



## Philippine presidential elections

# 'A classic churn of political positions'

*The 15th president of the Philippines 'Noynoy' Aquino, takes office on 30 June. But, writes JANE HUTCHISON, it is likely the best that can be expected is some easing of predatory type corruption and associated violence and intimidation,*

On 10 May, Filipinos voted in simultaneous national, provincial and local elections. The results would always deliver a new president as Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's term was at an end constitutionally. Yet, reformist opposition to the Arroyo regime was only galvanised electorally with the death of former president Corazon Aquino nine months earlier in August 2009.

Before then, Senator Benigno 'Noynoy' Aquino III had not planned to run for the presidency. The significant outpouring of public affection for his mother, however, led to immediate calls for him to stand as the Liberal Party candidate. When that party's then contender, Senator Manuel 'Ma' Roxas II—himself the grandson of a former president—opted in early September to run as vice-president instead, Noynoy leapt ahead in opinion polls, eventually winning the election by a significant margin over his closest rival, the once-president Joseph Estrada.

Noynoy brought to the 2010 presidential election the considerable 'symbolic capital' of his mother<sup>1</sup>—and indeed also of his father, Benigno 'Ninoy' Aquino II, who was assassinated in 1983. Despite her own administration's failings, Mrs Aquino was identified as taking principled positions on constitutional and political issues of national importance since leaving public office in 1992. She came to personify the qualities of moral uprightness and dedication to public service that many Filipinos believe is missing from their political system. Noynoy's parentage thus

gave him a stronger claim to representing 'clean and honest governance' than any of his presidential rivals,<sup>2</sup> helped by the fact that his 12-year record in the House of Representatives and the Senate was not



President-elect  
'Noynoy' Aquino

marred by any controversy. This presented an opportunity for extra-parliamentary opposition to the Arroyo regime to muster behind a candidate with some real chance of electoral success.

Arroyo's administration was widely accepted to be deeply corrupt. Quimpo compares the 'predatory' type corruption of Arroyo and her predecessor Estrada with the more 'traditional clientelism' of the earlier Aquino and Ramos administrations<sup>3</sup>.

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He argues, whereas corruption in traditional clientelism is kept relatively in check by public institutions, in the case of predatory corruption these 'checks are breached and overwhelmed' by resorts to political appointments, cash handouts, election fraud, violence and intimidation and the militarisation of social conflicts.



*Campaign posters in the streets of Manila (AP Photo/Bullit Marquez).*

The civil society opposition to Arroyo had peaked in 2005–06 after the public disclosure of her efforts to fix the 2004 presidential election. But

that opposition was more recently dissipated as calls for her to resign were unsuccessful and there was little or no appetite among the different groups involved for an attempt to remove Arroyo unconstitutionally via the 'parliament of the streets'. By 2009 it therefore seemed unlikely that a progressive reform agenda could be anything more than a marginal feature of the upcoming presidential campaign.

The civil society opposition to the Arroyo regime was organised, but lacking mainstream party political representation. Having worked for years on policy and legislative reforms, then on deepening democracy through constitutional and institutional reforms and participatory local governance, the progressive forces aligned under the national Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO) umbrella were apparently moving to adopt more partisan forms of political engagement.<sup>4</sup>

The previous change strategy of a few progressive individuals 'crossing-over' from civil society into senior government positions had been disappointing.<sup>5</sup> The plan was hence to 'build a reform constituency', more challenging to mainstream politics than the efforts to date to secure some of the 20 per cent of House of Representative seats that are reserved for the marginalised social sectors.

*'...husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters are swapping posts to keep their hold on power in districts and provinces.'*

The election itself generally went better than expected. During the lead up, almost as much media attention had been paid to the electoral commission's efforts to automate the vote count nationwide as there had been given to the candidates and their campaigns. Automation was touted as a means of addressing the past instances of fraud and long delays in the determination of election results.

In 2010, automation did enable the presidential race outcome to be known within 24 hours, but it did not prevent a number of the losers from claiming they were robbed. Realistically, more important for the legitimacy of Noynoy's victory was the 5.7 million vote margin by which he won. In turn, his clear success has helped to avert an immediate, deeper crisis of institutional legitimacy.

Nevertheless, other election results point to the fact that Noynoy has not headed a reformist clean sweep. Ma Raxas lost the vice-presidency in a close contest with Makati City mayor Jejomar Binay. As well, two particularly prominent reformist governors—Eddie Panlilio in Pampanga and Grace Padaca in Isabela—lost to candidates from Arroyo's political party, Lakas-Kampi-CDM. Arroyo herself won convincingly in the House of Representatives for Pampanga and her party is generally still a strong presence in Congress.

Indeed, in many respects the elections across the board were a classic churn of political positions within an established elite. This is shown by 'almost all' of the 79 congressional vacancies being contested by close family members<sup>6</sup>. To quote the same journalist before the election: 'From Ilocos to Mindanao, husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters are swapping posts to keep their hold on power in districts and provinces'. Arroyo herself replaced her son in the House of Representatives while the former First

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Lady Imelda Marcos did the same in Ilocos Norte, while her son moved into the Senate and her daughter was elected provincial governor.

Moreover, it is anyway not clear how 'clean and honest governance' will necessarily result in substantive, socio-economic reforms. Good governance is often linked to the achievement of a public good. Yet it has been observed that, broadly, the Philippine middle class can tend to equate good governance with a moral social and political order that they also lay particular claims to upholding.<sup>7</sup> On the one hand, this class identification with good governance is directed at differentiating the behaviours of traditional politicians. But on the other hand, it also extended not uncommonly to the poor, in the form an expressed distaste for their mode of living. In Marikina City in Metro Manila, for example, the previous mayor interpreted good governance to mean that *urbanidad* or 'civility' among residents should be promoted through disciplined living and leadership. She was not alone, among local government officials

I have personally interviewed, in considering that informal, slum dwellers are a 'blight' on the urban landscape that are better removed through relocation to the provinces and not awarded land tenure. Arguably the broadest middle class engagement with urban poor communities is currently not occurring through progressive groups under CODE-NGO. Rather, it is happening through Gawad Kalinga ('to extend care'), a Catholic charity movement which mobilises volunteers and corporate and public donations to build houses for poor families who only qualify by completing a course in 'values formation'. The movement links slum eradication to nation building that is as much spiritual and moral as it is economic and material.<sup>8</sup> It advocates addressing poverty through *malasakit* or 'concern for others' as an alternative to the progressive strategy of confronting structural injustice.<sup>9</sup> My point is that the seeming universal value in promoting good—'clean and honest'—governance is in fact not devoid of class priorities in the Philippine context (and probably also elsewhere). While in many respects, such

an agenda is clearly reformist; in others it turns out to be considerably less so. The 15th president of the Philippines, Noynoy Aquino, takes office on 30 June. In substantive terms, it is likely the best that can be expected is some easing of predatory type corruption and associated violence and intimidation. This is because the 'forces for democratic reform are much too weak' to successfully push for more fundamental reforms.<sup>10</sup> What is more, the moral discourse that pervades more broadly the public debate about what is wrong with Philippine politics tends to construct a national reform agenda that is silent on class conflicts and the processes for dealing with them.

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# State of Asian languages education 'worse than feared'

Australia's Asian languages education is in a far worse state than feared and is continuing to decline, according to four major new reports.

Released this month by the Australian Government, the reports—the first of their kind in more than 15 years—reveal that the aspiration to double the number of Year 12 students fluent in an Asian language by 2020 faces huge challenges unless there is attitudinal change across the Australian community.

