Independence and after in Southeast Asia: Old and new interpretations

APRU School of Humanities conference 14-15 August 2007, Penang, Malaysia

2007 marks the 50th anniversary of Merdeka (independence) for Malaysia. Malaysia attained political independence from British colonial rule in August 1957 through constitutional means. This led to a smooth handing over of power to Tun Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj - the prime minister and architect of Merdeka. Other countries in the region endured years of conflict and bloodshed before independence from colonial rule was achieved, the most recent being Timor Leste in 2002. The notable exception is Thailand which escaped the shackles of colonial domina-
tion by remaining the only independent, sovereign nation-state in Southeast Asia.

The discourse of nations achieving politi-
cal independence and the characterisation of the years that followed as the ‘postco-
lonial’ period has long been a mantra of the academic community in studies of South-
east Asia, particularly in the disciplines of history, political science, economics, liter-
ary and language, anthropology, and sociology. The road to independence was often long and arduous. The years follow-
ning the attainment of national sovereignty were equally troublesome with seemingly insurmountable challenges. Whilst Malaya-
 sia faced the sensitive issue of managing race relations, the Philippines struggled with a leftist insurgency, Thailand ‘seen-
waved’ with weak civilian governments and military juntas. Meanwhile Myan-
mar was secluded under a military dic-
tatorship, and Cambodia experienced the nightmare following the establishment of a genocidal regime. The ups and downs of nation-building, the maintenance of political stability and economic sustain-
ability are just some of the major issues that faced post-independent nation-states of Southeast Asia.

For more information visit www.usm.my/ APRU/index.html or contact shakila@usm.my

The political economy of growth, inequality and conflict

ISAS 3rd International Conference on South Asia 29–30 November 2007, Singapore

Economic, social and regional inequalities constitute major sources of political fric-
tion and conflict in the region. While the rapid socio-economic and political tran-
sitions underway throughout South Asia, there is pressing need to research inter-
relationships among economic growth and inequality and conflict and to draw out their implications for public policy. The 3rd International Conference on South Asia: The Discourse of South Asia - inequality, conflict, and democracy was held at the Hotel Dynasty and discussing results of fresh research on this vital subject, for comparing and learning from national experiences within the region and for promoting the collab-
oration among scholars of the region.

Under the broad rubric of Political Econ-
omy of Growth, Inequality and Conflict, top-
ics for discussion will include:

- Economic reforms and inequality trends: the politics of measurement and percep-
tion
- Growth and inequality under reforms: political causes and consequences
- Political-Economic institutions of gov-

ernance and growth
- Social and regional inequalities: does faster growth help of hurt?
- Social policies for redressing social ine-
quity: the politics of principles and practices
- What sustains redistribution under unequilising growth: politics or eco-

nomics?

The theme demands trespassing across disciplinary boundaries and so ISA extends a special invitation to scholars in economics, sociology, anthropology, political science and geography.

* probable dates for the conference.

For more information about ISAS and updates on the conference visit www.isas.nus.sg

Or contact the organising committee:
Institute of South Asian Studies
45A Tower Block,
Bukit Timah Road 279128
Singapore

For more information please contact web-
site http://www.isasconf.uc.ch

The 10th International Conference on Thai-
Studies
The Thai Khadi Research Institute
Thammasat University
Bangkok 10500, THAILAND
Tel: 665-631501-2 Ext 22
Fax: 662-226112

China: Evolution or revolution?

British Association for Chinese Studies Annual Conference
6-7 September 2007, Manchester, UK

The British Association for Chinese Stud-
ies (BACS) is pleased to announce that its 2007 Annual Conference will be held in conjunction with the Centre for Chinese Studies at the University of Manchester on 6-7 September 2007. BACS will be joined in Manchester by their sister organisa-
tions, the British Chinese Language Teach-
ing Society, holding their second BLCTS International Symposium.

The conference theme emerged from a ‘China Rising’ discussion. After decades of underestimating China’s contribution to world culture and its place in the world, in the last few years we have witnessed a Zhongguo re ‘China Fever’, certainly in Europe. We have also seen a counter-reac-
tion with some people claiming China is overhyped, China lacks creativity and that the impressive progress China has made in recent years is all down to Western investment and models. What has China’s contribution to world culture been? Does China offer alterna-
tive models? Are we witnessing a para-
digm shift in the 21st century? Is our dis-
cussion of China’s role in capturing the immense complexity and challenge China presents? Are we still trapped in modes of understanding that belong to the past and in discussing the China of today?

This is a question the central theme seeks to address, critically evaluating the claims of both traditional and contempo-
rary China to creativity and originality.

BACS promotes scholarship on all disci-
plines relating to China, both traditional and modern, and including China proper, other Chinese-speaking areas and the diaspora. We welcome papers across the whole spectrum.

