism in the Era of Globalization

16 – 17 September 2010

Processes of globalization have posed new challenges and offered new opportunities for religious groups to propagate their faiths. Conversations about religious "others" in the

global era have largely focused on groups that embrace an intolerant fundamentalism on the one hand or those that are committed to a more tolerant pluralism on the other. Yet many religious groups and institutions occupy a grey area between these two extremes. Papers explored this grey area through a consideration of proselytizing in a number of contexts across Asia, including Indonesia, Singapore, Korea, India, and Malaysia. Participants showed how religious groups have responded to global processes by adopting new and creative ways of reaching out to nonmembers through proselytizing.

### Domestic Violence in Asia: The Ambiguity of Family as Private-Public Domain

7 – 8 October 2010

This two-day workshop was convened by Dr Maznah Mohamad (ARI), with the collaboration of the Kartini Asia Network for Women's and Gender Studies. Altogether 12

papers and three keynote addresses were delivered. There were six panels of two papers each, which delved into issues such as the Family as Site/Source of Violence to the Deconstruction of Family in the Nexus of Religion, Culture and Law. The three keynote papers touched on the European debates on gender equality and violence, on the negotiation of cultural norms in attempts at criminalizing domestic violence and on the family as public domain for transnational action and policy on domestic violence.

### Transacted Intimacy: Political Economy of International Marriages in Asia

14 – 15 October 2010

This conference was jointly organised by the Migration Clusters of ARI and of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, NUS. The convenors were Dr Melody Chia-Wen

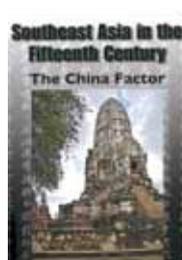
Lu, Dr Chee Heng Leng and Prof Brenda Yeoh. Prof Lenore Lyons (University of West Australia) gave a keynote speech with a critical review of scholarship on marriage migration and highlighted the conceptual issues as well as missing links and research focus. Speakers from various countries discussed the political, cultural and social processes that shape the contour of international marriages in Asia, and interrogate the political, economic and social structures in which love and intimacy are embodied.

Visit [www.ari.nus.edu.sg/ARI-Events.htm](http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/ARI-Events.htm) for more details.

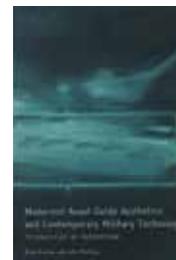
## New Books



*Cultural Transformations: Perspectives on Translocation in a Global Age*  
**Chris Prentice, Vijay Devadas & Henry Johnson (eds)**  
Rodopi, Amsterdam & New York, 2010



*Southeast Asia in the Fifteenth Century: The China Factor*  
**Geoff Wade and Sun Laichen (eds)**  
NUS Press, 2010



*Modernist Avant-Garde Aesthetics and Contemporary Military Technology: Technicities of Perception*  
**Ryan Bishop and John Phillips**  
Edinburgh University Press, 2010

# Notes from the Field: Left-behind Families and Children of Migrants

*The Asian MetaCentre for Population and Sustainable Development Analysis was established in 2000 with funding from The Wellcome Trust, UK. CHAMPSEA (Children Health and Migrant Parents in Southeast Asia) was designed to analyze the impact of parental abuse on the health/well-being of left-behind children in Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand and the Philippines. The study is funded by The Wellcome Trust.*

The qualitative phase of the CHAMPSEA project was successfully brought to a close with the completion of fieldwork in Thailand last August (2009). A total of 41 Thai carers – mothers, fathers and other female relatives – of children from both transnational migrant and usually resident households were interviewed.