The reports show an alarming drop in the number of Australian students learning one of the four priority Asian languages—Indonesian, Japanese, Korean and Chinese (Mandarin). Indonesian is at crisis point, with Year 12 enrolments halved since 2000 to just 1100 students nationally.

The proportion of 'non-background' speakers in Chinese language—that is, students whose families have no Chinese heritage—is rapidly declining. And Japanese—once the shining light in Australian Asian language studies—has seen a marked 20 per cent decrease in participation since 2000.

*The Current State of Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese and Korean Language Education in Australian Schools: Four Languages, Four Stories*, an Asia Education Foundation (AEF) series of reports commissioned by the Australian Government to get a baseline on current participation rates, shows:

- On current trends, Indonesian could be virtually extinct in language studies at Year 12 level by 2020.
- In 2000, 24 per cent of students across K–12 were studying one of the four languages, while in 2008, this had fallen to 18 per cent.
- At Year 12, the issue is particularly alarming: less than 6 per cent of students currently study one of the four languages and it is estimated

about 50 per cent of these are Asian 'background' or heritage speakers.

The challenge will be 'finding new and effective ways of persuading young people and their parents of the value of learning one or more of these languages', the report says. 'The right incentives for participation will have to be found, instituted and marketed.'

The aspirational target for the Australian Government's [National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program](#) (NALSSP) is that 'by 2020, at least 12 per cent of students will exit Year 12 with a fluency in one of the target Asian languages sufficient for engaging in trade and commerce in Asia and/or university study'.



**Kathe Kirby—challenges ahead.** Executive Director of [Asialink](#) and the AEF, Kathe Kirby, said the reports were the first detailed analysis of the state of Asian languages in Australian schools in more than 15 years, and revealed that Australia's Asian languages education was in urgent need of greatly increased resources.

'These reports have been developed at a time of significant impetus to improve languages learning in schools,' Ms Kirby said. 'The Government's NALSSP has provided crucial leadership and resources, and we now know the extent of the challenges ahead.'

Chairman of the NALSSP Reference Group, businessman Mr Sid Myer, said a substantial injection of additional funding was imperative to support languages learning.

'Young Australians' futures are linked to Asia. The next generation of Australians will be less effective if they cannot speak the languages and understand the cultures in which they will be working,' he said.

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## Asian language crisis

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'Thinking and working in English will exclude them from do much of the business and activity of our region. It means that as a country we will be one-dimensional—and we know that successful countries, companies and individuals are multi-dimensional.

'We cannot afford to be left behind,' he said.

According to the report summary, the target of 12 per cent is equivalent to 24 000 students exiting Year 12 fluent in



**Sid Myer—futures linked to Asia.**

one of the four languages. Currently, Asian languages have about a 90 per cent attrition rate overall—that is, students who drop the language before Year 12—among non-background speakers.

'Based on trends, in order to get to 24 000 by 2020, we need to have more than a million students learning Asian languages across all year levels,' Mr Myer said. 'And that is double what we have now.'

The Four Languages, Four Stories reports identify a number of key issues:

- better pathways for language study between primary and secondary schooling, and within secondary schooling, are essential if the pattern of participation and retention is to improve
- serious concerns exist across all four languages about the content and duration of primary school programs and the impact of these programs on student achievement, levels of satisfaction and motivation to continue to study the language
- the professional learning needs of teachers of all four languages are significant, varied and ongoing, and according to data gathered for all four reports, require renewed attention
- differing backgrounds of learners in Chinese and Korean classrooms must be officially recognised, with appropriate curriculum and assessment procedures developed for each category

- the nature and quality of training at the pre-service level for teachers of languages require urgent reform to attract and keep quality student teachers, and to produce quality teachers
- the challenge of finding new and effective ways of persuading young people and their parents of the value of learning one or more of these languages.

Indonesia expert, [Professor Tim Lindsey](#), Director of The University of Melbourne's [Asian Law Centre](#) and a member of the NALSSP Reference Group, said enrolment trends for Indonesian language showed it was at risk of disappearing from Australian schools.

*'The next generation of Australians will be less effective if they cannot speak the languages and understand the cultures in which they will be working.'*

'This is the language of our largest neighbour, the world's largest Muslim community, an emerging democracy and a country vitally important to our security. It is the key to ASEAN, which as a bloc is now one of our major trading partners,' he said.

'Yet every year, thousands of Australian students drop Indonesian. In 2009 we had 1100 students across the entire country studying Indonesian language at Year 12. This is down from the 1300 in 2008, and half what it was 10 years ago.'

'We sometimes hear that all will be well because Asians will all learn English, but this is naïve and self-deluding nonsense. How can we hope to resolve vital issues for our future like people smuggling, terrorism, or climate change, and how can we capitalise on economic growth in Asia, if Australians do not even speak the languages of own region?'

'We urgently need to invest in our future by rebuilding Asian language studies before it is too late.'

# Is Chinese the next global language?

*As China's power and influence grows, JEFFREY GIL detects a process that could see Chinese become a global language.*

China's rise, often referred to as the most significant event of recent times, has been the subject of numerous books, articles and commentaries in the fields of politics, economics and military affairs.

The linguistic implications of China's rise, however, have not been discussed to the same extent. We know that English became the global language because of its association with the two most powerful countries of recent centuries, Britain and America—so could China's rise make Chinese the next global language?

According to prominent linguist David Crystal,<sup>1</sup> a global language is one which has 'a special role that is recognised in every country'. A global language's special role consists of its worldwide use as a native language, its status as an official language and its teaching as a foreign language in education systems and less formal avenues of learning.

A look at the current standing of Chinese on these three dimensions shows that in all its varieties, Chinese is the native language of the majority of people in mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore, and is also spoken natively by overseas Chinese communities throughout the world. Mandarin Chinese is an official or co-official language in mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore. As a foreign language, Chinese, usually Mandarin, is taught in many countries.

Precise figures are difficult to come by, although according to Chinese government statistics, there are approximately 40 million people learning Chinese and the language is taught in some 2500 universities in more than 100 countries, as well as many primary and secondary schools.

This is certainly impressive but in comparison to English, Chinese remains

less common as a country's majority native language, less prevalent as an official language and less pervasive as a foreign language.

There is, however, reason to believe that Chinese could extend well beyond its current position. In their influential work *A History of the English Language*, Albert C Baugh and Thomas Cable (1993, p. 3) remind us that 'the language of a powerful nation will acquire importance as a direct



reflection of political, economic, technological, and military strength'. China's power and influence appears to be growing in all these domains: it has increased its membership

in international organisations and is active on many international issues; it has become a major exporter, manufacturer and consumer of goods; its armed forces have expanded, become more modern and technologically advanced; and it develops and adapts new technologies in a range of fields.

This encourages a process language scholars call macro-acquisition, in which large numbers of people across many countries decide to acquire a language because they perceive it to be useful or beneficial.

The numbers of Chinese language learners quoted above suggest macro-acquisition is already underway and this process has the potential to significantly raise the profile of Chinese in all three dimensions of the special role of a global language.

Firstly, and most obviously, macro-acquisition can consolidate and expand the foreign language role of Chinese. Schools, universities and private providers around the world are likely to establish and expand Chinese language programs due to demand for a language widely seen to be beneficial for the future.

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## Chinese a global language

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One example of this is offered by Brighton College, a private school in East Sussex, which in 2006 became the first school in Britain to make Mandarin compulsory. In an interview with the BBC, headmaster Richard Cairns explained this decision by saying, 'One of my key tasks is to make sure pupils at Brighton College are equipped for the realities of the 21st century'.<sup>3</sup>



Such actions will further the presence of Chinese as a foreign language both within and outside of formal education.

