

## WOMEN IN ASIA

July 1995

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Asian Studies Association of Australia

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### EDITORIAL TEAM NOTES

As has been our goal with past editions, this issue covers a broad geographical spread of the Asian region—including reports on Indonesia, China and India. Melody Kemp's article is a call for action on a sexual harassment case currently before the courts in Indonesia. Ye Xiaoqing's research report discusses the "strange" court case of the late Qing and provides a fascinating insight into the legal process in imperial China. Our contribution from South Asian studies comes in the form of Radha Mishra's report on forestry policy and its impact upon forest communities in India. We also have our first item from New Zealand in the form of a conference report on NZASIA—we hope such trans-Tasman links will continue to grow.

Readers may also notice that we have changed the name of the publication in our continuing efforts to upgrade. We have the first (of what we hope will be many) humorous pieces under the title "Postcard from the Edge". Many thanks to those 100 odd people who have supported *Women in Asia* with their subscriptions over the past few months. Our readership is now over 250 and will expand with your help. We have enclosed a flier for you to pin up or photocopy and pass around with this issue. Given that this is the sole organ of communication in those periods between Women in Asia conferences, we are keen for comment and advice on how best to serve your needs. We are all looking for someone to volunteer to organise the next Women in Asia conference. Those who attended the 1993 conference in Melbourne will all agree that the experience should be repeated soon.

Louise Edwards (ACU-Qld)  
Anne Cullen (Griffith)

**Are you the one to organise the 5th  
"Women in Asia" conference?**

**We are searching for a host institution  
to build on the momentum of  
Melbourne 1993**

### NEXT ISSUE

Please feel free to contribute a short piece to *Women in Asia*—either work in progress, miscellaneous jottings, cartoons, notes etc.—along with the usual news.

**COPY DEADLINE IS OCTOBER 20 1995**

### WOMEN'S CAUCUS EMAIL NETWORK

If you have email facilities and want to be on the list please send a message to Dr Mina Roces at Central Queensland University or Louise Edwards at ACU. The first sheet of addresses accompanies this issue.

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**N.B. RESUBSCRIBE TODAY!**

RESEARCH COMMENTARY

THE CASE OF YANG YUELOU AND WEI ABAO

YE XIAOQING

The case of Yang Yuelou and Wei Abao was one of the "Four Strange Cases" of the late Qing, and the only one centred around a moral issue, namely the rights of the individual in choosing a marriage partner, the control over the individual of the family (clan), and the legal prohibitions against marriage between certain classes. It involved the changing social status of women in a period of transition between a traditional and a modern society—as was Shanghai in the late nineteenth century.

From the 1860s, as Shanghai began to develop into a prosperous commercial city, factories in the settlements attracted women from neighbouring villages out of their homes. This change was very significant in altering the lifestyle of women. The fact that women from poor families would appear in public (i.e. work in the factories) was regarded by conservatives as one of the more pernicious influences of the foreign settlements. It was assumed that this could only lead to women's dissatisfaction with their lot in life, and loss of their sense of modesty. Women who worked in the factories had no time to attend to their families, or to do traditional "women's work" such as sewing, spinning and the like. They also achieved a certain degree of economic independence. The first customers of shops in the settlements which sold such items as shoes and socks were factory women and prostitutes, as the provision of such ready made items freed them from the need to make them themselves. Better off women also bought such ready made goods, for they could see no point in staying at home doing their own embroidery. This creation of "leisure time" led some women to visit previously prohibited places, such as public tea houses, opium dens, theatres and restaurants—places also frequented by men.

Relations between men and women in the foreign settlements were much less restricted than in traditional society. Extramarital relations were by no means unusual. Widows from surrounding areas, who were expected to "preserve their chastity" in their home villages, could come to Shanghai and live with their lovers without interference. Short term and long term extramarital relations were common. Such relations seem to have been easily made

and easily broken—unless one of the parties wanted to cause a fuss. Premarital sex and even pregnancy and childbirth before marriage or outside marriage were not impossible. Apart from the innumerable regular brothels of Shanghai, there were semi-public brothels known as "private nests" as well as the *maison de rendezvous* where "respectable" women could meet their lovers in private. The selling of aphrodisiacs in the Chinese city adjacent to the foreign settlements was a serious crime; in the settlements, however, they were sold openly, and even publicly advertised.

Yang Yuelou was a famous actor of Peking Opera, who was invited to perform in Shanghai by one of the local theatres. His performance and good looks made him an instant success, and he soon became an idol to many Shanghai women—at least to those who frequented the theatres—a not entirely respectable way of passing one's time. Amongst his admirers was the concubine of a Cantonese merchant and her daughter, Wei Abao. Mr Wei had property in Shanghai, but was often away on business. The concubine, Mme Wang, and Wei Abao, along with other Wei clan members, lived on the premises of the clan's Taihe company.

Wei Abao was 17 years old. She was literate, and fond of traditional romance stories. After seeing Yang's performance, she fell in love and resolved to marry him. According to the Qing Legal Code, however, actors and prostitutes, amongst others, belonged to a lower caste (*jianmin*, literally "mean persons"), and were inferior in status to "respectable" people (*liangmin*, literally "good persons"). Intermarriage between the two groups was forbidden by law. In practice, it was not unusual for a man of the "respectable" class to take a woman from the "mean" class as concubine (not as wife), but there was an absolute prohibition on men from the "mean" class marrying a woman of the "respectable" class. A woman's status depended on that of her husband and not vice-versa. A woman marrying a man of the "mean" class herself became a member of that class, and so did the children of that marriage. This in turn led to further legalised forms of discrimination, e.g. such children were forbidden to sit the

examinations which granted entry to a career as an official.