The BACS Annual Conference welcomes international and UK based participants, both members and non-members, to offer papers or just attend the conference. There will be distinguished keynote speak-
ers in plenary sessions, specialist workshops and postgraduate student sessions. For further details visit www.bacsuk.org

CESS 2007

Central Eurasian Studies Society
8th Annual Conference
18 - 21 October 2007, Seattle, USA

The 8th annual conference of the Cen-
tral Eurasian Studies Society (CESS) will be held at the University of Washington, hosted by the Ellison Center for Russian, East European and Central Asian Stud-
ies.

The conference aims to raise topics and discussions relating to all aspects of humanities and social science scholar-
ship in Central Eurasia. The geographic domain of Central Eurasia extends from the Black Sea and Iranian Plateau to Mon-
golia and Siberia, including the Caucasus, Crimea, Middle Volga, Afghanistan, Tibet, and Central and Inner Asia. Practitioners and scholars in all humanities and social science disciplines with an interest in Central Eurasia are encouraged to partici-

pate.

There has been a huge growth in interest in the CESS conference as our society has become more established. Over the past three years, attendance has averaged about 500 per year, with dozens of coun-
tries and all major fields of scholarship represented. We expect a similar number to attend in 2007.

For more information please visit:
http://www.georgetown.edu/cess/

Chinese and Central Asian Studies
18 - 21 October 2007, Seattle, USA

For more information please contact:
Alison Dvaidz
Ellison Center for Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies
208 Thompson Hall, Box 35560
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington 98195
USA

The Cold War in Asia
Workshop
Zhejiang University
1-2 November 2007, Hangzhou, China

The United States and Soviet Union carved out their respective spheres of influence at the end of the Second World War. The contest of these two global powers was a matter of ideological conflict, interment with arms races, and regime change rather than direct military confrontation. The invention of nuclear weapons made many believe that the arms race could escalate to another world war. This did not materialise and the contest ended with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991.

The study of the Cold War has flourished in the West as we can see from the works of John Caddis and others. But scholars in the Asia region and around the world have just begun to explore its Asian vari-

ables as archives have slowly become available. Cold War in Asia was far differ-
ent than in Europe because it became a hot war with real conflict in Korea and Vietnam. As Chen Jian has argued, Asia, unlike Europe, was the theatre of the Cold War. The Asian theatre was complex and dynamic as geopolitics and ideological differences were intertwined with history, links and cultural ties. Since Akira Iriye pioneered the field, too few scholars have explored the Cold War in Asia from Asian perspectives and more importantly from “soft” side of this global as well as regional conflict. The goal of this conference is to challenge the con-

ventional wisdom on the Cold War and launch the study of the Cold War in Asia from an Asian perspective first with a conference that will include the following major themes:

- the propaganda and print war, anti-com-

munist and anti-imperialist
- the pung pung and other styles of “soft” diplo-

macy
- the social and material legacy, civilian mobilisation for example
- the ideological war/alliance, the Band-

dung conference for example
- American/Westernisation of Asian popular culture, movies for example
- the continuing Cold War in Asia, contin-

ued American presence in the region

The conference is organised by the Centre for Chinese Studies, University of Man-
chester, East Asian languages and Civil-
isation, Hull University and the School of Humanities, Zhejiang University. For more information, please contact Miss Caterina Dobson. For more information please contact Miss Caterina Dobson.

caterina.dobson@manchester.ac.uk

Announcements

Emotions and East Asian social life
Summer School 3 - 8 September 2007, The Isle of Procida, Naples, Italy

Due to increasing economic and social development across East Asia and more broadly the cross-cultural understanding of emotions is becoming a highly-valued and sought-after subject. Understanding emotions is as important as language in the success of cross-cultural communication. For this reason the University “L’Orienteale” of Naples – an institution with a strong back-

ground in East Asian emotion research has developed a topic-related summer school, the first of its kind in Europe.

Emotions in East Asian Social Life: Theory and Practice will offer an excellent oppor-
tunity for students and professionals to gain expertise in all aspects of East Asian emosion management. The courses, given by an international team of experts, will be invaluable not only for students of East Asian studies, but for anyone interested in improving their intercultural commu-
nication skills.

For further information www.temisti.sanremo.school.it
or contact
Professor Paolo Santangelo: psantangelo@iue.it
or Dr. Daniel Kadar: danielkadar@yahoo.co.uk
Rapid globalization, coupled with economic liberalization and financial deregulation, has opened up the economics of the Asia Pacific region. Increasing wealth generation is heralded as a sign of general personal and national success, while large numbers of people remain marginalized in poor paying and insecure jobs. Young are under extreme pressures in terms of successful education and gaining secure employment. The media glorifies the consumer revolution, and we see increasing use of new technologies, which are changing forever the fabric of work, family life, health and culture in the countries of the Asia Pacific. The region is seemingly now more integrat-
ed, with unprecedented levels of tourism, migration, and economic and cultural linkages. But, are the nations of the region, and their populations, becoming more divided, united or are they fundamentally unchanging over the past two decades? The 8th conference of the Asia Pacific Sociological Association (APSA) aims to explore the various dimensions of the rapid social transformation of the Asian Pacific. Papers that empirically or theoretically address the themes of social transformation, in its diverse forms, are particularly welcome. Deadline for registration: 22 October 2007 Submission of full paper: 22 October 2007

The conference is co-sponsored by the School of Social Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), and the Centre for Asia Pacific Social Transformation Studies (CAPTRANS), University of Wollongong, Australia.