Secondly, macro-acquisition could help raise the profile of Chinese as a native language, although not directly. Many of those who learnt English as a foreign language speak it to their children in the home so that they can acquire it natively.

As China continues to exert an influence on the world, it is easy to imagine a situation in which this is done with Chinese. In fact, a similar trend is already occurring. South Korean newspaper *The Chosun Ilbo* reported in 2007 that many of the nation's parents were eager to hire Chinese domestic staff and babysitters who would be able to teach their children Chinese in addition to performing household duties. Such a trend could, in the long term, result in a significant portion of a country's population possessing native or native-like fluency in Chinese.

***'Approximately 40 million are people learning Chinese and the language is taught in some 2500 universities in more than 100 countries, as well as many primary and secondary schools.'***

Finally, the widespread learning of Chinese as a result of its perceived importance may lead to suggestions that it should become an official or co-official language. Academics, journalists and

commentators around the world have made such proposals about English, arguing that granting the language official status would facilitate its learning and enhance the nation's ability to interact with the world.

Again, it is reasonable to posit that such arguments may also be made for Chinese as China plays an increasingly important role in the economic, political and cultural life of numerous nations.

While we still live in a world where English is the undisputed global language, China's rise has the potential to change this and the linguistic implications of this event are worthy of further attention.

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# The oil palm question

*The complex forces at play in Indonesia's controversial oil palm boom need to be understood if the many social and environmental impacts associated with the industry are to be addressed, writes JOHN McCARTHY.*

**D**uring 2009–10, Unilever, the world's largest buyer of palm oil, 'blacklisted two major Indonesian members of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) for engaging in 'unsustainable practices'<sup>1</sup>. Nestle, the world's biggest food and beverage company, announced it would also withdraw from another key Indonesian supplier. Earlier, in response to complaints, the World Bank Group ordered a complete moratorium on investment in palm oil. These were all responses to prominent campaigns waged by NGOs and social movements.

Indonesia's oil palm boom indeed invites controversy. Yet if policy makers and environmentally minded actors are to address the many social and environmental impacts associated with oil palm, there is a pressing need to understand the complex forces at play in this rapid transformation.

The oil palm boom is dramatic. It is transforming whole local landscapes—encompassing the forests, villages and regional economies in many areas of the lowlands in the outer islands of Indonesia. The area under oil palm has increased from 4.2 million hectares in 2000 to more than 7 million hectares today, with up to 8 million hectare said to be mapped out for conversion. In comparison, the total area under agriculture in Australia is something like 20 million hectares.

It is hardly surprising that the businesses and government have focused on developing oil palm: it is a high-value crop and Indonesia has a comparative advantage. In terms of average yield per hectare, oil palm is the most productive of the vegetable yielding crops. Indonesia has a climate well-suited to oil palm, land

and cheap labour. For a developing economy in search of foreign exchange earnings, oil palm is clearly a winner.

Indonesian corporates, along with international banks and transnational food businesses, are all responding to the surge in the price of oil palm that follows an explosion in global demand for vegetable oils and biofuel. The corporate sector is highly concentrated, with large corporates controlling very large areas of land. For instance, reportedly, Singapore-based palm-oil trader Wilmar—subject to the complaint that led to the World Bank Group suspension of investments—controls around 500 000 hectares of plantations.

In addition to corporations and banks, many smallholders—especially in Sumatra—are also enjoying the boom. Clearly there are lots of winners from the boom. Oil palm is a simple plant, albeit one wrapped up in so many issues.

The environmental impacts associated with oil palm are just as striking. Forest and peat land areas, as well as unused land, overlogged forests, unproductive land, and old rubber gardens, are all being converted. The key problems include the deep areas of peat and significant areas of remnant forest being cleared, often with fire, and the tons of carbon entering the atmosphere.

The research on this is well known. The policy frameworks for protecting Indonesia's environment are also well developed, with both the Indonesian Government and now the RSPO developing an elaborate legal and policy edifice.

In response to criticisms regarding the opening of peat land, the President of Indonesia at one point decreed that oil palm should not be planted in peat lands. As ever, the unresolved question is how to implement these strictures more effectively.

The social sustainability of the oil palm is also a big question. To cultivate oil palm, capital and knowledge are required. In essence, large plantations and advanced farmers are able to successfully make the

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transition. Without state support, poor villagers are increasingly sandwiched between large plantations and small plantations, possibly with their food security compromised. If they are unable to grow their food as in the past, the very poor are likely to be vulnerable to price shocks—unless social safety nets are developed.

Policy makers in Indonesia clearly face various trade-offs that involve balancing economic development supported by powerful interests with the question of the cumulative ecological and social local consequences of the oil palm boom. For while the benefits are huge, so are the externalities. For instance, oil palm requires large volumes of fertiliser which, critics argue, end up as chemicals in the watertable. Few oil palm mills have effective pollution management, and this effluent also finding its way into local rivers where the poor wash and fish. Converting forest hillsides into oil palm also changes the hydrology: oil palm doesn't retain the water in the same fashion as forest species, and local people in the oil palm districts report increased flooding.

Indonesia has seen through a set of governance reforms over the last 10 years. Under these decentralisation reforms, different areas of Indonesia have the autonomy to craft their own response to the oil palm question. Oil palm is no longer imposed from Jakarta without the involvement of district governments. When we consider how different areas of Indonesia are responding, the outcomes—like so much associated with the plant—are ambiguous.

In Siak, in Riau, plantations cultivate very large areas of the district. The indigenous Melayu here are locked into small areas in between timber and oil palm plantations. The district government, seeing the marginal position of the customary landowners, has responded to the opportunities offered by the oil palm boom by seeking to use the oil palm boom as an instrument for poverty alleviation.

Using the large district budget available due to Riau's substantial oil reserves, Siak district has set up a scheme to target

marginalised smallholders—the indigenous Melayu people left behind by previous smallholder schemes that largely concentrated on transmigrants—and poor villagers moved to Riau from Java. Agricultural planners have carefully designed and rolled out a scheme which will give poor farmers at least 1.5 to 3 hectares of oil palm carved out of riverside peat land. With mature oil palm now producing an annual income of up to 10 million rupiah, if prices are to stay at current levels, some 1400 families enlisted in the first phase of the scheme will become prosperous in the next few years.

*'Without state support, poor villagers are increasingly sandwiched in between large plantations and small plantations, possibly with their food security compromised.'*

In Sanggau, in West Kalimantan, over the last four years the district government has responded to these same opportunities by granting 12 new oil palm concession licences. With each concession licence potentially extending up to 20 000 hectares, this is a large transformation. The district government sees this as the first opportunity to develop this remote and formerly heavily forested district. These plantations will likely lead to a thriving economic sector, perhaps with new roads, schools, supermarkets, hotels and other facilities for those at the centre of the boom. It is less clear how the indigenous and near-subsistence Dayak villagers will profit from the boom.

During the New Order period, plantations developed a surrounding 'plasma' area for smallholders up to five times as large as the plantation itself. Under the Sanggau model the plantations only develop one-fifth of the total oil palm area for the indigenous landowners. Unfortunately NGOs, producer and civil society organisations are poorly developed in Sanggau, and governance structures tend to be 'flexible'.

Under Suharto, where ancestral land rights were poorly protected by law, the expansion of large corporate plantations

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across Indonesia was associated with a history of conflict. In Sanggau, the private sector contractors are freeing-up indigenous land and developing smallholder arrangements in a fashion that, unless managed more carefully, may also culminate in marginalisation and conflict.

