The year of the Dragon has launched us on a fiery start. We must have already had close to thirty meetings, seminars and conferences and plenty of collaborations. This year, ARI will host the Association of Pacific Rim Universities’ (APRU) Fellows Programme, which APRU is reviving after several years, between May 28 and June 1 2012. The topic for the year is “The Value of Water: Water, Values and Society in the Asia Pacific Region.”

“The year of the Dragon has launched us on a fiery start. We must have already had close to thirty meetings, seminars and conferences and plenty of collaborations.”

New collaborative directions on the horizon are also expected with NUS’s brand new School of Public Health. Visitors Steven Ferzacca and May Wang have taken the initiative, but other members and ARI alumni are welcome to indicate their interests. We are working as well with NUS Museum at the intersection of art and inter-Asian studies which we initiated with a presentation on art in the Asian Century about the “West Heavens” China-India project launched in Shanghai in 2010.

Plans are also afoot to collaborate with the American Association for Asian Studies (AAS) in various ways. Friends of ARI attending the AAS in Toronto in March 2012 should keep a lookout for the announcement of the first ARI reception at the AAS. It will be a great time to gather together with alumni from all over the world. Vice President-and President-to-be of AAS, Prof Thongchai Winichakul, currently a Principal Research Fellow at ARI, will grace the event as will current and past presidents of the association and AAS keynote speaker, writer Amitav Ghosh. Ghosh will also present at ARI’s Asia Trends in November this year, as will Donald Treiman, Mayfair Yang and Arjun Appadurai.

As for office news, ARI’s Green Committee has implemented a green policy at our events. Instead of bottled water, all participants may obtain water from dispensers with paper cups, both of which are provided in the conference room. Since the last few years, ARI has also been cutting down on paper handouts distributed during conferences. Much else, of course, is planned for the year and you will find a great deal of it in these newsletter pages. Whether you are in Singapore or afar, we hope you will keep in touch and engage with these events and projects.
Researching the changing Asian family at ARI

The changing family in Asia is a massive topic, and beyond the capacity of a small research cluster to study comprehensively. When Gavin Jones arrived in ARI in 2003 to head the cluster, he decided to focus at first on changing marriage patterns, as clear evidence was accumulating of later and less marriage in much of East and Southeast Asia, with all the implications this had for birthrates, family life and inter-generational arrangements. Both seminars and research projects focused on these issues, and much effort went into a research project funded by the Ford Foundation which covered collaborative research in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. Three books resulted from this marriage research: (Un)tying the Knot: Ideal and Reality in Asian Marriage (2004), Muslim-non-Muslim Marriage: Political and Cultural Contestations in Southeast Asia (2009), and Changing Marriage Patterns in Southeast Asia: Economic and Socio-Cultural Dimensions (2011). A special issue of the Asian Journal of Social Science on Divorce in Asia is about to appear.

The cluster’s research on marriage has contributed both to a documentation of the complexity of marriage differences across the Asian realm, and to an understanding of the sources of these differences. A few facts give a flavour of this complexity:

- In China, about 2 per cent of women remain single after reaching the age of 30. Even in the large cities, the figure is only about double that. By contrast, in Chinese populations in Singapore, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, the figure is over 30 per cent, and even higher in Myanmar and Japan.
- In most of East and Southeast Asia, the old arranged marriage system has virtually disappeared; in India, perhaps 85 per cent of marriages are still arranged.
- International marriage is leading, through the back door as it were, to diversification of the ethnic composition in Japan, Korea and Taiwan.

By no means were all of the cluster’s efforts directed to marriage. An ARI initiative in bringing researchers together from different regions of Asia saw the cluster hosting the first Inter-Asia Roundtable in 2009, on gender relations in the 21st century Asian family. This saw stimulating interactions on topics as varied as “family systems, political systems and Asia’s missing girls”, gender relations and family forms, inter-generational relations, and the “queer” family in Asia. Research on childhood and childcare issues was gradually building up within the cluster, largely focused on research by Visiting Fellows and our own postdoctoral fellows. A later conference on The Changing Asian Family as a Site of State Politics saw a number of papers published as a special issue of Citizenship Studies, and other conferences dealt with topics such as the social and health consequences of ageing.