There were no such prohibitions in the foreign settlements, since they did not recognise Qing law. Mme Wang knew, however, that the clan would never approve of such a marriage, and so arranged for a secret ceremony to be performed. When the clan found out they informed the police, who interrupted the ceremony and took Wei Abao to the police station in her full bridal regalia. In conjunction with the Canton Association, the clan brought the matter to the Mixed Court, accusing Yang Yuelou of kidnapping, a crime that the foreign authorities did recognise. As the case did not involve any foreigners, however, it was referred to the Cantonese magistrate in the Chinese city.

The magistrate was from the same part of Canton as the Wei clan, and was also Managing Director of the Canton Association, so his prejudices were clear. He did not permit Yang to speak in self-defence and ordered him to be tortured until he confessed, which he eventually did. The magistrate ordered Wei Abao to remarry, but she refused, quoting a Chinese proverb: "If you marry a chicken you follow a chicken, if you marry a dog you follow a dog." Furious, the magistrate ordered the court runner to slap her on the face 200 times—by the end her face was bloodied and swollen. She was then sent to a Women's Prison, where she was examined by a midwife to see if she was still a virgin. When it was discovered that she was not, the magistrate ordered Yang to be hung by his thumbs from the rafters, and that a heavy wooden beam be used to apply pressure to his throat, making it excruciating for him to breathe. Whilst he was in this position, the magistrate further ordered that he be beaten another 100 times on his ankles. He lost consciousness.

A few days later Wei Abao's mother appeared in court, admitting her role in arranging the marriage. This did not help Yang or Abao—both remained in prison. A few weeks later the mother suddenly died, some said by suicide, and others that she had died of worry. Wei Abao's wet-nurse was also arrested as an accomplice. It was alleged her role was that of Wang Po, the procuress in *The Water Margin* who facilitated the illicit affair between Pan Jinlian and Ximen Qing. She was sentenced to 200 strokes of the bamboo and paraded around the streets for 10 days, wearing a cangue.

Not long after the girl's mother died, her father (actually her step-father) returned to Shanghai. The magistrate ordered him to take Abao home, but he refused. Instead, he

ordered that Abao be beaten 100 times on the palms of her hands and sent to a Charitable Hall pending the arrangement of a suitable marriage. According to Qing Law, as she was in effect homeless, this was the appropriate way of dealing with a woman who had contracted an illegal marriage. Yang and Wei insisted that their marriage was legal, but the magistrate chose to ignore that claim. A few months later a Mr Sun, over 70 years old, went to the Charitable Hall to claim Abao as his bride. The *Shen bao* (China's first modern newspaper, established in 1872), protested:

That such a flower should have fallen in the ditch is distressing, but an old man with white hair cannot be a suitable match for a gaily attired young woman. We have decided to expose this matter, hoping that Mr Sun's conscience will force him to regret his decision and not allow this beauty treated so badly by fate to again fall into the sea of bitterness.

Usually women in the Charitable Halls could refuse a suitor, but Wei Abao had been through so much physical and psychological trauma she probably was past caring, and a marriage to a 70 year old was no better or no worse than any other possibility.

The *Shen bao* continued its protest, and quite an argument broke out between the supporters of Yang and the supporters of the magistrate. Yang appealed to higher courts, but was still sentenced to exile and enforced military duty. The next year however, a general amnesty was announced and Yang returned to his home town. No more was heard of Wei Abao. Yang eventually remarried, and his son, Yang Xiaolou, also became a famous Peking opera performer.

Even before this case, Chinese officials had tried to maintain moral order amongst the Chinese population of the foreign settlements by issuing proclamations banning women from going to temples alone on "devotional excursions", from participating in religious processions and from working as "female attendants" in opium dens. After this case, the gentry in the Chinese city petitioned the magistrate requesting the banning of "indecent theatre" and a prohibition of women from theatres. The magistrate duly issued such an order, but like earlier such prohibitions, it was of little effect. The women of Shanghai had become used to a considerable degree of independence and were not prepared to give it up to satisfy the demands of Confucian moralists. The Yang Yuelou/Wang Abao case was a turning point in this process.

[Dr Ye Xiaoqing is a lecturer in the Department of Asian Languages and Studies at Monash University, Victoria]

**THE IMPACT OF INDIAN FOREST POLICY ON THE FOREST  
COMMUNITIES OF INDIA**

RADHA MISHRA

Nature based conflicts have increased in frequency and intensity in India. For much of the last twenty-five years conflicts over forest resources have been very visible and widespread. Indeed the modern origin of the Indian environment movement can be ascribed to the Chipko movement of central Himalaya which started in April 1973. Academic research inspired by such forest conflicts of the 1970s have revealed that local opposition to state-sponsored commercial forestry dates back to 1865 when the first Forest Act was instituted by the colonial rulers (Guha, 1989). Moreover prior to the formation of the Indian Forest Department in 1864 there was negligible state intervention in areas of forest management. Consequently, it was local communities that had principle responsibility for the management of their forests.

Studies of forest legislation and forest policy also reveal that from 1865 through until the current time, both the colonial and post-colonial governments have engaged in enormous expansion of their powers by taking over large areas of forest. This has resulted in a corresponding diminution of the rights of the forest communities over resources that were traditionally common property. In essence, this has been the cause of conflict between the interests of subsistence oriented forest dwelling communities on one hand, and the interests of state-backed urban centres and industry on the other (Shiva, 1991).

The imperative for colonial exploitation of the forests was the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain, similarly the rationale applied by the independent Indian State for exploiting its forests was the defence and economic "development" of the country. "Development" in this context is the Nehruvian model of classical economic development which is elitist in nature, top-heavy and centralised in its approach to policy-formation, and emphasises the creation of urban industrial enclaves which require extensive resource extraction from the forests (Shiva, 1991). Accordingly, such a development process has resulted in the

marginalisation of forest and peasant communities, which are the social groups most heavily dependent upon forest resources for their subsistence and survival.