While the social and environmental sustainability of the oil palm boom remain contentious, the political economy of the industry continues to push the boom forward. What then are the potential points of leverage? While there are many, more space and time is required to discuss this: so just a few initial thoughts. The first priority in addressing the oil palm issue is the need to protect conservation areas and stop the opening of peat lands. Policy makers in Indonesia might also consider carrying out a strategic assessment to consider comprehensively the social and environmental implications of oil palm. Key questions might include: if large, concentrated but very large regions of the lowlands are converted to intensive oil palm enclaves what are the likely environmental and social impacts? How much oil palm should be grown? Where and under what conditions? How can social and environmental considerations—involving participatory planning processes—be fixed more effectively into land use planning and decision making more effectively?

Based on such an assessment, policies could then be designed and (most importantly) implemented to ensure more sustainable outcomes. This needs to extend to measures to regulate land use, to enhance the tenurial security of small farmers, and to maximise their benefits, thereby ensuring that they meet their food security and other needs.

Earlier the central government decentralised key aspects of plantations permitting and licensing to the districts. Districts face strong economic pressures for plantation-driven development. Meanwhile, in remote agrarian districts governance arrangements tend to be weak, and the obligations to meet international or national environmental and social standards feeble.

This environment lessens the likelihood of smallholder and environmentally friendly outcomes, generating the patterns of landowner–plantation conflict and environmental decline criticised by NGOs and social movements. Clearly the central government needs to find ways to re-engage in overseeing environmental and social outcomes in remote oil palm districts.

The international dimension is also critical. Oil palm is an export crop: the main consumers are in Europe, India, China and the United States. Significant profits go to people in the complicated chain of buyers and sellers that stretches across the globe. How can these traders, consumers and governments take responsibility for mitigating the negative impacts?

This question is clearly not a simple one. The RSPO has developed a framework for cleaning up the industry. However, this voluntary code needs to be legally binding. Further, the RSPO needs to develop effective, independent, third-party mechanisms for monitoring and enforcing compliance to its principles.

In the meantime the question remains: is 'sustainable palm oil' any closer to realisation than 'sustainable international airline travel' or 'clean coal'? It is for this reason that financial institutions, subject to international scrutiny or with effective due diligence policies, are reconsidering their investments.

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## AIGRP highlights research achievements

**A** new booklet has been released showcasing three years of research (2007–10) on Indonesia's most pressing policy and governance challenges.

Published by the [Australian Indonesia Governance Research Partnership](#) (AIGRP)— an Australian Government Initiative, managed by the Crawford School of Economics and Government at the Australian National University, the booklet looks at achievements in public finance and administration, law and order, economic policy, environmental governance, public services and civil society. AIGRP's Deputy Convenor and Australia Research Coordinator [BEN HILLMAN](#) talks about the partnership's work

*You've just released a [report](#) summarising the research projects sponsored by AIGRP over the past three years. What are the highlights?*

During three years of operation AIGRP brought together 139 researchers from 62 institutions in Australia and Indonesia in 41 research projects. In a first for both countries, all research projects were completed on the basis of collaborative research between Australian and Indonesian academics.

*What prompted the establishment of AIGRP in 2007?*

Since 1999 Indonesia has been grappling with complex reforms to its political system. During the Suharto era universities and think tanks were underfunded and critical policy-oriented research was discouraged. This left a dearth of intellectual resources for Indonesia's reformers. AIGRP was established to strengthen the intellectual foundations for policymaking in Indonesia by supporting research on Indonesia's most pressing development challenges.

*One of your aims has been to link researchers from Australia and Indonesia to generate firmer intellectual foundations*

*to tackle some of Indonesia's most basic developmental challenges. What are some of the main challenges, and how effective has AIGRP been in meeting them?*

By sponsoring collaborative research between researchers from both countries, AIGRP was designed to bring a range of expertise and approaches to specific research problems. AIGRP is the first research-grant mechanism to operate on this basis in Indonesia. AIGRP projects have all led to specific policy recommendations that have been communicated directly to policymakers. While it is often difficult to attribute policy changes to a specific research project, it is important to feed new findings and ideas into public debates.



*AIGRP policy forum.*

AIGRP has been innovative in communicating its research findings. Rather than only support academic publications which take a long time to get published and which few people read, AIGRP published key findings in a range of areas, including a policy brief series, research posters and on a website.

AIGRP also launched latest research findings at a policy research forum held in Jakarta each year and attended by government officials, the media, NGOs and other policy stakeholders.

*Has there been a notable improvement in governance in Indonesia over the past three years and, if so, how much is that due to AIGRP?*

Indonesia's democratic reforms have been impressive, but still more needs to be done to strengthen governance systems, particularly in public service delivery and financial management. AIGRP research projects have focused on many of the most pressing issues confronting the public service, including problems of human resource management, public financial management, decentralisation, and environmental and economic governance. More details about specific projects can be viewed on our [website](#).

*Continued page 12*

## AIGRP research

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*There has been a significant decline in recent years in the number of Australians studying Indonesia, and the language in particular. What has attributed to this?*

Yes, most universities have reported a drop in numbers in recent years. One of the problems has been cuts to language programs in secondary schools, compounded by travel warnings for Indonesia, which has made it difficult, if not impossible, for schools to organise inspiring visits for their students. No doubt, violence such as the Bali bombings has been a deterrent for some.

But students are also motivated by how they perceive future opportunities. Among Asian languages, Chinese has been gaining in popularity, just as Japanese did in the 1980s. Future interest in the Indonesian language among Australian students will partly depend on the path of Indonesia's reforms, economic growth and the importance of Australia-Indonesia trade.

*How effective has the AIGRP's young scholars program been in fostering a new generation of Australian and Indonesian scholars working on Indonesia? How does the program work?*

The Young Scholars' Program was another pioneering initiative designed to encourage talented graduate students to pursue careers in research with a focus on governance in Indonesia.

The program brought together some of the best young minds from Australia and Indonesia to expose them to current policy debates, meet policy makers and polish their research and presentation skills.

Young Scholars were given an opportunity to showcase their own research at an international forum each year where they received feedback from senior scholars.

The program was also a rare opportunity for young thinkers from both countries to exchange ideas and get to know each other.

## Indonesia Update 2010

Indonesia Update 2010 will be held at the Australian National University, 24–25 September. The focus of this year's update—the 28th—will be on the nexus between employment, social participation and reform, poverty and inequality is a major area of social and economic life and of public policy.

Trends in poverty and inequality are heavily dependent on labour market opportunities, and on social policies and social spending, especially in education and health. Job creation, education and health, and direct policies to improve equity and overcome poverty are critical areas of economic and social policy, and the subject of intense debate in contemporary Indonesia.

The 2010 Indonesia Update conference aims to provide a research-based assessment, accessible to a general audience, of how Indonesia has travelled in regard to social policies over the past decade, given the ambitious goals the government has set for itself, especially under President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY).

The conference papers will also identify the challenges and possible new directions for equity and poverty alleviation policy in SBY's second term, in the broader context of challenges and achievements in neighbouring Asian countries.

Both academics and policy makers from Indonesia, Australia and elsewhere will contribute to the conference. Speakers will include established and early-career staff and graduates from Australian, Indonesian and other universities, staff of international agencies, NGOs and research institutions, and government and aid officials.

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## Adolescents in Indonesia in search of the 'good life'

*A major study of adolescents in Indonesia has found the middle-class ideal of the small, urban, dual-income family and lifestyle is ubiquitous. Lyn Parker and Pam Nilan report.*

Since the resignation of Suharto in 1998 there has been dramatic political change and continuing demographic and social shifts in Indonesia: declining fertility, arranged marriages giving way to 'love' marriages, urbanisation proceeding at speed, the labour force moving into secondary and tertiary industry, women moving into the labour force and the age at marriage rising fast.