In the past few years, the cluster’s research topics have continued to expand to other aspects of family behaviour and well-being. We have also reached out more to engage scholars, practitioners, and policy makers in other units and in the Singapore government. The changing socio-demographic landscape, ideational shifts in family values and gender ideology, rapid globalisation, financial crises, and the revamping of social safety nets in many countries in the past few decades have created new challenges to Asian families. Little systematic work has been conducted on these challenges in Asia and few Asian countries have adequate knowledge and/or programmes to help families address these challenges.
One such challenge is the increasing income and job instability which countless families have experienced through financial crises, natural disasters, the volatile food and housing costs, family instability, and the increasing inequality in many countries. In June 2010, the family cluster led an international conference to examine how economic stress had affected a wide range of family behaviour such as fertility, family formation patterns, psychological well-being of family members, health, and migration behaviour. This conference provided a forum for more than 250 researchers, policy makers, and practitioners to share findings about vulnerable groups, the impact of the Asian financial crises, Indonesia’s tsunami, China’s earthquakes, and to discuss policy implications for the well-being of families in Asia.

In the same year, the cluster also held the first international conference on fatherhood in Asia. More than 200 participants gathered to gain a better understanding about how traditional ideologies in Confucianism, Hinduism, or Islam interact with the rapid socioeconomic changes to influence Asian men’s construction of their fatherhood identity and their involvement with children.

In 2011, we tackled yet another dire challenge to Asian families. Statistics show that youth unemployment rates, often two to three times higher than that for other age groups, and the rising housing price make it difficult for many young adults to attain economic and residential independence. Young adults also face delayed marriage or non-marriage and vulnerability to risky substance and sexual behaviors as they enter their prime reproductive years. The cluster held a conference to focus on how Asian young adults navigate major life transitions such as completing education, seeking employment, leaving home, dating, and forming families.

Co-sponsors of these conferences include the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, the National Population and Talent Division, the FASS Family, Children and Youth and the Health Clusters, Institute of Policy Research, and Department of Epidemiology and Public Health. The Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ms Noeleen Heyzer, and the then Minister of MCYS, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, were among our honorable guests in these events. The NUS President and Provost also supported us by delivering welcome remarks. These conferences have yielded a forthcoming volume on *Economic Stress, Human Capital, and Families in Asia*, and three forthcoming special issues in internationally refereed journals on *Asian Fatherhood, Shifting Boundaries of Care Provision in Asia: Policy and Practice Changes, and Transitioning to Adulthood in Asia*.

Cluster members are also working on gender relations in changing political economic contexts, transnational families and labour migration in the Philippines, marriage, gender and Islam, and changing family and children’s growth. A most recent publication is a special journal issue of *Marriage and Family Review* entitled *How Fares the Family? Resilience and Transformation of Families in Asia*. The cluster has also been awarded several large external research grants including the MOE Tier 2 project *State Boundaries, Cultural Politics and Gender Negotiations in Commercially Arranged International Marriages in Singapore and Malaysia, Unmarried Crisis – the Rising Trend of Singleness among Chinese Singaporeans*, funded by Singapore’s Family Research Fund, and the project *Projecting Urbanization and City Growth* funded by the Global Asia Institute. Two other large externally funded projects, with matching fund from the MOE, were also launched last year, one focuses on Chinese children’s socio-psychological well-being; the other examines the impact of internal migration on family and child well-being in China.

“The changing socio-demographic landscape, ideational shifts in family values and gender ideology, rapid globalisation, financial crises, and the revamping of social safety nets in many countries in the past few decades have created new challenges to Asian families.”

We envision the Changing Family in Asia cluster to continue examining the increasing diversity of family forms in Asia, intergenerational relationships, the interactions of the family with other social organisations, and how gender, class and ethnicity intersect with Asian culture to shape the well-being of contemporary Asian families.
My former colleague John once said that working at The Asia Foundation was like trying to drink from a water cannon. I’ve never forgotten that because it describes so perfectly my experience of 11 years at the Foundation’s Indonesia office. No sleepy little NGO, this is an office populated by driven, committed professionals, the pace is relentless, and we all shouldered together the never-ending cycle of fund-raising, programme design, project implementation, and results monitoring and reporting. It was also an incredibly rewarding place to work – rarely does one have similar levels of access to decision-makers that actually have the power to make a difference, and rarely can one see so quickly and tangibly the results of your work in people’s lives.