What needs to be noted here is that in the late 1940s the Nehruvian model of development was challenged by the Gandhians who basically called for village based decentralised administration concentrating on small scale industries, labour intensive and resource prudent development. However, for a variety of politico-economic reasons this philosophy was ignored. Ironically, there has been a resurgence of these Gandhian ideals as now it is apparent that the current pattern of economic development manifests ecological destruction, economic deprivation and social injustice (Shiva, 1991).

The worst affected in this process of destructive development have been the forest women. With the disappearance of the forests their task of collecting firewood for cooking purposes, and non-timber forest produce for consumption and trade purposes has been made immensely difficult. They have been the traditional repositories of knowledge of the eco-system, of its medicinal and healing attributes. However, with the arrival of "scientific forestry" this too has been lost. Also, with the steady encroachment of forest officials into their area, they are subject to constant harassment and sexual abuse. Thus, it is not surprising that conflicts between the state and its citizens have persisted, and the forest department continues to be a largely unwelcome presence in the Indian forests.

In the past the resources were abundant, but today the conflict is that much more acute as the resources are scarce. Popular movements in defence of the rights of the forest people have focussed on two issues central to the direction of forest management. First, they have argued that the control of the commons must revert to communal management. This is essential for the regeneration of the degraded woodlands, and also for better relations between the state and forest communities.

Already there are reports of local communities who have managed to restore their forests through either local management of the forests or by joining hands with the state. Second, the state has to radically rethink its forest management strategy and has to strike a balance between the subsistence orientation of the tribals and the commercial orientation of the state.

The power of the popular movements and voluntary non-governmental organisations cannot be under-rated. For example, their coordinated opposition against the Draft Forest Bill of 1982, an Act that ought to greatly strengthen the punitive powers of the state, resulted in the Bill being withdrawn. There are many other instances of their organisational success at the grassroots level.

In conclusion, it must be said that the Indian state has been consistent in its commercial exploitation of the forests and the forest communities. Forest policies have systematically marginalised and ignored the concerns and knowledge of the forest people. Specifically, the power and status of women in their communities have been undermined by state initiatives. However, with the present rethinking of the development model, brought on by the ecological and social cost of the classical pattern of economic growth, the power and demands of the popular movements have been gaining in legitimacy.

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[Radha Mishra is currently undertaking a Master of Philosophy in the Faculty of Asian and International Studies at Griffith University, Queensland]

#### ♦ Lecturer/Senior Lecturer Korean Waikato University, Hamilton, NZ

Applications are invited for the foundation position in Korean. This position will be for a fixed term of 4 years. Applicants should have a native or near native command of Korean language and should have a doctorate, a substantial record of research and scholarship and experience in teaching Korean and Korean studies at the tertiary level. [A95/36]  
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Tel: 64-7-838 4210 FAX: 64-7-838 4638  
Closing date: 15 August 1995

#### 6th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women

The Sixth International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women is to be held in Adelaide, South Australia, 21-26 April 1996. These Congresses have been held every three years since 1981, in different parts of the world. They aim to bring together scholars and practitioners from a wide range of disciplines and areas of expertise, to share insights, experiences and research, and to explore issues of importance to women throughout the world. They provide a setting in which participants from developing and developed countries can exchange information, ideas and experiences, promoting long-standing networks related to such topics as Ecology and the Environment, Work, Human Rights, Health, Peace, Education and Politics.

The themes for the 1996 Congress are:

- Global Restructuring
- work
- population movements
- refugees
- sex tourism
- technologies
- markets and states
- growing food
- trade
- aid
- Women's Studies
- Making Feminist Politics
- Health and Sexuality
- AIDS
- New reproductive technologies
- Bodies and markets
- Bodily alteration
- After Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing
- Sustainable Development
- Community Education
- Indigenous Peoples
- Cultural Representations

The Sixth Congress is supported by the three South Australian Universities, and its Executive Committee is drawn from the academic staff concerned with teaching and research in Women's Studies.

We are currently calling for abstracts.

If you would like to make a presentation to this Congress, please would you send a 250-word abstract of it to the Conference Secretariat by **30 September 1995**. The full registration brochure with details of registration fees, conference program, accommodation and the cultural program will be mailed August 1995. It's going to be great! Do come and join us.

#### Conference Secretariat:

Festival City Conventions  
P.O. Box 986 Kent Town, South Australia 5071  
Telephone: 61-8-363-1307 (international)  
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Margaret Allen



## VOLATILE FICTIONS: THE STRENGTHS AND DIVERSITIES OF WOMEN AT THE JSAA

DONNA WEEKS

The 9th Biennial Conference of the Japanese Studies Association of Australia was held at Queensland University 3-6 July 1995. With over 120 papers presented over 3 days, the conference highlighted the diversity of interests and research undertaken by the Japanese studies community. The papers were divided into themed panels across four broad streams (literature/art, Japanese Studies, linguistics and applied linguistics). From early in the planning, it was the organisers' intention to incorporate papers dealing with gender into "mainstream" panels. In recent conferences, it has been common to find "the gender panel" tucked away on the afternoon of Day 4 pooling together unrelated papers on women's issues and saved thematically only by the ingenuity of the panel convenor and participants.

Did this strategy work? Overall it probably did (although some paper-givers sensed some marginalisation from the "mainstream" issues). It allowed room for panels to focus on gender in ways not previously available. For example, a literature panel with a gender focus explored ambiguity in Oe Kenzaburo's work, motherhood and contemporary feminist poetry; and two panels were given over to questions of citizenship, ethnicity and gender in modern Japan. Gender issues were also raised on other panels and in different contexts such as Kyoko Kawasaki's analysis of women in Japanese women's magazines and reference to the issue of gender in international relations in Meredith Patton's critical reading of international relations theory and Japan. Helene Bowen Raddeker's work on Kaneko Fumiko featured in a history panel which allowed for exploration of this paper in context of "history". Thus the overriding sense one gained from this conference was that gender issues and studies on women in Japan were beginning to move away from the margins.