Our central research question was: in what ways do adolescents in Indonesia embody social transformation?

The 'education revolution' that had occurred during the New Order meant that the period known as adolescence was growing: most young people now finish senior high school—a tremendous achievement for Indonesia, given the low levels of education in, say, 1970—and many now go on to tertiary education. This is the most educated generation of young people in history.

A new, educated middle-class was flourishing, displaying comparative wealth, new lifestyles and worldview—and adolescents in particular were consuming globalised popular culture. At the same time, the worldwide resurgence of Islam was evident in Indonesia—this was a cultural Islamisation, and young people, particularly university students, were its enthusiastic leaders.

Most social science research on youth has viewed adolescence as a training-ground for adulthood, looking back from the vantage point of adulthood.

Most libraries in Australia have many shelves devoted to youth, and the focus is invariably on deviant youth—teen pregnancy, drugs, alcohol consumption, wild youth, school drop-outs, youth crime, etc.

Our study assumed the interdependence of individual development and culture, but we saw the future as open-ended, and thus adolescents as potentially exerting agency and contributing to new cultural production. Our main interest was in the

youth themselves—how they experience being a teenager or a young adult in this rapidly changing environment. We expected that they would be ambivalent, buffeted by contradictory discourses, and spearheading social transformations.

We decided that we would have some common elements to our objectives and methodologies, and some particular, in order to allow the different members of the team to follow their own interests, to use their different expertises and experience, and to respond to local 'difference'.

The most important common methodology was the team survey, which was



*Youth at a Yogyakarta pesantren (Islamic boarding school).*

administered to 3565 Indonesian youth in secondary schools and universities at our

nine field locations—Jakarta, West

Sumatra, Yogyakarta, Solo, Bali, Banjarnegara (Central Java), Lombok, Flores and Sorowako (South Sulawesi)—between 2006 and 2008.

Young people in Indonesia have always played an important historic role, spearheading political change at all the major regime changes. 'Youth' in Indonesia has long connoted revolutionary heroism and struggle; young people (*pemuda*) were thought to have the freedom and potential to transform Indonesia's historic destiny.

Of course some young Indonesians are still engaged in forms of political struggle, but most of the current youth generation is rather uninterested in political struggle and more interested in building their individual selves and securing their futures.

Three salient aspects of contemporary youth experience emerged from the survey data and are common patterns have identified in fieldwork: the take-up by youth of consumer lifestyles; the self-reflexive concern with morality and the

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## Indonesian adolescents

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religious self; and the fragility and uncertainty of the transition to work.

The term for teenagers now is *remaja*. This conjures up images of youth lifestyles involving consumption of fashion, pop culture and leisure activities such as hanging-out with friends and (window) shopping in air-conditioned malls. Young people enjoy the media and cultural freedom; they want to be modern and 'cool', to buy cool things, to listen to cool music and participate in globalised youth culture. Friends are a vital part of young people's lives; nevertheless they still seek their families', and particularly their parents', approval—and the reality is that most will be dependent upon their families for a long time. When it comes to dreams for the future, the middle-class ideal of the small, urban, dual-income family and lifestyle is ubiquitous.



Lyn Parker

The moral panic surrounding '*pergaulan bebas*' (literally, free socialising) is a panic about sexuality and sexual freedom. It is focused on young people, and young women in particular. It is partly a response to the freeing up of media and popular culture, and the heightened participation of youth in global youth culture. It entails a perception of Westernisation, which threatens loss of local culture and morality. However, this is not an inter-generational contest: we found that young people generally have a strong commitment to normative family formation and religious faith. They want to be pious and to behave morally and according to the teachings of religion: the question is how to be both cool and religious, both modern and moral.

Young people have upwardly mobile aspirations, and most desire a professional career. There are not strong gender or religious differences in these findings, though regional differences are apparent in job aspirations. Our research participants are very concerned with exam marks, school performance and *prestasi* (status) and how they are going to find a good job.

This worry is not unfounded: in 2004–06, just under half of all unemployed were 'young, secondary educated people

(mainly senior high graduates) aged 15–24, most of whom resided in urban areas, and who might be expected to be queuing for formal sector jobs'<sup>1</sup>. The young Indonesians we surveyed, especially those lower on the socio-economic scale, perceive, quite accurately, that they do not have a strong chance of realising their life dream and, by extension, their career aspiration, due to material, economic obstacles. The major material obstacle is the cost to families of education.



Pam Nilan

An overall finding, which was rather surprising to us, given our assumptions of youth agency and open-endedness, is that young people of both sexes hope to lead a 'good life' oriented to family, religion and wellbeing. They all expect to get married, and they want a harmonious family, a sound religious faith and good health. In short, they expect a rather traditional transition to adult life. They have a patriotic commitment to Indonesia, tempered by a sense that Indonesia is not really delivering on promises, particularly for a satisfying job or career. These findings have been and are still being disseminated through special issues of journals ([Review of Indonesian and Malaysia Affairs](#), [Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asian and the Pacific](#) and [TAPJA \(The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology\)](#)), individual journal articles, book chapters, and conference papers, a workshop funded with an ANRC grant, PhD theses, a book edited by [Kathryn Robinson](#), and a co-authored book by us.

### Reference

1. Manning, Chris. 2008. 'The political economy of reform: Labour after Soeharto'. [Indonesian working paper no. 6](#). Sydney: University of Sydney. Accessed 29 March 2009.

*Lyn Parker is a professor in Asian Studies at the University of Western Australia and Pam Nilan is an associate professor in the School of Humanities and Social Science, University of Newcastle. They are part of a six-member team that has been undertaking a four-year project—now coming to an end—on adolescence in Indonesia. The other team members are Linda Bennett (La Trobe University), Kathryn Robinson (ANU) and two PhD students, Tracy Wright Webster and Traci Smith. The project was funded by an ARC Discovery Grant.*

## Henry Black— Australia's earliest contribution to the Japanese theatre

*The first foreign entertainer to appear in Japanese theatres was most likely Australian-born. IAN McARTHUR recounts the unusual story of Henry Black.*

**A**mong the earliest Japanese to come to Australia were troupes of entertainers specialising in acrobatics. But it is not widely known that this trade in entertainers was a two-way thing. In fact it is highly likely that the first foreign entertainer to appear in Japanese theatres was the Australian-born storyteller, kabuki actor and hypnotist Henry Black.

I learned of Black's existence in 1983 when I bought a copy of *Monumenta Nipponica* (Vol. 38, No. 2), a scholarly journal published by Sophia University in Tokyo. I was then working in Japan as the Tokyo correspondent for the Melbourne-based Herald and Weekly Times. Flipping through the pages on the subway train home from Maruzen bookshop in Nihonbashi, a photograph on page 143 caught my eye. It was Henry Black posed for a female role on the kabuki stage.

On reading the accompanying article by German-born Japanese citizen Morioka Heinz and his fellow researcher Sasaki Miyoko I became intrigued by the thought that an Australian-born British citizen had found a vocation on the Japanese stage as a kabuki actor and teller of humorous short stories known as (*rakugo*) in the Meiji-era (1868–1912).

Black's life as a professional storyteller (*rakugoka*) went against commonly accepted wisdom about that era. At a time when Europeans were employed in Japan to advise the government on how to model the country's banking system, legal codes, and military on those of modern European constitutional monarchies in Western Europe, Black was one of a minority of Europeans who had gone 'native'.