I spent the first half of my tenure at the Foundation leading its programmes related to Islam. I was called the Director of Islam and Development, and together with Indonesian Muslim NGOs and research centres, we tried to support an indigenous discourse on civil society, human rights, rule of law, and democracy at a time when Indonesia was transitioning from authoritarian rule to becoming the third largest democracy in the world. Over time global power dynamics and the international discourses on “Islam and the West” made it very difficult for an international NGO to engage in this kind of work—at which point we and our Muslim NGO partners shifted away from discourse-related work on Islam and democracy, and towards direct technical assistance on poverty-alleviation working with district governments and parliaments. These were challenging but fulfilling years, and I was able to use my academic training in directly applied ways at a crucial time in Indonesia’s history. In 2006 I became Deputy Country Representative, and two years later Country Representative — this entailed learning an entirely different set of skills related to management, personnel decisions, strategic plans, budgeting, and institutional representation. Five years of this was no less intense and challenging, but eventually I began to feel the absence of engagement at an intellectual level with my “field” of Islamic politics, and began to look for opportunities that would allow me to read, think, and write more deeply — or indeed, at all.

“I began to feel the absence of engagement at an intellectual level with my ‘field’ of Islamic politics, and began to look for opportunities that would allow me to read, think, and write more deeply — or indeed, at all.”
“My primary project here is to work with these colleagues to explore the ways that mutual engagement is changing both religion and NGOs, and to facilitate scholarly analysis of this in a way that both incorporates and is useful to, the experience of development practitioners.”

The pace of life at the Foundation, as described above, left little time for keeping up with the flow of academic literature on Islam, Indonesia, or development. And I became increasingly aware that a great many smart people were thinking and writing about precisely the processes that I, and my colleagues at the Foundation, were involved in — particularly the increasing engagement of the development literature with religion and the politics of democracy support. It was out of a desire to take a few steps back and contemplate the broader ramifications of my work over the past decade, and to catch up on the literature that I had missed out on over that same decade, that led me to leave the Foundation and my life in Jakarta, move to Singapore with my two children, and take a position in the Religion and Globalisation in Asian Contexts cluster at ARI.

Here at ARI I am delighted to encounter others who share my interest in the intersection of religion and development, and who have much more knowledge of the scholarly literature in this area than I do.

A secondary project is to contribute to updated academic understanding of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Indonesia’s largest mass-based Muslim organisation and an important political entity in its own right in Indonesia. I hope that my “outsider-insider” status will add to the richness of the work conducted here, and I am sure that I in turn will benefit from drinking, not from a water cannon, but from some deep ponds and well-springs during my time at ARI.
Everybody thinks that they know what the problem with China is. For the woman with whom I shared a taxi from the airport to Nanning, it was eggs. She complained about Chinese eggs for most of the journey. They were too expensive; they were often not from chickens; it was impossible to tell if they were real at all. Her flowery descriptions of the unpleasant texture of the whites and the insipid colour of the yolks had me furiously consulting my dictionary.

A couple of days later, while interviewing a group of feminist activists in Bobai, a small rural city four hours from Nanning, I asked a prostitute what the word “rights” meant to her. She immediately said “Fairness!” and spoke angrily about the many times that her clients had beaten her, how the police ignored her if she complained, and how she had no recourse to law. Needless to say, the eggs paled in comparison.

As I walked along the streets of Bobai, everyone stared at me: it was mostly because almost no Westerners ever go there, but it may have also been the bright blue NUS pullover I brought to protect me against the cold breezes. There are few really bright colours in rural Guangxi. Everything is covered with a thin layer of dust, even oranges left to sit in the market for a few hours. Most of the buildings on the roadside had either been recently constructed, or were derelict. Like every part of China, the landscape is undergoing a continuous process of deconstruction and reconstruction. The detritus of this construction — dust and dirt — settles over everyone and everything. In the same way, the apparatus of the Chinese party-state — its security mechanisms, its propaganda, its restriction on information — intrudes into every aspect of citizen life, even in its most primal manifestations like eating and sex.

As academics, we deconstruct and reconstruct ideas and events. I study activism because I am intrigued by the individual response to changes in social circumstances, and by the indefatigable ability of individuals to get what they want regardless of the difficulty of doing so. Organisations like the feminist workshop in Bobai — and, indeed, the consumers who protest against adulterated foods — inspire me not simply because they fight for nominally “good causes”, but because they do so ingeniously and courageously. The strategies of Chinese activists remind us of the power of individual citizens anywhere to fight against oppression in any form.