Ms Parichart Chantcharas, one of our Thai interviewers, shares her thoughts and observations with us:

After receiving training in Singapore, my teammates and I embarked on the qualitative fieldwork in Udon Thani – a province in the north-eastern region (*Isaan*) of Thailand – with the support of in-country coordinators A/P Aree Jampaklay and A/P Patama Vapattanawong. Udon Thani is a famous migrant-sending province with nearly all its labour-age locals moving both internally and internationally for work. The amount of remittances from migrants in this province is massive and contributes to the economic well-being of the left-behind families. The sprouting of new homes in this region over the past ten years is the most obvious evidence of migration. General observation from the field also indicates that the newer and bigger houses are mainly owned by households with migrant members, especially those working abroad.

These colourful, modern two-storey houses with the latest electronic facilities are gradually erasing the traditional Isaan houses from the landscape. At the same time, the lifestyle of Isaan people is also changing in sync with the economic growth brought about by migration. For example, modern food such as pizza or hamburger is no longer foreign to Isaan people, especially the younger generation.

During the fieldwork, I was especially sensitive to issues relating to the left-behind families and children of migrants. The carers we interviewed revealed that the first perceived advantage of migration is the improved well-being of the family, in terms of increasing household income from remittances. A higher income was recognised as the main factor contributing to a better life, especially for the migrants' children who are perceived as better off compared to other children in terms of access to good schools and better healthcare. However, remittances from migrant parents were also used to spoil the children who now had the money to buy material goods such as cell phones. They also indulged in deviant behaviour. Overall, the psychosocial wellbeing of these children continues to weigh heavily on my mind based on the concerns voiced by caregivers. Several caregivers we spoke to express anxieties over the children's emotions and their reactions whenever their parents went away or came back. Sad feelings, depression and loneliness as a result of missing their absent parents were frequently mentioned. The trend of early marriage among adolescents was also mentioned as a social concern.

Stay-behind mothers raising children alone have to cope with multiple day-to-day challenges. Not only are they burdened with looking after children without the physical help from their husbands, they

*Women seeking work abroad is a fairly recent phenomenon and their numbers remain relatively small. Most of these women were drawn into factory work especially in South Korea and Taiwan.*

also realise that their behaviours in their husbands' absence are under the constant surveillance of their watchful neighbours. Gossip can easily spread if the neighbours feel that these stay-behind mothers do not stay at home enough to care for their children or have a tendency for "inappropriate" behaviour such as spending money on beautiful dresses while their husbands are working hard abroad. Furthermore, those with husbands who have been working overseas for a long time may feel insecure in their long-distance marriage. This was a concern raised even by fairly reticent female interviewees. The challenges of managing a transnational marriage/relationship and the effects on the well-being of the left-behind spouse and children need to be explored further as it was difficult to discuss these issues openly within the short span of the interview.

Another problem we observed in the field pertains to failed migration whereby households, rather than improving their economic circumstances, end up drowning in debt instead. Migrant families usually take many years to cover the cost of migration. Unfortunately, some migrant families fail to do so and wind up with even greater debts than before going abroad. Failed migration, according to community leaders, is generally caused by rogue informal agents. Nonetheless, success stories are more evident as households of international migrants are relatively better off and more sufficient in terms of material possessions. The improved economic appearance of migrant households then becomes a motivation for their neighbours to follow in their footsteps. Migrants are treated as role models and parents generally expect their children to work overseas and remit. They would try their best to get their children a job in other countries. Similarly, young people look forward to graduating in anticipation for a chance to go abroad. In the process, the loss of young, able people may further hinder the development and growth of the province.

#### General Information on Udon Thani

Most of the people in Udon Thani (some 81% of the population) are engaged in agricultural activities, though involvement in wholesale and retail trading

*Migrants are treated as role models and parents generally expect their children to work overseas and remit.*



*Children in the village*

activities is rising. The main economic crop is rice and other plantation crops include sugarcane, eucalyptus, rubber trees and vegetables.