Henry Black had lived with a male Japanese lover, was fond of dressing in *yukata*, composed haiku, learned tea ceremony, loved bathing in hot-springs, and even took Japanese citizenship in 1893. After reading the article, I contacted its authors with a view to preparing a story about Black for the papers which I served in Australia. Morioka and Sasaki invited me to the first-ever ceremony to commemorate Henry Black at the family grave in Yokohama Foreigners' Cemetery on 19 September 1983, the anniversary of his death. At their request, I helped proof-read the plaque, which was unveiled at the ceremony. It reads:

*Henry James Black (1858–1923)*

*Australian-born rakugoka storyteller, eldest son of James R Black. First performance in Yokohama, 1876. Member of Sanyu School. Stage name Kairakutei Black. Became naturalised Japanese in 1891. Performed rakugo and told popular Western stories throughout Japan. 1903/04 recorded rakugo and naniwabushi narrations, the first records ever made in Japan.*

My story on Black appeared in several



Front cover of Ian McArthur's book *In Search of Kairakutei Black*.

Australian newspapers soon after that. But the fascination continued. On return to Australia, I followed this up at the Harold S Williams Collection in the Australian National Library, where I located notes and letters

regarding Henry Black. One, a letter from O M Poole, an American friend of Williams, recalls Black's performance at a 'smoking concert', probably for the Yokohama expatriate community, in which he 'held the audience spellbound' with his 'marvelous mimicry' of the cries of street vendors.

On subsequent stays in Japan, I visited places which Black also visited. These included the village of Hirayu in Gifu Prefecture, and the town of Ikaho in Gunma Prefecture, both hot-spring resorts in mountainous areas. Professional

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## Henry Black and Japan

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storytellers used to spend their summers in such resorts entertaining travellers at inns in return for cheap or free accommodation. Black was fond of taking the waters at such places. The information I found prompted me to write a Japanese-language book about Black to tell Japanese people more about this unusual Australian who had contributed to their culture. As I dug deeper, I learned more about Black. His speeches to participants in the pro-democracy movement in 1879 dealt with topics such as prison reform, abolition of prostitution, criminal codes, cholera prevention, juries, the jail system, the use of evidence in court trials, and the relationship between citizens and their government.

In the 1880s and 1890s, Black adapted stories by British and French writers, including Charles Dickens (*Oliver Twist*), Mary Braddon (*Her Last Appearance* and *Flower and Weed*), and Fortuné de Boisgobey (*Le Crime de l'Omnibus*). His stories were serialised in newspapers whose editors were associated with the pro-democracy movement. They portrayed examples of modernity which many Meiji-era citizens of Japan admired and debated. They presented audiences with novel examples of the use of science to expose criminals, new ways for men and women to relate to each other, and warnings about the negative social impact of the Industrial Revolution.

Through this research, I began to develop a respect for Black's attempts to engage in the debate over reform in spite of the opposition from his brother and sister who shunned him for performing in the theatre. Black had felt perfectly at home in Japan. He had also devoted himself to the Meiji-era cause of bringing 'civilisation and enlightenment' to the nation.

As I wrote my book, I also began to better appreciate the art of *rakugo*. As a student in Japan in the 1970s, I had attended a *rakugo* performance, but found it difficult to appreciate as I had not comprehended the references to characters or the puns which the storyteller used. But through Black, my curiosity was piqued. I found that *rakugo* was a good way to improve my understanding of Japanese language,

history, and culture. Its wide-ranging repertoire is replete with amusing caricatures of venal merchants, stupid samurai, proud geisha, cuckolded accountants, animals who turn into humans, and humans who visit hell and encounter eccentric goblins. More modern tales deal with contemporary issues as *rakugoka* continue to update the repertoire.



Ian McArthur performing the *rakugo* story 'Father and son drink sake'.

*Rakugo* storytellers typically deliver the tales while kneeling on a cushion known as a *zabuton*. Only

the top half of the body moves. Props are limited to a small *tenugui* (face-towel) which doubles as a wallet or tobacco pouch, and a fan which can double as a sake cup, sword, or oar for a boat.

Soon after my book was published by Kodansha, the film director Fujii Tomonari asked me to play the role of Black in a stage play adapted from my book. The script called for me to memorise the classic *rakugo* tale *Father and son drink sake*. Part of the skill of the *rakugoka* is to impersonate not one, but two and sometimes three people, on the stage. This is achieved by changing the direction of the storyteller's gaze for each character in the dialogue. I found the instant switching between characters one of the more difficult things to master when memorising my delivery of the tale. It was difficult to remember my dialogue during the play, so I was grateful to my wife who waited in the wings during each performance to remind me which side of the stage to enter from for each scene.

I have found *rakugo* a useful tool in the teaching of Japanese language and social history. Dialogue in *rakugo* stories reflects the social conditions of the era portrayed. As a language teaching tool, students can memorise short versions of the tales and in the process familiarise themselves with the many puns, word-plays and registers used to portray such things as the social interaction between a haughty samurai

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## Henry Black and Japan

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and a lowly peasant. Contact with *rakugo* even inspired one of my students to proceed to a doctoral thesis dealing with the genre of music played in *yose*.



*Kabuki poster (Faculty of Asian Studies, ANU)*

has led me into other areas of research.

I am working on two books about Black. One is a biography. The other is a work of historical fiction. But there is life after Black. Writing a doctoral thesis about his contribution to the Meiji reform debate

My current focus is on applying the concept of intertextuality to examine the roles of media such as oral storytelling, kabuki, newspapers and adaptive translation of 19th century European sensation fiction in the transmission of European notions of modernity to Meiji-era Japan. Given my background in journalism, I have found that the methodologies used are also applicable to the study of the dissemination of ideas to and from present-day Japan.



*Dr Ian McArthur is an Honorary Associate of the Department of Japanese Studies in the School of Languages and Cultures at The University of Sydney. In 2009, he was a recipient of the third Inoue Yasushi Award*

*presented annually to a researcher in Australia for outstanding research in Japanese literature in Australia. The award was for his paper, 'Narrating the Law in Japan—Rakugo in the Meiji Law Reform Debate', in the [Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies](#).*

## Promoting manga

Monash University's [Manga Library](#) provides a unique environment in which Japanese popular culture can be easily accessed. The library is run by local and international students. CATHY SELL talks about the library's work.

*What is manga?*

'Manga' is the Japanese word for the medium we generally refer to in English as comics and graphic novels. It differs from western comics, not only in language and culture of origin, but also in aesthetic norms, storytelling techniques and publication format.

*What led to the setting up of the Manga Library and cafe?*

The Manga Library was established in November 2002 as part of Monash University's Japanese Studies Centre to cater to both the needs of education and entertainment through the incorporation of the popular Japanese culture of Manga. Almost all of the books in the library's collection are donations from individuals, as well as some large-scale donations from several Japanese universities and the Japan Foundation.

*What does the library offer?*

The library has over 7 000 books in its collection, including approximately 700 in English. It is free to stay and read, and for a membership fee the manga can also be borrowed out. The library also holds cultural and manga related events throughout the year. Weekly events include the [Manga Translation Workshop](#) and Manga Drawing Circle.

*What's in the Manga collection?*

The collection spans all genres, from *shōjo* (girls) and *shōnen* (boys) manga, to *seinen* (young adults) manga and *gekiga* (pictorial dramas).

*Outside of the university, who are your most regular users?*

Our most common visitors who are not from Monash are families with young children

*Cathy Sell is manager of the Japanese Studies Centre Manga Library.*

# China's aid policy— challenging existing practices

*With China significantly increasing its foreign aid presence around the world, PHILIPPA BRANT asks whether its experience with development has anything to offer other countries.*

In recent years, China has significantly increased its foreign aid presence in many developing countries. At the same time, the current Western-derived development system has become increasingly complex and there is a strong necessity for reform.