It is in this context that I have been asked to write a short review of the panel from Griffith University "Volatile Fictions" chaired by Sandra Buckley with papers given by Catherine Burns [A Woman Killed—Judicial Narratives on Trial]; Kaye Broadbent [I should be a manager]; and Sharon Chalmers [Once upon a time there was a Japanese lesbian—No there wasn't]. For those who attended, this was one of the outstanding panels of the conference and one of the few which,

according to some participants, held the attention for the full 90 minutes.

What made it an interesting session was the way in which the three quite diverse topics were read as texts, as a way of exploring the notion of narrative as a means of analysing a given situation. The read texts in each case were quite different: Catherine's paper examined the text of a trial of a Tokyo prostitute; Kaye's paper on the personal narratives of a particular group of women part-time workers and Sharon's work with lesbians and discourses on subjectivity and the writing of a feminist text. The presentation and examination of the texts in each case took the listener on a compelling, personal and yet shared journey through the lives of these different women (the subjects of the respective studies) in a manner which is completely absent in similar studies which reside in the comfort zone of the traditional disciplines. Sandra's commentary teased out the strands of narrative, performance and choice as the linkage points of the three papers which provided the backdrop for the audience and the panel members to weave their own tapestries, their own readings of the texts as presented.

Upon reflection, I think it is this very point that made this panel one of the conference highlights and where it distinguishes itself from the others. It crashed through the subjectivity/objectivity debate in such a powerful way that, as a result, we should never feel obliged to apologise for our lack of objectivity again (for those of us who still have that compulsion!). It showed us that we can pursue our research down other avenues, ask other questions and seek other responses.

I have since reflected on my own work on women in politics in Japan using the frames of reference offered by Catherine, Kaye, Sharon and Sandra, and I suspect, others in the audience will have done the same. Although it will be some time before I will be able to offer an analysis with the impact of the three papers on this panel, I feel grateful to have been able to hear these Japanese women speak through the interpretations offered by panel members. This panel was indeed worthy of the high praise accorded to it by those who attended.

[Donna Weeks lectures in Japanese Studies at the Department of Asian Languages and Studies, University of Queensland]

## NEWS FROM NEW ZEALAND

### NZASIA CONFERENCE

ROBYN HAMILTON

Eleventh New Zealand International  
Conference on Asian Studies,  
The University of Auckland, 1-4 July 1995.

The theme for this year's conference was to recognise and celebrate the achievements of those scholars now living abroad who had begun their academic training in New Zealand. Of these, one of the keynote speakers for the conference was Professor Elisabeth Croll, from the School of Oriental and African Studies, London School of Economics. Professor Croll was justifiably keen for the conference participants to know that her full professorship to the Chair of Chinese Anthropology was the first to be bestowed since that held by Maurice Freedman. Croll's work over the last twenty years has been in the area of gender issues in China. The title of her opening address to the conference was entitled "From comrade to consumer: new collective and gendered identities in China". As with the seminars she had delivered in the week previous to the conference on campus ("Living with Rhetoric: Gendered Moments and Memories in Republican China"; "Missing" Girls in China"; "Gendered Space and Time in Contemporary China"), Croll displayed a serious intent to show the missing dimension of the experience of being a woman in China and to put women into the arena of scholarly discussion.

For those of us with an interest in women's studies and Asia there were other offerings which served to show the range of issues that highlighted the experience of being Asian and being woman, in contemporary times as well as in history. A discussion on the methods of daily travel used by women in Indonesia was presented by D. C. Johnston, "Gender Differences in Daily Travel: A Case Study in Rural Java, Indonesia" and several other of the conference discussions dealt with women in modern day Asian society or communities of Asian women in western society (see for example Margaret Trawick's "South Asian Feminism on the Internet"; and Kwi Leng Lee's, "The Overseas Chinese at the University of Auckland"). The findings of Tomoko Shimoda's "Gender relations in Japanese media since 1980" was startling not

only in the way her analysis brought to light gender related discrimination in Japanese society but also because it highlighted the difficulties of speaking out against her own cultural background while working within it.

At the other end of the time spectrum the panel on Chinese film dealt with Zhang Yimou's *Red Sorghum*, set in the early part of the century but showing that many of the issues could be related to contemporary Chinese society. The panel provided the impetus for widely differing discussions on Chinese film, from the application of post-modernist theories, to temporal changes in the images of women in Fifth Generation films. As well as the variety of topics offered in the conference, it was noticeable too that many of the discussants called on methodologies from a wide range of disciplines (mainly from the social sciences—social anthropology, geography, gender) to frame their discussions. My own paper dealt with the writings and life of a late eighteenth-century Chinese woman using methods of analysis from social anthropology.

As well as a bringing together of themes and people with an interest in women and Asia, the conference has acted as a catalyst for strengthening future personal and institutional ties amongst women (and those working on women) in the field of Asian Studies in Australia and New Zealand. Steps are now being taken to consolidate these efforts and networks.

[Robyn Hamilton is a PhD candidate in the department of Asian Languages and Literatures at the University of Auckland]

#### *GENDER, CULTURE AND SOCIETY: AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL*

This journal wishes to raise to the foreground the issue of boundaries of modernity which has been unwittingly identified with progress within a Western tradition.

Contributions max. of 4000 words.

