

Welcome to the ASAA Newsletter for October-December 2007. The Newsletter is an informal quarterly report about the workings of the ASAA Council and other issues of interest to our members. If you have something you'd like to be considered for inclusion in future newsletters, please contact the Association's Secretary, Michele Ford (michele.ford@usyd.edu.au).

From the President

The looming federal election raises critical questions for Asian Studies in Australia. Would a change of government lead to a change in the level of support -- rhetorical and financial -- for Asian Studies in Australian universities? Or are current structures so embedded that change will be limited to narrowly-focussed high profile projects? Would a return of the coalition, chastened by poll difficulties prior to the election and possibly with a new leader, lead to a rethinking of Asia policies on the conservative side?

For once, though, the key governance issue in Asian Studies in Australia is not funding, but rather the RQF. In focussing its assessment on broad RFCD codes (the system used to classify disciplines and sub-disciplines), the RQF process has made practitioners of Asian Studies a minority group within each of the disciplines. From several disciplines, we hear reports of the difficulty that Asian Studies scholars are facing in getting journals and publishers recognized at appropriate levels and in having excellence in the study of a particular region or country in Asia acknowledged in the same way as excellence in some aspect of Western studies. The ASAA is acting vigorously on several fronts to defend the interests of Asian Studies within the RQF, and we may well be calling for specific support from members over the coming weeks and months.

On another more happy matter, the ASAA welcomes the new Timor-Leste Studies Association of Australia as an affiliate national organization. See their website at www.etstudies-aust.org.

ARC Grants in Asian Studies, 2007 for 2008

The ASAA Council congratulates the following scholars for their success in the 2008 ARC round:

- GR Barme, **Reconfiguring ideology: embodying China's new concepts of heritage in commemorative rituals** (The Australian National University)
- AV Betts; VN Yagodin; FJ Kidd, **A study of a newly discovered corpus of early Central Asian wall paintings** (APD Kidd: The University of Sydney)
- JG Butcher; Prof RE Elson, **Contesting the sea: maritime territoriality in the Indonesian archipelago since 1850** (Griffith University)
- AR Brumm, **A reassessment of early human stone technology from a Southeast Asian perspective** (APD: University of Wollongong)
- C Cameron; Dr PJ Nicholson, **Testing Court Reform Projects in Cambodia and Vietnam** (The University of Melbourne)
- JA Cameron, **Indian Textile Technology as archaeological evidence for population movements in Early Southeast Asia** (ARF, The Australian National University)
- JA Clark, **The Asian Modern** (APF: The University of Sydney)
- DK Curnoe; PS Tacon; SD Mooney; DA Penny; J Xueping; R Pan; D Fink; AI Herries, **The Late Pleistocene Peopling of East Asia and Associated Climate-Environment History** (ARF Herries: The University of New South Wales)
- SE Davies, **Containing H5N1: the role of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and East Asian states** (APD: Queensland University of Technology)