“I study activism because I am intrigued by the individual response to changes in social circumstances.”
Modes of Activism and Engagement in the Chinese Public Sphere

26-27 April 2012

This conference aims to explore and assess the new strategies of activism which have emerged in China over the past decade. It will rely on a broad interpretation of activism and public engagement, ranging from public protests and anti-government discourse to dispute resolution at a local level. In particular, the conference aims to explore the ways in which the Chinese public has made use of changes in their public sphere to develop strategies for the promotion of ideas and dispute resolution. It will also aim to address the effect of the “individualization of Chinese society” (to use Yunxiang Yan’s term) on activism, and to draw distinctions between activism done as a collective and performed by individuals.

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Education Mobilities in East Asia

16-18 May 2012

Universities in Asia are increasingly regarded as an important component by which the respective national economies are able to better compete globally. Major Asian cities where these universities are located also have considerable attractive power in these emergent geographies of student mobilities. The growth of higher education (HE) also has concomitant impacts on these urban centres, resulting in significant socio-cultural change to the fabric of society, new responses in terms of urban planning and policy making, and the development of new services that contribute to the shaping of the urban landscape. New tensions also arise as cities attempt to balance the needs of a growing student population against those of the larger population of city dwellers. This inter-disciplinary conference brings together leading scholars of HE in Asia to address a number of issues organised into three panels focused on student mobilities, urban geographies and political projects that highlight three key elements of the emerging landscape of internationalised higher education in Asia.

Contact persons for further details:
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The Value of Water: Water, Values and Society in the Asia Pacific Region

APRU Fellows Program 2012, in partnership with NUS Asia Research Institute

28 May-1 June 2012

Important technical advances have been made towards water sustainability. Yet policymakers and urban elites are disconnected from the immediate effects of environmental degradation. It is time to investigate whether and how values and social attitudes in different societies and physical settings can better inform public policy and scientific enquiry to ensure the protection and sustainability of water as a resource. This programme will bring together leading and early career researchers in the full range of disciplines from APRU universities (including the humanities, engineering, business and finance, public health, physical, life and social sciences) to examine these and related issues. They will present papers which engage with the topic of water, values and society in the quest for international solutions to environmental sustainability and social equity.

Contact person for further details:
Ms Valerie Yeo: valerie.yeo@nus.edu.sg

Doing Asian Cities: The MPI-ARI-TISS-Shanghai Urban Aspirations Project

5-6 June 2012

Following an earlier workshop held in Mumbai and a summer school which was held in Shanghai, co-organised by the Max Planck Institute for Religious and Ethnic Diversity, this workshop will specifically address methodological dimensions of studying urban aspirations. This is important in view of the range of disciplinary traditions and approaches that are encompassed by urban studies and a more general under-specification of methodological concerns in this trans-disciplinary field. The workshop presenters will each explore methodologies of studying/mapping/narrating the urban and associated aspirations drawing upon their own empirical work in Asia. While this will allow comparative understanding of a diversity of contexts and cases in the region, the collective contribution is intended to be of more-than-regional scope, application and significance. The workshop will draw upon Asian cities and urban aspirations in pushing the methodological frontiers of urban studies.

Contact person for further details:
A/P Tim Bunnell: geotgb@nus.edu.sg
Militia, Religion and the Legitimation of Violence in Southeast Asia

14-15 June 2012

Contact person for further details:
Dr Jeremy Kingsley: arijkl@nus.edu.sg

This workshop focuses on militia in Southeast Asia that are affiliated with religious groups or utilise religious iconography. An important consideration is how militia express their religiosity and what are the consequences for individual personal piety of participation in these groups. Interconnected with this is how do these groups use religion to recruit members, justify their behaviour and what kinds of religious practice and discipline underpin their activities. This workshop seeks to draw upon rich empirical and ethnographic research about these security groups that operate outside the boundaries of direct state control. A significant issue underpinning this workshop is an examination of the effect of these non-state security groups. An essential part of this assessment is to review whether religious groups are, in fact, alternatives to formal state authority, and if they are, what are the consequences of this governance arrangement.

Social Media and Cross-border Cultural Transmissions: Technologies, Policies, Industries

21-22 June 2012

Contact person for further details:
Dr Sun Jung: arijss@nus.edu.sg

This interdisciplinary workshop takes a transcultural approach to explore newly emerging online practices of cultural transmission. Culture industries across Asia have been dynamically transformed during the past decades, and are significantly affected by multilayered economic, socio-political and technological turbulence occurring on both global and domestic levels. This workshop explores how social media, online consumer practices and transcultural pop flows have facilitated the emergence and development of new global cultural distribution avenues and transformed the cultural industry landscape, and how Asia is at the centre of this newly emerging global cultural economy. The workshop will focus on technologies; policies; and industries. The primary intention is to examine both positive and negative connotations of the impact of Web 2.0 technologies on cross-border cultural transmission and the transformation of cultural industries in Asia.

