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Newsletter No. 29, May 2014

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1 Regional Updates

1.1 Massey University

Dr. Rosemary Haddon (Chinese, School of Humanities) reported on changes in the Chinese programme at Massey. There has been an increase in the enrolments in the Chinese papers on the Albany campus, Auckland. As a result, Dr. Michael (Shouji) Li (previously, tutor in Chinese, Albany) has been made a full-time lecturer. At the end of April, the Chinese programme on the Palmerston North campus welcomed Lanhui Ying (MA Beijing Languages University), a new teacher sent by Hanban (Chinese National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language) who is assisting in various ways with the teaching programme. The Confucius Institute, Victoria University of Wellington, undertook the arrangements for her two-year appointment.

1.2 University of Auckland

Professor Mark R. Mullins (Professor of Japanese Studies, School of Cultures, Languages and Linguistics & Director, Japan Studies Centre) reported that an international conference will be hosted at the University of Auckland on 26-27 July 2014. The conference is entitled Empire of Religions: Exploring Belief and Practice in Imperial Japan and Colonial Korea. (See attached pdf. conference notice.)

1.3 University of Canterbury

Dr. Jane Buckingham (School of Humanities and Creative Arts; History) submitted a final call for papers for the joint Macmillan Brown Research Centre and New Zealand South Asia Centre workshop to be held on 5 June.

CALL for PAPERS

New Zealand South Asia Centre/Macmillan Brown Centre
University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand
Joint Workshop

Health, Labour and Migration in the 19-20th century South Pacific

Date: 5 June 2014

Location: Room 208, Macmillan Brown Centre, University of Canterbury,
Christchurch, NZ.

From the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century the high price of sugar drove the expansion of plantation agriculture into the Australian Tropical north and the West coast of Viti Levu, Fiji. The Colonial Sugar Refinery dominated the manufacture of sugar and the management of labour in the Pacific region, supporting colonialism in Fiji with revenue flow, management of immigration and control of labour.

This workshop focuses on issues of labour, health and citizenship in the South Pacific region. Existing research into the experience of Indian indentured labour migration to plantations on the Pacific island of Fiji has discussed morbidity and mortality on the sea voyages from Indian ports to the Fijian plantations. There has also been some investigation of the causes of death on plantations. However there is no systematic analysis of health and disability as aspects of plantation experience and of disease as a factor

in discourses of exclusion within the plantation communities themselves. Similarly research into the movement of Pacific laborers to the sugar plantations of Australia has tended to neglect health and stigmatization of disease as elements in both the well-being of plantation workers and in the configuration of their exclusion from Australian society. This workshop brings a medical history perspective to the Pacific experience of labour migration. It encourages exploration of health and disability as aspects of indentured and laboring experience and argues that disease, particularly stigmatizing diseases such as leprosy, contributed to the marking of labouring populations as excluded from community and citizenship both within plantations and in the emerging political cultures of Australia and Fiji. The core papers presented will situate the history of migration and labour in the South Pacific within the broader perspective of indenture and plantation history. Other papers will then take up moments in the history of Indian and Pacific labourers' experience to explore the interconnections of health migration and labour in the formation of new communities in new lands. Publication of selected workshop papers as an edited book or special issue is planned.

Papers are invited relating to the themes:

- 'A new type of slavery? Plantation labour in global perspective
- Identity and citizenship
- Migration and community in the South Pacific
- Health, indenture and identity in the South Pacific
- Gender, health and labour migration in the South Pacific

Post-Graduate students are particularly encouraged to contribute.

Confirmed participants include:

Professor Brij Lal, College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University, Canberra

Dr Rajsekhar Basu, History, University of Kolkatta, Kolkatta

Dr Jo Robertson, University of Queensland, Brisbane

Professor Biswamoy Patti, Associate Professor, History, University of Delhi, New Delhi

Katherine Foi, MA, History, University of the South Pacific, Suva

Dr Jane Buckingham, History and New Zealand South Asia Centre, University of Canterbury, Christchurch

Dr Gwen Parsons, History, University of Canterbury, Christchurch

Scholars interested in contributing to the workshop and/or a future publication, please send a 200 word abstract and short CV by 30 May 2014 to

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Dr. Piers Locke (Department of Sociology and Anthropology & Co-Director New Zealand South Asia Centre) submitted a recent opinion piece he wrote for Academic Freedom Aotearoa. The piece concerns the legal case to ban Wendy Doniger's book *The Hindus: An Alternate History*. The article, which is entitled *Religion, Scholarship and Censorship in India*, can be accessed at this link:

<http://academicfreedom.kiwi.nz/2014/04/religion-scholarship-censorship/>

1.4 Victoria University of Wellington

Professor Sekhar Bandyopadhyay (Director, New Zealand India Research Institute, VUW) submitted the following report on the NZIRI activities.