- SJ Donald; H Evans, **Posters of the Cultural Revolution: Contemporary Chinese perspectives on an era of propaganda** (University of Technology, Sydney)
- PA Eckersall, **Revolution and the everyday: performative interactions in art, theatre and politics in 1960s Japan** (The University of Melbourne)
- GF Egan; S Usui; Z Cho; LA Johnston, **eResearch in the Neurosciences: Building collaborations in Asia** (Linkage International: The University of Melbourne)
- DH Evans, **Hydraulic Systems and State Development in Early Cambodia: Mapping the Engineered Landscapes of the Khmer Using Remote Sensing** (APD: The University of Sydney)
- JJ Fitzgerald, **The transnational history of the Chinese Nationalist Party** (La Trobe University)
- MT Ford, **From Migrant to Worker: New Transnational Responses to Temporary Labour Migration in East and Southeast Asia** (The University of Sydney)
- D Ghosh; H Goodall; S Muecke; MN Pearson, **Intercolonial networks of the Indian Ocean** (University of Technology, Sydney)
- DS Goodman; Y Lu, **Colonial Cosmopolitanism and Chinese Modernity: German Economic and Cultural Adventurers in China 1870-1937** (University of Technology, Sydney)
- DT Hill (Murdoch University), **Indonesia in exile: The Indonesian Left abroad during the late Cold War**
- TH Hull; GW Jones, **Indonesian young adults facing the future** (The Australian National University)
- MA Keane; X Zhang, **'Governance, human capital and regional investment in China's new creative clusters** (Queensland University of Technology)
- JM Lo; T Khoo; D Chan, **Being Asian in Australia and the United States: Analysing Ethnic Representations in Visual Arts, Popular Culture, Academia and Community Festivals** (The Australian National University)
- LT Lyons; MT Ford; H Cunningham; J Heyman; TM Wilson, **Comparative Border Studies** (Linkage International: University of Wollongong)
- LH Manderson; P Liamputtong; EA Hoban, **Immigration and parenting among Cambodian and Iraqi women in Australia** (APD Hoban: Monash University)
- MJ McLelland, **Global/Local Intersections: History, Identity and Community in a Tokyo Subculture** (University of Wollongong)
- CT Nyland; CE Hartel; G Standing; JC Zhu, **Enterprise Labour Flexibility, Worker Security and Wellbeing: China and India Compared** (Monash University)
- SL O'Connor; AR McWilliam, **Cultural and Environmental Shifts in Late Holocene East Timor: Evidence for Climate Change?** (The Australian National University)
- W Ommundsen; P Sharrad; AE Broinowski, **Globalising Australian literature: Asian-Australian writing, Asian perspectives on Australian literature** (University of Wollongong)
- TA Reuter; GL Acciaioli, **Revitalisation Movements in Contemporary Indonesia: Nativist Reworkings of Custom and Religion in Reaction to Decentralisation, Islamisation and Globalisation** (Monash University)
- RG Roberts; AR Chivas; MD Petraglia, **Monsoons and migrations: Quaternary climates, landscapes and human prehistory of the Arabian peninsula and the Indian subcontinent** (University of Wollongong)
- KM Robinson; AR McWilliam; Dr NI Idrus, **Being Muslim in Eastern Indonesia: practice, politics and cultural diversity** (The Australian National University)
- AW Selth, **Burma's Role in Shaping the Asia-Pacific Strategic Environment** (APD: Griffith University)

- JH Simpson; I Arka; AD Andrews; ME Dalrymple, **Understanding Indonesian: developing a machine-usable grammar, dictionary and corpus** (The University of Sydney)
- FC Teiwes; WW Sun, **The Post-Mao Transition in China: From the Ashes of Revolution toward Reform, 1976-1978** (The University of Sydney)
- AJ Walker; CJ Reynolds, **Handbooks and Environmental Knowledge in Thailand** (The Australian National University)
- M Wang; MJ Webber, **The geography of labour market dynamics: Competition between new migrants and laid-off workers in China's urban labour markets** (The University of Melbourne)
- C Warren; JF McCarthy; GL Acciaioli; AE Lucas; J Schiller; L Visser, **Social Capital, Natural Resources and Local Governance in Indonesia** (Murdoch University)
- SG Wheatcroft; SL Morgan; C O Grada, **The causes and consequences of the great famines of the last two centuries in Russia, China, Ireland and elsewhere** (The University of Melbourne)
- Y Xu, **Nuclear Giants? Prospects for Nuclear Energy in China and India** (Griffith University)

New Website: A Wonderful Facelift for ASAA (by Li Narangoa)

The ASAA council has been working on creating a facelift for the ASAA website. As the result of their hard work – especially the President Robert Cribb and the secretary Michele Ford – and with the help of IT-designer Shane Silva, the ASAA now has a bright and cheerful looking web-face with a lot of interesting and unexpected photos from all over Asia. It is very user friendly: **sidebars** make it easy to navigate around the site and it is informative without being crowded. There are **links** to 60 overseas Asian Studies associations, as well as links to Australian centres of Asian Studies. A new feature of the web-site is a **register of experts** which allows ASAA members to upload information about their qualifications and areas of expertise. This is a **searchable database** that should be very useful to members of the community looking for Asia expertise. Another interesting link is to useful map sites which is valuable for our teaching. Most members probably know, too, that it is possible to **renew membership online** from the website. The council is working on a **postgraduate page** to provide a dedicated forum for research students. See the new website at <http://asaa.asn.au> and enjoy yourself.

Membership Drive

Thanks to all those new and renewing members who responded to our membership drive. We did manage to achieve a substantial increase in net member numbers, but need still more members to bring the association back to full strength. Please do encourage your colleagues and students to examine our new website and consider joining.