Does China's own experience with development have anything to offer other countries? Will Chinese development assistance provide new ways of thinking about aid and development? Will China repeat the mistakes of the West?

My PhD research is delving into these issues. In examining Chinese development assistance I am particularly interested in whether China will fundamentally challenge the existing aid norms and practices—the international aid regime—and if so, what effect it might have on developing countries, as well as on the aid policies and practices of so-called traditional donors.

I am using my Prime Minister's Australia Asia Endeavour Award to spend a year in Beijing, and am currently a 'visiting expert' in the research division of China's International Poverty Reduction Centre in China (IPRCC). IPRCC is an institute linked to the Chinese Government and was jointly established by China and the United Nations in 2005 with the objective of making contributions to global poverty alleviation and social development.

Working together with China to help respond to the current (and future) problems facing the world is vital. China's development model and foreign aid approach is unique and has much to offer other developing countries. But other

countries like Australia can also share knowledge and experience that will strengthen China's responses to development issues.

During my time at IPRCC, I will be contributing my skills and knowledge to some of the centre's research projects, and will also be furthering my understanding of China's own development experiences and the lessons they may have for other developing countries.

The opportunity to work with Chinese experts, policymakers, and international development agencies in Beijing is invaluable, both academically and professionally. Being exposed to Chinese approaches, understandings and responses to issues of aid and development will enable deeper insight into these (often contentious) issues.

China's development model and foreign aid approach is unique and has much to offer other developing countries.

I have found that dealing with 'data' on Chinese aid can be challenging, not least because China has a different understanding of 'aid', and prefers not to be called a 'donor'. While some aid figures can be measured directly against OECD Development Assistance Committee definitions, the Chinese tend not to treat 'aid' as separate from other forms of engagement in a country; 'development assistance' is viewed more holistically.

Prior to receiving the PM's Endeavour Award, I spent a few months in 2009 in the South Pacific, specifically Fiji and Papua New Guinea, conducting fieldwork about Chinese aid in the region. The work included discussions with all of the major bilateral and multilateral donors, government officials, and civil society, as well as the Chinese themselves.

I was also lucky enough to be able to visit Chinese aid and investment projects, such as the Nadarivatu hydrodam in Fiji and the Ramu nickel mine in Papua New Guinea, to get a sense of things. The PM's Award has given me the opportunity to now examine these issues from the Chinese

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## China's aid policy

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perspective. I had travelled to China many times, including for my Honours thesis, but before starting my Award in April this year I had never spent more than a month in China at any one time.

Working within a Chinese Government organisation is enabling me to see how the Chinese approach development and aid, and how they grapple with its complexities. It is also proving to be a valuable lesson in how to work in an educational and intellectual situation quite different to that in Australia.

In recent years there has been an increased call from other donors for China to 'play by the rules' in providing development assistance. There is an emphasis on drawing China in—a socialisation process to encourage China to integrate into existing donor coordination mechanisms and align its aid to the established aid norms and practices.

Through my research so far I have found that developing countries are often overwhelmed by the complexities of different donors' processes. Consequently, calls for greater harmonisation and coordination are highly desired.

There is a legitimate concern, however, that this process may serve to further marginalise developing countries' voices and restrict their ability to determine their own development priorities and objectives. For many, China is appealing because it 'broadens the menu of options'

Through my research I hope to shed some light onto how Chinese and Western donors are responding to each other, negotiating the changing aid dynamics and responding to concerns from other developing countries and communities.

During my time in Beijing I'm really interested in seeing which elements of the Western aid system China wants to subscribe to, and where divergences may occur and why. There's a real sense at IPRCC of wanting to learn about the successes and challenges of the international aid experience in different

countries to identify where China may have something valuable to offer.'

*'Developing countries are often overwhelmed by the complexities of different donors' processes.'*

IPRCC itself is a site of collaboration between scholars and officials, representatives from other donor agencies, and governments, and its key aims also include exchanging experience and strengthening international collaboration.

In addition to my research I am also involved in some of the South–South Cooperation training programs and the China-DAC Study Group within the IPRCC. It is the opportunity to experience programs like these that is no doubt one of the real benefits of the PM's Endeavour Award.

The Award also provides the opportunity to gain professional experience, as well as academic exchange. China is in the unique situation of being a valuable provider of development assistance to other countries, while also facing significant development challenges itself.

As part of my Award, I am intending to undertake a work placement with an international development agency or Chinese NGO in Beijing. During my time in Beijing, I am also embracing the challenge of improving my Chinese language skills—something I see as a crucial not just for my work but also in deepening my understanding of Chinese culture, politics and everyday life.

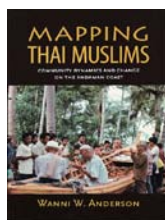
I hope my research findings, along with the connections I am making in China, will contribute to increasing the ties between China, Australia and other countries, particularly in relation to foreign aid and development issues.



*Philippa Brant is a 2010 winner of the Prime Minister's Australia Asia Endeavour Award and is a PhD Candidate in the School of Social & Political Sciences at The University of Melbourne.*

## New books on Asia

From the [AsiaBookroom](#)



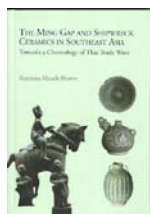
**Mapping Thai Muslims. Community Dynamics and Change on the Andaman Coast.** By Wann W Anderson. Paperback. 185pp. Silkworm Books. \$38.95.

This longitudinal, anthropological study challenges the single, dominant narrative of Muslim discourse in Thailand. It focuses on Thai Muslims in the Nipa Island community on the Andaman coast, whose economic and education aspirations, social relationships, and ethnic identity have been significantly altered through globalisation and the religio-political unrest on the southeastern coast of Thailand.

Nipa islanders seek to define themselves on their own terms as both Thai and Muslim. Their Muslim identity is uniquely interwoven with the particularities of time, locality, and specific ethnocultural history that links them to the Andaman coast.

Mapping Thai Muslims also traces Muslim socioreligious changes from two centuries ago to the 1980s, and through to the present. The ongoing redrawing of Islamic religiosity allows unique insight into Nipa islanders as local actors and agents with their own individual viewpoints and consequent life decisions.

Based as it is on extensive fieldwork, this study will be of great appeal to anthropologists, historians, Southeast Asian and Asian scholars, and readers interested in Islam and Muslim identity.



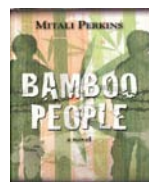
**Ming Gap and Shipwreck Ceramics in Southeast Asia. Towards a Chronology of Thai Trade Ware.** By Roxanna Maude Brown. Hardback. 207pp. Siam Society. \$99

Shipwrecks discovered throughout Southeast Asia and the precious cargoes they contain represent invaluable information for the study of international trade networks. However, these treasure troves of Thai, Vietnamese and Chinese ceramics, have up until this point, not been

systematically studied, and rarely published. This book addresses this as the author traces the development and fluctuations of the international ceramic trade between China and Southeast Asia, focusing specifically on the 14th–15th centuries, a period known in ceramic scholarship as the Ming Gap.

The term Ming Gap arose to describe the ban placed on the export of Chinese ceramics by the Ming Dynasty. The author illustrates how, as a result, Southeast Asian ceramics began to fill this void and for over a century became the dominant ceramic trade ware throughout the region.

Analysing over 120 shipwrecks, the author for the first time proposes a chronology of ceramic production. She places Thai ceramics into five chronological periods and discusses issues such as the relationship between Sukhothai and Sawankhalok kilns, the discovery of exported Burmese celadon wares and the location of Vietnamese production sites for ceramic exports.