7th Singapore Graduate Forum on Southeast Asia Studies

18-20 July 2012

Contact persons for further details:
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Dr Jonathan Benney: arjdb@nus.edu.sg
Dr Chee Heng Leng: arich@nus.edu.sg

This event coincides with ARI’s Asian Graduate Student Fellowship Programme 2012, which brings some 35 graduate students to ARI for a two and a half month period. These students will also participate in the Graduate Forum in which postgraduate students from NUS, ASEAN as well as other regions working on Southeast Asia will present their work in progress that is at an advanced stage or on completed work. This three-day forum, the seventh of an annual series of forums for graduate students who work on Southeast Asia, will be organised thematically. Themes broadly reflect (but are not limited to) the core research strengths of ARI, including the Asian dynamics of religion, politics, economy, gender, culture, language, migration, urbanism, science and technology, population and social change.

In addition to student presentations, experts from the region will also be invited to give keynote speeches, and share their insights on challenges and issues facing contemporary social science scholarship.
**Professor Chua Beng Huat** gave a keynote address on “Regionalization of Media Industry and Pan-Asian Identity Formation” at the seminar on *Voices Series 2: Media, Politics and Identity in Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture, Nottingham University (Malaysia), Kuala Lumpur, 5 November 2011. He gave another keynote address on “Conceptualization and Reference in Cultural Studies in Asia” at the conference on *Cultural Studies and Its Discontents: Reconsidering Cultural Studies for the Twenty-First Century*, English Language and Literature Association of Korea, Onyang, Korea, 17-19 November 2011.

In December 2011, he was also appointed member of the editorial board of *International Sociology Review of Books*, an official journal of the International Sociology Association.

**Professor Prasenjit Duara** gave 2 keynote speeches: “The Multinational State and the 1911 Revolution in Global History” at the *International Conference Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the 1911 Revolution*, Kobe, Japan, 10 December 2011; and “Competitive Temporalities and Historical Societies: The Place of the Early Modern” at the *International Conference on Multiple Trajectories of Early Asian Modernities*, Varanasi, India, 16 December 2011. He also gave a plenary speech on “Historical Logics of Post-Western Modernity” at the 40th World Congress of the *International Institute of Sociology (IIS) - Rethinking Global Power*, Delhi, India, 16-19 February 2012.

**Dr Lai Ah Eng** has been appointed as Consultant and Member, Housing and Development Board (HDB) Research Advisory Panel, 1 January - 31 December 2012.

**Dr Jerome Whitington** gave a keynote address on “Principles and Practicalities: United Nations Carbon Market” at the *Civil Society Workshop on Carbon Markets in Southeast Asia*, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, 12 October 2011. He was also appointed the Singapore Representative for the Asia-Pacific Science, Technology and Society Network (APSTSN) in January 2012 for the period 2012-2014.

**Professor Jean Yeung Wei-Jun** gave a keynote address on “China’s College Expansion Policy and its Implications for Social Stratification” at the *International Conference on Social Inequality and Mobility in Chinese Societies: Towards a Comparative Study*, Center for Applied Social and Economic Research, HKUST and Central Policy Unit (CPU), Hong Kong SAR Government, 16-17 December 2011.

She was also reappointed as member of the Board of Trustees of ISEAS for the period 2012-2015.

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**New Books**

*Islamic Legal Professionals in Contemporary Southeast Asia*

Special issue of *Pacific Rim Law & Policy Journal 21 (1)*

**Mark Cammack, Michael Feener, and Clark Lombardi** (eds)

*From the Ground Up: Perspectives on Post-Tsunami and Post-Conflict Aceh*

**Patrick Daly, Michael Feener, and Anthony Reid** (eds)

ISEAS, Singapore, 2011
New Books

Memetakan Masa Lalu Aceh

Michael Feener, Patrick Daly, and Anthony Reid (eds)
KITLV, Jakarta, 2012
[Indonesian translation of Mapping the Acehnese Past by Michael Feener, Patrick Daly, and Anthony Reid (eds), 2011]

Early Interactions between South and Southeast Asia: Reflections on Cross-Cultural Exchange

Pierre-Yves Manguin, A. Mani, and Geoff Wade (eds)
ISEAS, Singapore, 2011

To Nation by Revolution: Indonesia in the 20th Century

Anthony Reid
NUS Press, Singapore, 2011

Religion and Modern Society: Citizenship, Secularisation and the State

Bryan S. Turner
Cambridge University Press, 2011

Opening the Black Box of Migration
Special Issue of Pacific Affairs 85 (1)