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POSTCARD FROM THE EDGE

## ARTTAIWAN

ANNE CULLEN

Let me begin by saying that quite possibly I am not the right person to be writing this review. In fact I know I am not! I know very little about Taiwanese culture, let alone Taiwanese Art, and what's more, while my Western Sydney upbringing endowed me with many essential 'life skills', culture and art were not on the daily agenda. But, yes, it is true that with age and growth one does come to appreciate Art, albeit, in my case, in a limited sense. Which puts me in mind of the saying—*I don't know much about ART, but I know what I like*, and I did like the ARTTAIWAN exhibit currently showing at the Gold Coast City Art Gallery! In fact, I found it rather educational. I learned three things on the day I visited this exhibit, (1) The Gold Coast is a particularly depressing place on a cold and wet day, (2) Taiwanese art is fascinating and thought provoking and (3) Australia exhibits a peculiar and contradictory behaviour when dealing with international cultural and Art events.

The first lesson of the day is not worth pursuing here. But the other two are closely related, and the third in particular coloured the way in which I viewed the exhibits. But let me digress a little here to explain. Early morning on the day I viewed ARTTAIWAN I was yet another hostage of medical surgery with aged magazines and musak, everybody's worst nightmare. Fluking on a fairly recent *Bulletin* I read of Ellis Rowan, an Australian women artist who entered her "small watercolour paintings" in the Melbourne International Exhibitions over the 1870s and 1880s, where she was awarded a "strong of gold, silver and bronze medals" (should this be a clutch, not a string). The article went on to explain how in 1888 the serious male artists complained that the "local girl's" success was a "direct insult" to the foreign artists (presumably male) who had exhibited. Also demeaning was her subject matter of flowers and botanical species, which were not considered to be sufficiently serious (Mendelssohn 1995, 83). While the incident of the *Belittled Woman* filed itself in my memory banks, I must confess it was into the category of interesting trivia of a long ago past. It also

put me in mind of another art exhibition billed as a display of *The Great Artists* of Indonesia held in Jakarta not so long ago. Only one exhibitor was female. Discussion had occurred (well, raged would be an exaggeration) in the local press regarding this phenomenon, but it was subdued and did not change the billing at the national event. But back to ARTTAIWAN.

Prompted by the knowledge of Ellis Rowan and the Jakarta incident, I asked the attendant how many exhibitors were women. The reply was disheartening. "Maybe one. Yes, I do believe there is one!" said the attendant with great enthusiasm. She went on to explain that she did not know which one, but asked if it really mattered. Well, to me it did. I could not help but refer back to the biases I was already carrying round in my Art information baggage for the day. It also made me question how I was to view the images of Art. Surely a women's perspective of her surroundings, and the comments she wishes to make through her art are different to the male experience. Or, I was left asking, is the art experience universal? I thought not.

Well, with a quick read of the promotional pamphlet I discovered that there were at least three women represented here. Optimistic given the thought that there may only be one, but disheartening given the show-case includes a total of 29 artists. But this gender bias should not stop one from enjoying the show, I thought, and it did not. Of particular interest was *Wommunism* by Hou Yi-ren. In this work she addresses the complexities of the personal and political life of Taiwanese women by constructing the five-pointed star of Communist China with kitchen bowls and other paraphernalia usually associated with feminine pursuits. Yan Ming-huy is represented with two works, *Resting* and *Variations*, which challenge women to take control of their own symbolic representations. The use of wood, rock and stone by Lai Jun-jun is striking in its simplicity and had an impact on my evolving data-base. Haunting images created in charcoal by Chiu Tse-yan comment on the intervention of humans on the natural world, and are not images I will forget



easily. Works by the male artists are no less striking. Kou Jen-chang presents a vibrant combination of the Eight Generals (Gods from Taiwanese folk religion) and combines these portraits of different people of different ages, occupations and ethnicity from Taiwanese society. Most entertaining, though was a series of wood-block prints by Hou Chung-ming, who appears to be intent upon taking the mickey out of Confucian morality in a most sexually explicit manner. Shocking to some, maybe (and certainly to some of the elderly viewers who were in the gallery at the time), but they make a valid statement nonetheless.

This same art-experience-filled day, the national news services carried a story about the cancellation by two north Queensland High Schools of the touring Papua New Guinea dance troop from Gordon Secondary School Port Moresby. The reason, "The girls are topless" and "...students were not mature enough to see the show and might lose control (Marx, 1995)." A few questions popped into my head—lose control of what? surely they were not driving cars as they viewed the performance? Surely if the PNG dancers of the same age and mature enough to perform 'topless', then what does this say about Australian youth? Or what does this imply about those adults who are charged with overseeing these hormone filled youths of Australia? And, why are the young of the Mackay primary schools still viewing this live cultural experience if their elder siblings (presumably male and female) may become overexcited at the sight of a bare breast? And what of the right of Australia's young to view this inaugural exhibit of Taiwanese Art in Australia? Should we ban their presence in case the sexually explicit art is *too exciting*? Or should we restrict their viewing to less serious art, and let them *only* view the *Belittled woman's* work?

Unknowningly, Mr Woodcock, the cultural excursion leader, further highlighted the greatest of Australian cultural glitches when he commented that his students were bewildered by the 19th century attitude. I feel obliged to point out to Mr Woodcock, had his students indeed toured in the 19th century, and based on the Ellis Rowan experience, his students would have been entitled to far greater appreciation and respect than they are experiencing currently.

All my musing aside, ARTTAIWAN is well worth viewing, and beyond deserving of being caught up in my reflections here. ARTTAIWAN is organised by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney and the Taipei Fine Arts Museum in association with the

University of Wollongong. The works will remain at the Gold Coast until the 16 August 1995, then will travel to Canberra School of Art Gallery and show from 29 September to 21 October, after which they may be seen at the Wollongong City Gallery from the 8 December till 4 February 1995.