**Bamboo People. A Novel.** By Mitali Perkins. 272pp. Charlesbridge Publishing. 2010. \$24.95

It is very unusual to find young adult fiction that is set in Burma. This coming-of-age young adult novel takes place against the political and military backdrop of modern-day Burma.

Narrated by two teenage boys on opposing sides of the conflict between the Burmese government and the Karenni, one of the many ethnic minorities in *Burma*, *Bamboo People* explores the nature of violence, power, and prejudice as seen through the eyes of child soldiers.

### NEW BOOKS FROM THE ASAA SERIES

[Southeast Asia Series](#)  
[Women in Asia Series](#)

Books can be ordered through [Asia Bookroom](#).

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## New books on Asia

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**Than Shwe: Unmasking Burma's Tyrant.** By Benedict Rogers. Paperback. 256pp. Silkworm Books, 2010. \$45.95.

Than Shwe is one of the world's most notorious dictators, presiding over a military regime that persists in repressing and brutalising its own people. Until now, his story has not been told.

The book provides the first-ever account of Than Shwe's journey from postal clerk to dictator, analysing his rise through the ranks of the army, his training in psychological warfare, his belief in astrology, his elimination of rivals and ruthless suppression of dissent.

Drawing on the insights of Burma Army defectors, international diplomats, and others, Rogers provides a compelling account of the reclusive and xenophobic character of Than Shwe, and life in Burma under his rule.



**Comprehensive Indonesian-English Dictionary. Second Edition with CD.** By Alan M Stevens and A Ed Schmidgall-Tellings. 1103pp, with CD. Ohio

University Press, 2010. \$170.

The second edition this dictionary—based on five years of research—brings the highly successful first edition up to date with hundreds of new entries in business, law, and finance, as well as specialised terminology in the fields of technology, engineering, mining, and construction.

This new edition also comes with a CD-ROM and offers readers the most current information on names of political parties, acronyms for government offices, Islamic terms, colloquial pronunciations and abbreviated forms used in blogs and emails.

## *Islam and economy—proposals sought for SE Asia conference*

Proposals are being sought for papers to be presented at the special joint conference of the Association for Asian Studies and the International Convention of Asia Scholars, to be held in Hawaii from 31 March to 3 April 3.

Patricia Sloane-White, Department of Anthropology, University of Delaware, is organising a panel that will explore the connection between piety and economic practice and capital accumulation in contemporary Muslim experience in Southeast Asia.

The panel will explore such topics as:

- corporate ties and fundraising activities of Muslim NGOs and politically oriented groups and communities
- key actors in commercial ventures and firms in the Islamic or halal economy
- Muslim producers and consumers; capitalisation commercial ventures and firms
- the influence of shariah on corporate practice and decision-making
- identity formation and belief among Muslim entrepreneurs and philanthropists
- notions of Islamic 'corporate social responsibility', social justice, and Islamic sustainability in Islamic enterprise
- profit, wealth, and corporate and personal zakat
- Islam in the workday and its role in workplace relations
- the gendered workplace
- global networks and alliances of Muslim business leaders.

Researchers are invited to contact Dr Sloane-White to discuss research they may like to present or to offer suggestions for other avenues to explore—and to send a 250-word proposal, including your name, address, email, and institutional affiliation by 15 July 210.

## Job websites

These sites offer career prospects for graduates and postgraduate in Asian Studies. If you know of other useful sites advertising jobs for postgraduates in Asian Studies, please send them to [the editor](#).

[www.jobs.ac.uk](http://www.jobs.ac.uk) advertises worldwide academic posts.

<http://isanet.ccit.arizona.edu/employment.html> is a free-to-access website run by the International Studies Association.

[www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int) is a free service run by the United Nations to recruit for NGO jobs.

[www.aboutus.org/DevelopmentEx.com](http://www.aboutus.org/DevelopmentEx.com) has a paid subscription service providing access to jobs worldwide in the international development industry.

<http://h-net.org/jobs> is a US-based site with a worldwide scope. Asia-related jobs (mostly academic) come up most weeks.

[www.aasianst.org](http://www.aasianst.org) is the website of the Association for Asian Studies. New job listings are posted on the first and third Monday of each month. You must be a current AAS member to view job listings.

[www.timeshighereducation.co.uk](http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk) The *Times Higher Education Supplement*.

[www.comminet.com](http://www.comminet.com) is the site of The Communication Initiative Network. It includes listings of jobs, consultants, requests for proposals, events, trainings, and books, journals, and videos for sale related to all development issues and strategies. You can view all posts on these pages without registering, but will need to register to post your items.

## Diary Notes

**LIVING HISTORIES: THE PERSONAL FACE OF THE AUSTRALIA—JAPAN RELATIONSHIP, lecture, Sydney, 2 July 2010.** This lecture is the last in a series of six organised by the Japan Foundation, Sydney, addressing the topic of people from Japan and Australia who have played roles in shaping the bilateral relationship since its inception. This lecture by Dr Yuriko Yamanouchi is on 'Japanese Migrants and Indigenous Australians'. Venue: Multipurpose Room, the Japan Foundation, Level 1 Chifley Plaza, 2 Chifley Square, Sydney. Admission free. Bookings Essential. [RSVP](#) or phone 02 8239 0055. For further details contact Susan Wake 02 8239 0055, fax 02 9222 2168.

**ASAA BIENNIAL CONFERENCE, Adelaide, 6–8 July 2010.** The 18th Biennial Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia will be held at the University of Adelaide. Its theme is 'Asia: Crisis and Opportunity'. See the [conference website](#).

**DISPLACEMENT, DIVISION AND RENEWAL conference, Sarawak, Malaysia, 8–9 July 2010.** Organised by the Curtin University Research Unit for the Study of Societies in Change, in conjunction with Curtin University in Sarawak, the conference will be held at Miri, Sarawak, as a sequel to the conference 'Crossing Borders', held in Sarawak in 2007. See [website](#) for further information.

**CHINA UPDATE 2010: Canberra, 14 July 2010.** Hosted by the Rio Tinto–ANU China Partnership, between the China Economy Program in the Crawford School and Rio Tinto Australia, this is an annual event at which world leading experts present the latest research on the Chinese economy. Venue: HC Coombs Lecture Theatre, ANU. Further information from the [website](#). Enquiries: Ligang Song on 02 6125 3315, Dominic Meagher on 6125 3831.

**INDONESIA UPDATE 2010, ANU, Canberra, 24–25 September 2010** (see page 12).

## Contributing to Asian Currents

Contributions, commentary and responses on any area of Asian Studies are welcome and should be emailed to the [editor](#). The general length of contributions is between 1000–1500 words. As *Asian Currents* is intended for scholars and general readers, please avoid technical language and keep references and notes to a minimum.

## About the ASAA

The Asian Studies Association of Australia (ASAA) promotes the study of Asian languages, societies, cultures, and politics in Australia, supports teaching and research in Asian studies and works towards an understanding of Asia in the community at large. It publishes the *Asian Studies Review* journal and holds a biennial conference. The ASAA believes there is an urgent need to develop a strategy to preserve, renew and extend Australian expertise about Asia. It has called on the government to show national leadership in promoting Australia's Asia knowledge and skills. See [Maximising Australia's Asia knowledge: repositioning and renewal of a national asset](#).

*Asian Currents* is published by the ASAA and edited by Allan Sharp. The editorial board consists of Kathryn Robinson, ASAA President; Michele Ford, ASAA Secretary; Mina Roces, ASAA Publications officer; and Lenore Lyons, ASAA Treasurer.