Johan Lindquist, Biao Xiang, and Brenda S.A. Yeoh (guest eds)

How Fares the Family?
Resilience and Transformation of Families in Asia
Special issue of Marriage and Family Review 47 (8), 2011

Bina Gubhaju and Lai Ah Eng (eds)

Melayu: The Politics, Poetics and Paradoxes of Malayness

Maznah Mohamad and Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied (eds)
NUS Press, Singapore, 2011

Travels of Bollywood Cinema: From Bombay to LA

Anjali Gera Roy and Chua Beng Huat (eds)
OUP, Delhi, 2011

The Reinvention of Distinction: Modernity and the Middle Class in Urban Vietnam

Van Nguyen-Marshall, Lisa B. Welch Drummond, and Danièle Bélanger (eds)
ARI-Springer Asia Series 2

Opening the Black Box of Migration
Special Issue of Pacific Affairs 85 (1)

Johan Lindquist, Biao Xiang, and Brenda S.A. Yeoh (guest eds)
Asian Migration Cluster Affiliates Roundtable

On February 22, 2012, the Migration cluster gathered for some affiliates to present their research in progress. Chaired and initiated by Prof Brenda Yeoh, the roundtable led to an engaging and stimulating dialogue.

Laavanya Kathiravelu, from the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, spoke about the institute’s research on global diversities in her presentation “Researching Superdiversity in Singapore”. Ye Junjia, also from the Max Planck Institute, spoke about the processes of social reproduction vis-a-vis economic production in the context of transnational migration. Using precariousness and conviviality as frameworks, she is studying the interactions between migrants and locals in Singapore.

Song Jiyoung, from the University of Oxford, gave a presentation titled “Irregular Migration and Human Security in East Asia” from an international relations and human rights perspective. In the presentation, “Emotional Geographies of Skilled Diasporic Citizenship”, Koh Sin Yee from the London School of Economics and Political Science, shared findings from her ongoing PhD research on the emotional geographies of skilled Malaysians in London, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur.

Cho Hae Lim, from EWHA Womans University, addressed the issue of immigration policies and settlement patterns of South Koreans in Singapore in “Globalization, Education Fever, and Mobility Transition: Educational Transnational Strategies of Korean Families in Singapore”. Finally, in “Families, Debts and Body Commodification in Vietnam”, Nicolas Lainez from École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, presented findings from his ethnographic research on Vietnamese sex workers.

Cheng Yinghong, A/P of History at Delaware State University and a visiting Senior Research Fellow at ARI from May to August 2011, visited Dharamsala between 19 and 25 December 2011 as a member of the small group “Concerned Chinese-Tibetan Scholars in the United States”. The travel was related to his ongoing research — started and supported by ARI last year — on Chinese nationalism. A/P Cheng met the leaders of the Tibetan exile community, and visited their library, archives, schools and the refugee reception centre. He also had an audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama in his residence. He gave a speech on the Chinese perception of Tibet and Tibetans to all members of the Central Tibetan Administration.

A/P Cheng met the leaders of the Tibetan exile community, and visited their library, archives, schools and the refugee reception centre.
DR DHIMAN DAS
has commenced a 6-month appointment as a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Asian Migration Cluster with effect from 16 November 2011. Dr Das’s main research interests are in Health Economics and Public Policy.

At ARI he will be engaged in research on the effect of migration in sending countries. He will examine the effect of migration on care-giving of left behind children in migrating families. He will also study the effect of migration on human development of these children.

DR ARUNASALAM BALASUBRAMANIAM
has commenced a 1-year appointment as Senior Research Fellow in the Historical Sociology of Asian Connections Metacluster with effect from 1 December 2011.

Dr Arun Bala is the author of The Dialogue of Civilizations in the Birth of Modern Science (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) While at ARI his research will explore how a neo-Lakatosian model for scientific method, involving the consilience of research programmes, can be deployed to explain how reservoirs of knowledge from different Asian traditions came to be epistemologically incorporated in the making of modern science.

DR ROBIN BUSH
has commenced a 2-year appointment as Senior Research Fellow in the Religion and Globalisation Cluster with effect from 5 December 2011.