E-FLT

Jane Orton writes: I am seeking good quality articles for the ASAA supplementary issue of the electronic Foreign Language Teaching Journal (e-FLT) that ASAA co-publishes with the Centre for Language Studies at NUS. The journal is registered on Ulrich's list as fully peer-reviewed. All contribution details are given on the Journal's website <http://e-flt.nus.edu.sg/>. **E-FLT offers academics whose primary focus is on foreign languages an excellent opportunity to add a quality journal article to their CV.**

ASAA prizes

The **ASAA Prize for Excellence in Asian Studies** is awarded biennially by the Asian Studies Association of Australia (ASAA) to a mid-career researcher (or researchers) for research on an Asian subject, as represented in a book or a portfolio of articles. Applications must be submitted by 30 October 2007. Details are available at http://www.asaa.asn.au/prizes/prize_mid.php

Applications for the ASAA Presidents' Prize and DK Award have now closed. The ASAA Presidents' Prize and DK Award is awarded each year to the best PhD thesis in Asian Studies at an Australian university. Each university has been asked to nominate a single thesis for consideration by the committee and letters to this effect have been sent to all the vice-chancellors. For information for future submissions see <http://www.asaa.asn.au/prizes.php>.

Conference Reports

Brett Hough, Paul Thomas and the team at Monash hosted the extremely successful 2007 **Indonesia Council Open Conference** in Melbourne on 24-25 September. The biennial conference, which is a key event in the Indonesian Studies calendar, attracted around 70 papers, presented by academics and postgraduates working on Indonesia-related topics.

The European Southeast Asian Studies Conference (EUROSEAS conference) was held last 12-14 September 2007 at the University of Naples "L'Orientale". There was a strong presence of scholars from Australia who delivered papers across a number of panels (with some of them presenting more than once). In addition, due to generous funding from the conference organizers there were large numbers of scholars from Southeast Asian universities also giving papers making the conference truly a global one. Some of the panels organized by ASAA members included: "Transnational Activism in Southeast Asia", "Women's Movements in Southeast Asia" and "The State and Illegality in Indonesia".

We still don't know how to pronounce it (eye-cass? or ee-cass?), but ICAS, the **International Convention of Asia Scholars**, has achieved a secure place in the Asian Studies conference calendar. ICAS-5, the third to be held in Asia, took place in Kuala Lumpur in the shadow of the Petronas Towers from 2 to 5 August 2007. It was a massive affair in a massive venue, with about 1500 registrations and up to 23 parallel panels at any one time. More than 100 participants from Australia were listed. The overall no-show rate for listed presenters was perhaps higher than is normal for conferences in Australia, but there was still a rich offering of panels on Southeast Asian topics and a fairly strong selection for China, with individual presentations varying, as usual, from inspiring to insipid and from sharply fresh to old and slightly warmed. With lunch served in a broad walkway just outside the panel rooms and book display, and with the Surya KLCC shopping centre just too far away to be convenient, ICAS was an excellent conference for renewing old contacts and making new ones. And those who chose the right panels, as always, came away enthused. ICAS 6 will be held in Daejeon in Korea in August 2009.

Attitudes towards the Study of Languages in Australian Schools

On 12 July 2007 ACSSO and APC jointly launched the final report setting out the findings and recommendations of their **National Survey of Attitudes to the Study of Languages in Australian Schools** in 2006. Read more at: <http://www.languageseducation.com/attitudes.pdf>

Thoughts about 'Particular Scholarship'

In a posting on H-Asia, Frank Conlan posed a question about the value (or lack thereof) prescribed to area studies in the US and Europe. While perhaps this dilemma is less keenly-felt in Australia, it is nevertheless an important issue for Australian Asianists and the ASAA.

Frank wrote: 'It [strikes] me that many scholars face a critical dilemma. Particularly in Europe and North America, academics face critical appraisal of their works by colleagues from fields centered on "the modern West" –and thereby their work is grasped to a degree by how they have used--or at least invoked –critical new concepts, theories and terminologies arising from study of that "West." This can make for exciting comparative thinking, but if our audience includes those whom we study...we may find misunderstandings or worse... Outside of our published work, I know of a number of instances where discussions, and decisions, of faculty appointments have been determined by the appreciation (or not) of aspects of the candidate's work that reflects little upon the candidate's command of her or his subject, and more upon the candidate's ability to say the "magic words." Among some of my colleagues this has been a source of curiosity and, sometimes despair. I raise it here not to provoke a slanging match between practitioners of various epistemological perspectives, but to discover if the question has any potential for Asianists – inside and outside Asia – to further sharpen our comprehension of our work and those of others.'

Appointments and Promotions

Members of the ASAA are always interested to hear news of the latest appointments and promotions. Please drop a line to the editor (michele.ford@usyd.edu.au) when something interesting happens.