As the top-ranking migrant-sending province, international labour migration became a more preferred option in Udon Thani after the closure of the American airbase and withdrawal of American troops in 1976 left many local men jobless. These unemployed men rejected the difficult agricultural work and were keen to fill the vacancies created by the huge demand for experienced labourers from construction companies based in Middle Eastern countries. Migrant workers to the Middle East, especially the pioneer group, were largely well paid. Their success stories spread quickly throughout the region, attracting more workers to seek their fortune in the Middle East. Since the demand for labourers is mostly in the construction sector, the migrants are thus disproportionately male. Women seeking work abroad is a fairly recent phenomenon and their numbers remain relatively small. Most of these women were drawn into factory work especially in South Korea and Taiwan.

Overseas migration has become the main economic activity of the province as about 60% of community residents depend on it. Trends of migration abroad are perceived to be on the rise and popular destinations include Israel, Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore. More married persons go abroad for work as compared to their single counterparts as they have the responsibility to support their families. However, some singles go abroad in order to earn money for their dowry. For migrant families, it is usually the fathers who go abroad while the mothers stay at home to take care of their children. The percentage of households where both parents go abroad is small while the number of mothers going abroad and leaving the fathers behind to care for the children is even rarer. Such gender ideology remains strong in Thai society.

# Graduate Studies at ARI

ARI has a strong reputation as a hub of research in the international community. Yet it may be less known that the Institute supports emerging young scholars by providing research support at the PhD level.

While ARI comes under the umbrella of NUS and does not confer any form of degrees, there are currently 21 PhD scholars housed within the premises of the institute who are encouraged to participate in ARI's scholarly activities. In addition, ARI scholars need to fulfill some obligations at ARI during their second last semester of studies. This ranges from providing research assistance to individual projects, or logistical and administrative support for wider cluster conferences and events.

In order to be selected for ARI's PhD Scholarships, one needs to be registered under a Faculty and a department in NUS. Additionally, at least one of the student's supervisors should be an ARI staff member. At present, ARI's graduate student coordinator collaborates with various faculties and schools in NUS in facilitating research students. These include the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, School of Design and Environment, the NUS Business School and the Faculty of Law.

The following are 9 ongoing research students at ARI, their NUS affiliations and the titles of their research projects:

**Name**  
Yenny Rahmayati  
**Faculty Affiliation**  
School of Design and Environment  
**Research Project**  
Reading the Typology, Morphology and Transformation of Aceh Urbanism

**Name**  
Kim Ji Youn  
**Faculty Affiliation**  
Department of Sociology  
**Research Project**  
Space of Difference: Itaewon from 'Americanized Ghetto' to 'Multiethnic Community'

**Name**  
Stefani Haning Swarati Nugroho  
**Faculty Affiliation**  
Department of Sociology  
**Research Project**  
Being 'Orang' Indonesia: Narratives of the Nation among Young People in Indonesia

**Name**  
Tan Lee Ooi  
**Faculty Affiliation**  
Southeast Asia Studies Programme  
**Research Project**  
Buddhism, Politics, and Transnationalism: A Case of Chinese Buddhist Revitalization in Malaysia

**Name**  
Bubbles Beverly Asor  
**Faculty Affiliation**  
Department of Sociology  
**Research Project**  
The Role of Religion in the Construction of Identity of Overseas Filipino Workers in South Korea

**Name**  
Claire Lee Seung Eun  
**Faculty Affiliation**  
Department of Sociology  
**Research Project**  
China's Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy in the Rising China

**Name**  
Fiona-Katharina Seiger  
**Faculty Affiliation**  
Department of Sociology  
**Research Project**  
Forgotten Seeds - An Aftermath of Global Migration. Japanese-Filipino Children in the Philippines

**Name**  
Jayeel Serrano Cornelio  
**Faculty Affiliation**  
Department of Sociology  
**Research Project**  
Religious Identity and the Isolated Generation: What Being Catholic Means to Religiously Involved Filipino Students Today

**Name**  
Maria Andrea Medina Soco  
**Faculty Affiliation**  
Department of Geography  
**Research Project**  
Identities in Mobility: Cosmopolitanism among 'Return' Filipino Migrant Domestic Workers