Dr Bush’s research interests revolve around the interfaces between Islam, politics, and development, particularly in Indonesia and Southeast Asia. She is pursuing two research projects at ARI – the first is an updated and in-depth examination of NU and Muhammadiyah, Indonesia’s large mass-based Muslim organisations, and the second is contributing to the cluster’s overall project on Religion and NGOs in Asia.

DR TINN HONGHONG
has commenced a 1-year appointment as a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Science, Technology, and Society Cluster with effect from 3 January 2012.

Dr Tinn received her PhD from the Department of Science & Technology Studies at Cornell University in 2011. Her dissertation explores the historical relationships between the digital electronic computing technology, the development discourse underlying the Cold War, and the international exchanges of scientific and technological expertise in the context of the Cold War.

While at ARI, she plans to develop her dissertation into a book manuscript and conduct research on the history of Apple and IBM computer compatibles in Singapore in the 1980s.

A/P MAY WANG
has commenced a 6-month appointment as a Visiting Senior Research Fellow in the Changing Family in Asia Cluster with effect from 3 January 2012.

A/P Wang is currently Associate Professor of Community Health Sciences at the School of Public Health, University of California at Los Angeles, and Associate Director of the Healthy and At-Risk Populations Program at the Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center at UCLA. Her research focuses on the effects of changing physical and social environments on child nutrition and obesity, and on the application of systems science approaches in health research. Her current research project will address the effects of the changing family environment on child nutrition, growth and development in Singapore and China.

A/P ITTY ABRAHAM
has commenced a 3-month appointment as Visiting Senior Research Fellow in the Science, Technology, and Society Cluster with effect from 9 January 2012.

A/P Abraham is Associate Professor of Government and Asian Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. His areas of expertise include international relations, science and technology studies, India, and Asia. While at ARI, he plans to write up research related to a project on social risk and radiation in Kerala, India and to complete a book manuscript on the history of Indian foreign policy.
DR IVAN JAMES CROZIER

has commenced a 3-month appointment as Visiting Senior Research Fellow in the Science, Technology, and Society Cluster with effect from 9 January 2012.

Dr Crozier is a senior lecturer at the Science Studies Unit at the University of Edinburgh. His research interests centre around the history of psychiatry, the history of the body, and the history of sexuality. His current work focuses on the history of koro - a culture-bound syndrome that has been largely associated with south and south-east Asian cultures.

DR T.G. SURESH

has commenced a 1-year appointment as a Visiting Research Fellow in the Open Cluster with effect from 9 January 2012.

Dr Suresh is an Assistant Professor in Political Science, Jawaharlal Nehru University. His teaching and current research engages with the critical globalisation studies and the comparative political economy of India and China. While at ARI his research will examine the larger processes involved in the making of historically different labor regimes in Delhi and Shanghai. This study attempts to explain the specific modes through which the migrant labor in these two cities is mobilized, incorporated and institutionally sustained in the production systems of urban constructions.

DR ALEXEY KIRICHENKO

has commenced a 3-month joint appointment as Visiting Senior Research Fellow in the Religion and Globalisation Cluster in ARI and the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies with effect from 11 January 2012.

Dr Kirichenko is an assistant professor at the Institute of Asian and African Studies, Moscow State University, Russia. His primary research interests include early modern and colonial period history, monastic Buddhism, historiography, organisation and representations of political power in Burma as well as history of other Southeast Asian countries.

At ARI, he will study monastic reform movements in early modern and colonial Burma (18th to early 20th century) and their relationship to and impact on shifting forms of Burmese monastic Buddhism.

A/P ANNE M. BLACKBURN

has commenced a 3-month appointment as Visiting Senior Research Fellow in the Religion and Globalisation Cluster with effect from 17 January 2012.

A/P Blackburn is Professor of South Asia Studies and Buddhist Studies in the Department of Asian Studies at Cornell University. She studies Buddhism in South and Southeast Asia, with a special interest in Buddhist monastic culture and Buddhist participation in networks linking Sri Lanka and mainland Southeast Asia before and during colonial presence in the region. While at ARI, she will be working on a new project, Monks, Texts, and Relics: The Sihala Sangha in Southern Asia.
Asian MetaCentre News

The CHAMPSEA (Child Health and Migrant Parents in Southeast Asia) project successfully drew to a close on 31 March 2011 after more than three years of hard but fruitful labour. Since then, the team has been working on various dissemination initiatives to highlight the project’s key findings to relevant stakeholders and members of the wider public.