Postscript: It was not until the following day that I viewed the edition of *Lateline* (screened on the same day as my learning curve in Art went into overdrive) which was investigating the state of Art and Art galleries in Australia. You may well be thankful that I shuddered in my shoes and turned off before I could 'learn' any more. Maybe I should have returned, however, to the papers to seek an answer in the Stars for that day, I suspect Aquarius might just say, "Stay out of towns promising sunshine and golden facades, and a very Arty day ahead."

#### References:

- Mendelssohn, J. (1995) "Belittled Woman," *The Bulletin*, May 2 1995.  
Marx, A. (1995) "School Ban on Papuan Dancers," *The Courier Mail*, July 6.

[Anne Cullen is co-editor of *Women in Asia* and is currently finishing her PhD on forestry in Indonesia at Griffith University]

#### RESEARCH GRANTS

##### CHINESE STUDIES CENTER TAIPEI

The CCS is offering research grants for the period of July 1996-June 1997 to foreign scholars wishing to conduct research in Taiwan in the area of Chinese Studies. Grants are awarded according to the following scale:

Full Professor NT\$50,000 per month

Associate Prof NT\$40,000 per month

Assistant Prof NT\$30,000 per month

Doctoral Candidate NT\$20,000 per month

The duration of the grants may be between 3 months and one year and airfare is included.

Application forms available from  
Liaison Division

Center for Chinese Studies

20 Chungshan South Road, Taipei

Taiwan 10001, ROC

Tel: 886-2-314-7321

FAX: 886-2-371-2126

Email: ruth@msg.ncl.edu.tw

Closing date: **October 31 1995**

#### FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

- "Making a World of Difference: A Conference on Education and Training in Cultural Diversity." St Kilda Town Hall, Melbourne. October 26-27, 1995.

"This Conference will 'make a world of difference' for those seeking to respond to the challenges of cultural diversity through the education and training of professionals in Australia. The Conference offers a rare opportunity to exchange views, experiences and resources in the growth area of cultural diversity training. Coinciding with the Year of Tolerance, this conference makes a major contribution to the 1995 celebrations, enhancing tolerance and promoting the value of diversity in Australia."

Contact:  
Centre for Ethnic Health  
23 Lennox Street  
Richmond  
Victoria 3121  
FAX: (03) 942 82269  
TEL: (03) 942 78766

- "Cooperation in the Asia Pacific Region". ANU, Canberra July 27-28 1995. A Canada Australia sponsored Conference.

"The Conference is being held to mark 100 years of official trade relations between Canada and Australia. The objectives of the conference are to contribute to a more dynamic relationship among the Asia Pacific economies through a policy dialogue on issues and collective interests that are shaping the region."

Contact:  
Ms Marilyn Popp  
Australia-Japan Research centre  
RSPAS  
ANU  
Canberra, ACT 0200  
TEL: (06) 249 0168  
FAX: (06) 249 0767

- "The Seventh International Congress on Women's Health Issues" Khon Kaen University, Khon Kaen, Thailand. 5-8 November 1996.

Contact: Associate Professor Eamporn Thongkrajai, Faculty of Nursing, Khon Kaen University, Khon Kaen 40002, Thailand.  
FAX: 043-237606 / 043-242106

The theme of this conference is Women in Development and proposed topics include Reproductive health, women in work, Women and AIDS/HIV, Women as Health Advocates,

Women in the developing world and gender issues in general.

Deadline for abstracts December 1 1995. These should be 250-300 words, typed single space. Submit 3 copies and one cover page with name, position and address to Eamporn Thongkrajai at above address.

- "6th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women." Adelaide, Australia, 22-26 April 1996. [See accompanying item]

- "Chinese Culture and Society in the 1990s." Centre of East Asian Studies, Monash University, Clayton, Victoria. August 26-27, 1995.

This symposium, organised around the question of what constitutes Chinese culture and society in the 1990s, seeks to bring together scholars in Chinese Studies from all over Australia for a series of roundtable discussions on contemporary issues in the field. There will be four panels over the two days of the symposium. Each of these panels will explore a different theme or trend in Chinese Studies and will be led by a key speakers including Ms Liu Qingfeng, Prof. Chen Fangzheng & Mr Jin Guantao (Chinese Uni, HK), and Professors Yue Daiyun and Tang Yijie (Beijing University).

Registration closing date 18 August 1995  
Registration of \$65 includes lunches and morning and afternoon teas. Concession rates are \$45 with lunch and \$20 without.

Contact:  
Dr Gloria Davies Tel: 03-99052234  
Dr Ye Xiaoqing Tel: 03-99052289  
Email: Gloria.Davies@arts.cc.monash.edu.au

◊ Lecturer Chinese  
University of Western Australia  
Centre for Asian Studies

Applications are invited for a fixed term appointment to the above position for an initial period of three years with prospects of reappointment. The appointee will have the major responsibility for developing the initial phase of the new Chinese language program. There may also be an opportunity to contribute to courses on society and culture in the Asian Studies major. Candidates must be fluent in both Chinese (Mandarin) and English and have completed, or be close to completing, a PhD in Chinese language, culture or related field. Experience in teaching Chinese at tertiary level is also essential. [Ref no. A40/95]

Contact:  
Associate Professor B. Hooper  
Tel: (09) 380 2080  
FAX: (09) 380 1167

# CONFERENCE REPORTS IN BRIEF

♦ Workshop on Southeast Asian Women—  
July 14 1995. Monash University.

On July 14 at Monash University a workshop on Southeast Asian women was held, under the auspices of the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies. It was the second in what is intended to be an annual series aimed at promoting research in the area and facilitating the exchange of ideas among scholars, particularly graduate students. The organisers were Barbara Hatley, Susan Blackburn and Zaniah Marshall. The workshop featured a number of panels and a networking session. Papers covered topics relating to motherhood, Malay literature, human rights, the arts, the media, feminism and femininity, and Indonesian history. About 40 people participated.