For more information visit www.asiapa-cificsociology.org or contact:
The Secretariat
The 8th Conference of the Asia Pacific Sociological Association
School of Social Sciences
Universiti Sains Malaysia
11800 USM
Penang, Malaysia

Tel: 604 6533969
Fax: 604 6570918
E-mail: dean_ssc@usm.my

Call for Papers
Conference

Aalto University, Helsinki
Northwestern University, Evanston
University of British Columbia, Vancouver

Anthropology of Elites: Methodological and Theoretical Challenges
24-25 January 2008
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

How do structures of power shape our society? This question lies at the core of many of the social sciences. Within anthropology, an understanding of power is central to many theories; however, the study of those groups which hold significant power (i.e. elites) is far less central within the discipline. Our conference explores ethnographical approaches to studying elites.

An important book that deals with many of these issues is Elite Cultures: Anthropological Perspectives (Routledge, 2002), edited by Cris Shore and Stephen Nugent. This collection contains several highly relevant methodological and theoretical interests and interesting ethnographic examples. However, there has been little occasion for in-depth discussion on the matters raised in Shore and Nugent’s book since. Therefore, to further our ethnographic knowledge and deepen methodological and theoretical debates on elites we wish to create a platform of discussion in the form of the conference: Anthropology of Elites: Methodological and Theoretical Challenges. The conference will address the following themes:

1) Methodological questions regarding the study and ethnographies of elites. As Shore states, elites do not always recognise themselves as elites. It is a term of reference rather than self-reference (Shore 2002: 3). How, therefore, do we deal with this problem when studying elites? Moreover, elites are allegedly difficult to research. What are the different experiences regarding this matter? Finally, in anthropology the main research method is ethnographic fieldwork based on intensive participant observation, something that is often not feasible in the study of elite groups. How can we tackle these methodological shortcomings? Does anthropology have the right tools for studying elites? And furthermore, what ethical questions arise when studying elites?

2) What can the anthropology of elites contribute to elite studies in general? Shore notes that elites have been of much concern to sociologists, historians and political scientists, but anthropologists have hardly studied them at all (ibid: 2002: 10). However, an anthropological approach is important for understanding elites from within. In order to get a better grip of power structures in socie-
ties we have to understand the dynamic of elite cultures, and how elites employ their influence and power. Siebold would like to pursue this debate at the conference by focusing on ethnographies of elites. Further, our aim is to deal with this mat-
ter in a debate with other social scientists involved in studying elites, in order to stimulate a multi-disciplinary approach in the study of elites.

3) What can ethnographies of elites contribute to anthropology in general? Shore argues that studying elites ‘provides a useful focus for addressing important anthropological and sociological concerns including language and power; leadership and authority; status and hierarchy; ideology and consciousness; social identities and boundary-mainte-
nance; power relations; social structure and social change’ (ibid 2002: 9). One of the most renowned ethnographies of elites Abner Cohen’s Politics of Elite Cul-
ture (University of California Press, 1983), for instance, addresses a range of these concerns. However, since the publication of Cohen’s work there have been developments, such as increasing modernisation, globalisation and transnationalism that have become core in anthropological research. Thus, we would like to establish what the variety of recent ethnographies of elites might contribute to understanding how elite studies relate to larger anthropological debates.

Important dates:
• 15 September 2007: deadline for sub-
mission of abstracts (max. 400 words)
  including CV of author(s) (max. 100 words)
• 15 November 2007: deadline for submis-
sion of papers (max. 8,000 words)
Abstracts and papers should be written in English.

Please forward your submission to:
The organising committee: Professor Dr. Jan Abbink, Dr. Sandra Evers, Tijo Sal-
verda
E-mail: t.salverda@fsw.vu.nl
Any further queries or requests for infor-
mation on the conference should be sent to the above e-mail address.

Rising China in the age of globalisation
International Conference of the UCD Confucius Institute for Ireland /
Irish Institute for Chinese Studies
16-18 August 2007, Dublin

China’s rapid growth over the last quarter of a century has propelled it to become the world’s fourth largest economy in 2006 and potentially it’s largest in the foresee-
able future. This development has seen China’s 1.3 billion people begin a process of integration into the global economy and become a major driving force in the process of globalisation, particularly since joining the World Trade Organisation in 2001. There has been increasing interest and speculation as to the rising China and its cultural, social, political and legal prac-
tices today which have to be recognised and reconsidered within the context of globalisation.

This two day conference will be co-organ-
ised by University College Dublin and Ren-
nin University of China and sponsored by the
Office of Chinese Language Council Inter-
national (Hanban).

The conference aims to provide a forum for researchers, academics, practitioners and government officials and business executives to share up-to-date findings and developments in the fields of Chinese culture and language, Chinese economy and business, and the Chinese political and legal system of globalisation.

For more information: www.ucd.ie/china
elva@conferencepartners.ie