In March, the NZIRI welcomed Mr Jawhar Sircar, CEO of Prasar Bharati, India's national public service broadcaster. Mr Sircar gave a public lecture in Wellington at Victoria University on "India's Media Revolution: Myth and Reality", in particular highlighting the impact of the country's media expansion on Indian politics. Mr Sircar also spoke at the University of Auckland. In May, the NZIRI in conjunction with the VUW History Department received Associate Professor Devleena Ghosh (UTS), who presented on Australian and Indian individual and personal connections in a seminar entitled "Affective Politics Beyond the Nation: Komalam and Ronald Craig." The NZIRI and the VUW History Department subsequently co-hosted the one-day symposium "Fast History, Slow Reading: He Pukapuka Tatau Tenei." This symposium on Maori, Pacific and Indian texts was well-attended and successfully brought together scholars with diverse interests. The NZIRI is proud to have launched its first electronic newsletter earlier this month, and is pleased to report on its Facebook page's success in providing a forum for lively discussion on various intellectual and professional issues.

The NZIRI has a number of upcoming events planned at Victoria University of Wellington. Professor Kirin Narayan (ANU) will hold a seminar in the School of Social and Cultural Studies on 28 May on "Everyday Creativity and Well-Being: Women's Sung Mythologies in the Western Himalayas", followed by an Ethnographic Writing Workshop on 29 May. On 4 June, Dr Harshan Kumarasingham, Smuts Fellow in Commonwealth Studies at the University of Cambridge and Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, will deliver a seminar talk entitled "Eastminster: Decolonisation and State-Building in Asia" in the School of Political Science and International Relations. On 16 and 17 June, the NZIRI in collaboration with a Marsden Project will hold a workshop on the "Long history of Partition in eastern India". Prominent India scholars from New Zealand, Australia and India will present papers. On 18 June, Professor Ranabir Samaddar, MCRG, India, will give a lecture on "The Change and the New Government in Delhi - A Paradigm Shift?" And on 22 July, Professor Sumit Ganguly, Indiana University, will deliver a public lecture entitled "Prospects and constraints on India's rise and its implications for the Asia-

Pacific region”. Professor Ganguly will also give a talk at Otago University. Professors Narayan and Samaddar will also speak at Massey University, respectively on 26 May and 20 June. Professor Ganguly will visit the University of Otago, date and topic to be announced.

Peter Harris (New Zealand Contemporary China Research Centre) has taken over as Acting Director of the New Zealand Contemporary China Research Centre, based at Victoria University of Wellington. Apart from VUW the Centre has five University Members (the Universities of Auckland, Waikato, Otago and Canterbury and the Auckland University of Technology), with an Associate Director from each of them. The founding Director of the Centre, Professor Huang Xiaoming, stepped down from his assignment at the Centre in March so as to concentrate on writing and research. A search is under way for a new permanent Director, who is expected to be appointed within the next two or three months. Peter reported on the upcoming one-day conference.

The Centre's next major event will be its annual Wellington Conference on Contemporary China. This year's one-day conference, to be held on 2 July 2014 in the Hunter Building of Victoria University of Wellington, will be on China's November 2013 Third Plenum and subsequent developments. It will be entitled 'The Third Plenum - Policy Prospects for China, New Zealand and the World' It will bring together a group of accomplished heads of China Centres, scholars and professionals from the US, China, Australia and New Zealand. These will include David Shambaugh (George Washington University), Kerry Brown (University of Sydney), Christine Wong (University of Melbourne), Jonathan Unger (ANU), Anita Chan (ANU), Cai Fang (CASS Institute of Demography), Zhai Kun (CICIR Beijing), Liu Li-gang and Cameron Bagrie (Chief Economists, ANZ China and New Zealand), Marc Lanteigne (VUW) and Stephen Noakes (University of Auckland). Others participating as chairs or commentators are expected to include Paul Clark (University of Auckland), Anne-Marie Brady (University of Canterbury), Rob Ayson (Victoria University of Wellington) and John McKinnon (Asia New Zealand Foundation). Registration and other details can be found on the Centre's website <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/chinaresearchcentre/>

Professor Philip Morrison (School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences) has been undertaking research in Sarawak, Malaysia, for several decades. He submitted the following item on behalf of his Ph.D student who is a staff member in Social Science at the Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Kuching. The student's PhD study is being funded by a Malaysian Government scholarship and her field work runs from May through June this year. The abstract from her proposal is reproduced here. Any enquiries should be directed to philip.morrison@vuw.ac.nz

Accessibility and Development. A Case Study of Rural Malaysia.

Regina Garai Abdullah

Accessibility plays a significant role in a country's development particularly during periods of de-agrarianization when the labour of rural households is reallocated to non-agricultural activities and settlements experience increasing urbanization.

Most studies on the relationship between accessibility and development focus on aggregates i.e. on average levels of development in places as levels of accessibility increase. This study extends this perspective in two ways. Firstly, it recognizes that both 'development' and 'accessibility' are contested concepts and, if defined and measured differently, the relationship between them varies. For example, development can be appreciated as an objective and subjective measure and accessibility can involve not only physical transport but social networking and electronic communication. The second contribution of the study is the recognition that 'development' and 'accessibility' can take on different meanings and degrees of correlation at the country, state, place community, household and individual levels of analysis.

The primary value in adopting a multi-definitional and multi-level perspective to the interaction between accessibility and development is the ability to appreciate the distributional consequences of the changes generated by the interaction. For example, around any average place-community relationship, there may exist a wide variety of household experiences, as well as different individual experiences within any given household.



Philip and Regina

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The views expressed in the Newsletter are those of the contributors and not the official position of NZASIA.