If you would like to be put on the mailing list for next year's workshop, send your name and address to:

Rhonda Lyons, Monash Asia Institute,  
Monash, Clayton, Vic 3168  
Fax: (03) 9905 5770  
Email: secmai@arts.cc.monash.edu.au

♦ Taiwan Update 22-23 May 1995

University of Technology, Sydney

This informative 2 day conference aimed to provide participants with a survey of recent events in Taiwan, ROC. Speakers included Fuh-sheng Hsieh of Taipei's National Chengchi University, Bruce Jacobs of Monash, David Schak of Griffith, Simon Patten of Sydney University, Hans Hendrichske of Macquarie, C.L. Chiu of Queensland University and Jason Hu, the representative of the ROC govt. The forum covered the social, economic, political, cultural and international changes of the past decade.

For more information contact:

Prof David Goodman, ITS  
University of Technology, Sydney

♦ Gender and Sexuality in Modern Thailand—  
July 11-12, 1995. ANU.

This conference covered a wide range of issues related to sexuality in Thailand including attitudes to sex, lesbian lifestyles, women in development, masculinities, sex trading, prostitution, and HIV/AIDS planning. Women's caucus members Nerida Cooke (UTas) and Andrea Whittaker (UNewcastle) attended. For further information on the papers contact Dr Peter Jackson, RSPAS, ANU.

Tel: (06) 249 3142

Email: Peter.Jackson@anu.edu.au

♦ Lectureships in Chinese & Korean

Auckland Uni, Dept. of Asian Lang & Literatures

Chinese—[UAC.611] Applicants should have advanced qualifications (preferably PhD or equivalent) with a strong research specialisation in modern literature, Ming-Qing fiction or drama. Evidence of effective language teaching is sought.

Korean—[UAC.612] Applicants should have advanced qualifications (preferably a PhD or equivalent) and be specialists researching in Korean literature and also have strong language teaching experience. The successful applicant will be able to design, co-ordinate and teach literature and cultural courses to complement the language program.

Closing date: 17 August 1995

Contact: Appointments Office, Auckland University  
Private Bag 92019, Auckland, NZ.

FAX: 64-9-373-7023

Lecturer Indonesian

University of Western Australia

Centre for Asian Studies

Applications are invited for a fixed term appointment to the above position for an initial period of three years with prospects of reappointment. The appointee will be required to teach at all levels of the Indonesian language program and may also have the opportunity to contribute to courses on Indonesian society and culture within the Asian Studies major. Candidates must be fluent in both Indonesian and English and have completed, or be close to completing, a PhD in Indonesian language, culture or related field. Experience in teaching Indonesian at tertiary level is also essential. [Ref no. A39/95]

Contact: Associate Professor B. Hooper

Tel: (09) 380 2080

FAX: (09) 380 1167

Closing date: 25 August 1995

Senior Lecturer or Associate Professor Japanese

UWA Centre for Asian Studies

Applications are invited for a tenurable appointment in Japanese studies. The program is offered at undergraduate, honours, and postgraduate levels. Students and graduates have an outstanding record in winning competitive scholarships to undertake study and research in Japan. The appointee will be responsible for the overall coordination of the Japanese studies program. Applicants must have a fluent command of Japanese as well as of English, a relevant higher degree and an established teaching and research record. The ability to foster research among staff and experience in supervising postgraduate students are also essential. While the position is open to applicants with a record of achievement in either Japanese language or humanities or social sciences discipline, the appointee will be expected to play a leading role in overseeing the language program. The ability to teach one or more units on Japanese society and culture and experience in developing exchanges with Japanese universities are desirable. [Ref no. A38/95]

Contact: Associate Professor B. Hooper

Tel: (09) 380 2080 FAX: (09) 380 1167

Closing date: 25 August 1995

## CLEARINGHOUSE FOR INFORMATION ON WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

### A RESOURCE CENTRE FOR LITERATURE INFORMATION: INDONESIA

*[The following is a copy of the Clearinghouse's pamphlet. Virginia Hooker (Southeast Asia Centre, Faculty of Asian Studies at ANU) visited recently and said they were keen to make them services more widely known)—eds]*

#### Background

There is no doubt that the Indonesian Government pays special attention to the issues of Women in Development. The creation of the post of Junior Minister for the Role of Women in 1978, upgraded in 1983 to State Minister for the Role of Women, testifies the scope of the work relation to Women in Development.

In order to support both the policy-making process and workers in research and development, access to literature and information on subjects related to Women in Development is vital. However, the government is of the opinion that information on the subject is closely integrated and interrelated with other subject disciplines. Therefore, the creation of a separate centre exclusively dealing with Women in Development has been entrusted to PDII-LIPI (Centre for Scientific Documentation & Information, Indonesian Institute for Sciences), formerly called PDIN-LIPI (National Scientific Documentation Centre). This centre has in fact been in existence since 1965 and the growing collection of literature on Women in Development has been integrated into PDII's collection since 1979.

The development of the Clearinghouse has received guidance and direction from the State Minister for the Role of Women, with financial support from the Government and UNICEF.

#### To Meet the Needs of a Diverse Public

The subject catalogue of PDII's library is the first point of reference for finding out what the library has on Women in Development. The collection includes books, journals, microfilms & microfiches, vertical files and clippings.

In the acquisition of material, special attention is given to

- 1) Indonesian generated literature and reports on Women in Development
- 2) foreign reports on the same subject

3) other kinds of information mainly for the purpose of comparative studies.

It is not the quantity of the collection that is important, but the quality. Whatever the inquiries or requests, the Clearinghouse will do its best to meet the needs of the users, utilising its own resources or tapping those of other centres. In order to provide as full a service as possible an in-house database is available. Foreign databases can be also accessed from PDII.