CHAMPSEA examines the impacts of parental migration on children left-behind in four Southeast Asian countries: Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. Between 2008 and 2009, over 4,000 households were surveyed using a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. The project was funded by The Wellcome Trust, and helmed by joint PIs, Prof Brenda Yeoh (NUS) and Dr Elspeth Graham (University of St. Andrews, UK).

In the Philippines, the Scalabrini Migration Center (SMC) organised two research forums entitled The Difference Parental Migration Makes: Health and Well-being Impacts on Left-Behind Children in Diliman, Quezon City, and Sao Pablo City, Laguna. The meetings which took place on 23 May and 3 June 2011 were attended by government officials, academics, NGO workers, the media and members of the community.

Representatives from government agencies included those from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, and the Department of Social Welfare and Development. Participating NGOs included Migrant Forum in Asia, the Center for Migrant Advocacy (Philippines), the Scalabrini Lay Association and the Development Action for Women Network.

At both meetings, country coordinator, Dr Maruja M.B. Asis, along with co-coordinator, Ms Cecilia Ruiz-Marave, highlighted key findings from the CHAMPSEA-Philippines study, prompting valuable feedback and discussion among members of the audience. Ms Theodora Lam from ARI presented the background of the CHAMPSEA study.

To provide an intimate view of the daily experiences of transnational households primarily from a child’s perspective, some children of migrant parents were also invited to share their personal experiences and aspirations for the future.

The following are some key findings from the CHAMPSEA study in the Philippines:

- Children from transnational households were generally found to be at an advantage compared to those from non-migrant households, especially in terms of physical health and school performance.

- Although mother-carer households appeared to benefit most from transnational labour migration with the least disruption to childcare arrangements, results also suggest that fathers were managing well as carers.

- Overall, the study did not gather strong evidence to indicate that transnational migration had detrimental impacts on children left-behind, as households have generally managed to adjust to family separation through regular communication.
Between October 2011 and January 2012, ARI co-organised two academic events with the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information (SCI) as well the School of Art Design Media (ADM) from the Nanyang Technological University. Spearheading the conceptualisation of the events from ARI was Prof Chua Beng Huat, and from the NTU, Dr Liew Kai Khiun and A/P Stephen Teo from SCI for the conference on Film and Cinema in Singapore and with the workshop on Gender and Sexuality: Performance and Representation, Assistant Professors Lucy Davis and Liew Kai Khiun.

For the conference on Film and Cinema in Singapore on 6 to 7 October 2011, responses to the call for papers were enthusiastic and it was unfortunate that the review panel had to narrow the number of accepted abstracts. New perspectives were brought out in this conference ranging from film soundtracks, ethnic Tamil minority cinema, film archives, shifting urban density of cinemas in Singapore, gender and sexuality, transnational productions, and the tensions of capitalism and development on the working classes. For a seemingly local phenomenon, it was pleasantly surprising to see scholars coming from around the world. This included Dr Sophia Siddique Harvey from Vassar College, USA, Mr Jun Zubillaga Pow from King's College, UK, Dr Olivia Khoo from Monash University and Dr Phyllis Teo from University of Queensland, Associate Professor Anjali Roy from Indian Institute of Technology, Dr Oradol Kaewprasert from University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, and Dr Charles Leary from the University of Malaya, Sarawak. Scholars based in Singapore included A/P Adam Knee and Dr Brenda Chan and Dr Issac Kerlow from NTU as well as Dr Edna Lim, Dr Ivan Kwek and A/P Kenneth Paul Tan. Others included Karen Tan and Chew Tee Pao from Asia Film Archives and Independent Scholar Dr Loh Kah Seng. An edited book is expected to be published from this event.

The one day workshop on Gender and Sexuality: Performance and Representation in Asia on 18 January 2012 witnessed the participation of a combination of international and local scholars and was attended by more than a hundred registered audiences. Coming from North American universities were Prof Maud Lavin from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Ms Lee Soo Jin, a PhD candidate from the University of Illinois at Chicago & School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Dr Adeline Koh from Richard Stockton College. From Hong Kong came Dr Hsu Fang-Tzu from the Asia Art Archive and prominent art critic Lee Weng Choy from Malaysia. Presenters at NUS included Dr Daniel Goh and Dr Jeremy Fernando, while NTU was represented by Liew and Davis. Other external parties were Dr Adele Tan from the Singapore Art Museum and writer, Ms Yu-Mei Balasingamchow. Within a day, the workshop managed to cover topics ranging from popular culture and androgyny in East Asia to the gender politics of history writing, cross-dressing and education in Southeast Asia, particularly in the context of Singapore.