The Clearinghouse is able to assist the public by:

- providing access to its collection
- preparing a Current Awareness Service
- undertaking retrospective searches of information
- acting as a referral centre
- responding to cooperative and joint activity programs in the country as well as in the SE Asian region.

#### General Information

The Clearinghouse for information on Women in development is located at PDII-LIPI, Jalan Jend. Gatot Subroto 10, Jakarta 12190, Indonesia. The centre is open to the public from Monday to Friday from 0830-1800, Saturday from 0830-1300. Inquiries and requests can be sent by mail, phone 583 465 and 511 063, by fax 573 3467 or by telex 62875 IA

♦ Research Fellow **Chinese Anthropology**  
ANU, Dept of Anthop and Contemporary  
China Centre. [Ref PA 7.6.1]

Candidates must have a good command of Chinese and have carried out field research in the PRC, Taiwan, HK or an overseas Chinese community, preferably SE Asia.

Appointment for 3 years initially with the possible extension to a maximum of 5 years.

Contact Professor Fox

TEL: (06) 249 2162

Closing date: 1 September 1995

## PUBLICATION NEWS

- Iem Brown and Joan Davis (eds), *Di Serambi: On the Verandah—A Bilingual Anthology of Modern Indonesian Poetry*. Melbourne: Cambridge Uni Press, 1995.
- Norma Sullivan, *Masters and Managers: A Study of Gender Relations in Urban Java*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1995. [This is one of the Women's Caucus's *Women in Asia Series*—see the back page for more information on this publication series]
- Anne-Marie Hilldson, *Madonnas and Martyrs*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1995. [Another *Women in Asia Series* Publication]
- Alberto Gomes, *Modernity and Identity: Asian Illustrations*. Bundoora: La Trobe University Press, 1995. [This includes chapters by women's caucus members A. McLaren, M. Stivens, L. Healey, K. Ram]
- *AMPO: Japan Quarterly Review*, Vol. 25, No. 4/Vol.26, No. 5 is a special issue on women in Japan titled "Towards Beijing".

### CALL FOR PAPERS & REPORTS

#### PAKISTAN JOURNAL OF WOMEN'S STUDIES

*The Pakistan Journal of Women's Studies: Alam-e-Niswan* has decided to bring out its issue Vol. 2, No. 2, 1995 on development of Women's Studies in the Asia Pacific Region. The issue will include articles about Teaching and Research Methodology, Curricula Development, Feminism and the Third World, Women's Studies and Women's Movement, Classroom Experiences, Empowerment, Success Stories and Personal Experiences. The last date for submission of papers is **October 30 1995**. Research papers may be 20-25 pages in length, double spaced on A-4 paper. Please send three copies.

Contact:  
Tahera Aftab  
Editor  
Pakistan Journal of Women's Studies  
C-12, Staff Town, University of Karachi  
Karachi-75270,  
Pakistan  
Tel: 92-21-471828  
Fax: 92-21-473226

#### SAMPLING SURVEY DATA OF WOMEN'S STATUS IN CONTEMPORARY CHINA

Edited by Institute of Population Studies,  
Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 1994,  
46+630 pages, 265x190mm  
ISBN 7-80003-232-2, Hardback, USD 69.00  
(in Chinese and English)

This book contains major data of the sampling survey on women's status in contemporary China which involved 30 million urban and rural couples from five provinces and one municipality. The sampling survey supported by UNFPA, was conducted in 1991 by the Institute of Population Studies of CASS. The data were processed, tabulated and edited by computer. It consists of (1) general information (2) educational status (3) marriage and the quality of marriage (4) contraception and fertility (5) employment, occupation and income (6) living conditions and internal management of family (7) gender norms. In addition, a concise report on the sample survey is also presented at the beginning of the book and the questionnaire form is affixed at the end. The book provides comprehensive information on the status of the contemporary Chinese woman, especially the status quo within the family, its characteristics, trends and problems, and thus it is regarded as important reference for the study of Chinese women.

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— This book is dedicated to the Fourth World  
Conference on Women 1995—

#### WOMEN'S CAUCUS STATE CONTACTS

Please send information for the newsletter to the state contact or directly to the Queensland Editor.

##### Western Australia

Tamara Jacka, Humanities,  
Murdoch University, Murdoch, 6150  
Tel (09) 360 2993

##### Victoria

Barbara Hatley, Asian Languages,  
Monash University, Clayton, 3168

##### New South Wales

Pamela Gutman, Research Institute for Asia and the  
Pacific, University of Sydney, 2006  
Tel (02) 692 3822  
Fax (02) 692 4527

##### South Australia

Lesley Potter, Geography Dept.,  
University of Adelaide, SA 5005  
Tel (08) 303 5647

##### Tasmania

Nerida Cook, Asian Studies,  
University of Tasmania, GPO Box 2520 Hobart, 7001  
Tel (002) 202914

##### Northern Territory

Amanda Yorke, 1/14 Tang St.  
Coconut Grove, NT 0810

##### Australian Capital Territory

Helen Creese, Pacific and Asian History, RSPacS,  
ANU, Canberra, ACT 0200  
Tel (06) 249 3169  
Fax (06) 249 5525

##### Queensland

Louise Edwards, Humanities,  
Australian Catholic University,  
PO Box 247, Everton Park, Qld 4053  
Tel (07) 855 7252  
Fax (07) 855 7245  
email L.Edwards@mcauley.acu.edu.au

#### COPY DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE

October 20 1995

Reports, reviews and comments and  
activities past and future are most welcome.  
Contact your state representative or the  
Editorial team—Louise Edwards and Anne  
Cullen.

The views expressed in *Women in Asia* are those of the  
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opinions of the ASAA or the Women's Caucus

#### WOMEN IN ASIA PUBLICATION SERIES

This series is produced by the ASAA in  
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