**Highlights**

**Congratulations to Our Colleagues!**

Four of our colleagues won highly competitive grants during the 2014/15 General Research Fund exercise.

The Research Grants Council awarded HKD 627,340 to Dr. Ji Li (Research Assistant Professor) for her two-year project **“Making Religion, Making Local Society: The Social History of a Catholic Village in Northeast China”**. Dr. Li will focus on the formation, negotiation and continuity of the Catholic identity under imperialism, republicanism, colonialism and communism from the 19th to 20th century. Through examining the multi-generational history of a particular community in Northeast China, she will explore issues of religious identity, local elites, state building, as well as Christianity and localization in modern China.

The Council also awarded Dr. Oiyan Liu (Research Assistant Professor) HKD 217,550 for her project **“China’s Southeast Asia: Territory, People, and Civilization in the late Colonial Era”**. This study will examine how the Chinese central state, governments and elites of Southern China, and Southeast Asian Chinese (particularly those from British and Dutch possessions) viewed Southeast Asia during its last decades of Western colonial rule. Focusing on the early 20th century, this study attempts to look at how European colonialism helped (re)shape Chinese notions of territory and people in Southeast Asia.

Dr. Gonçalo Santos (Assistant Professor) was awarded HKD 414,340 for his two-year project **“Technology, charitable benefaction, and humanitarian aid in contemporary China”**. This project will explore the rise of humanitarianism in 21st century China as a late capitalist technology of ethical imagination. The approach adopted will be ethnographic. Research will focus on the activities of two major non-governmental organizations including a leading online charity platform and an international service club operating in the region of South China. Particular attention will be given to the relationship between ethical subjectivities, technological infrastructures, and political economy. Theoretically, the project joins recent efforts in the humanities and social sciences to emphasize the increasing importance of ethical regimes of charitable giving in the formation of contemporary subjects and in the legitimation of mounting social inequalities.

Dr. Izumi Nakayama (Honorary Assistant Professor) received HKD 328,620 for her three-year project **“Be Polite, Be Healthy, Be Feminine: Gender, Body Culture, Etiquette, and Health in modern Japan”**. In this historical and ethnographic study, Dr. Nakayama will examine the Japanese female body as a depository of rituals and disciplined acts and how it embodies and is shaped by specific historical and cultural ideals. She plans to trace its transformations from the late 19th to 21st century, seeking to better understand the complex interactions between gendered notions of propriety, physical acts, and health in the formation of an idealized Japanese female identity.
Featured News

Urban Studies and the China Experience – Advanced Training Program on “Inter-Asian Urbanity: Connections and Comparisons” 都市研究與中國經驗高級研修班「亞洲區域中的都市：聯繫與比較」 (August 18-24, 2014, HKU)

The final event of a three-year collaboration with the Harvard-Yenching Institute and East China Normal University (ECNU) was held in Hong Kong this summer. During the seven-day program, 20 graduate students and young scholars from mainland China, India, Taiwan, Japan, Europe and the United States took part in a series of lectures given by renowned scholars, including You-tien Hsing (University of California, Berkeley), Angela Leung (HKU), Peter Rowe (Harvard University), Helen Siu (Yale University), Eric Tagliacozzo (Cornell University), Zhang Jishun (ECNU), and Ching Maybo (Sun Yat-sen University). In addition to engaging in discussions from various disciplinary perspectives, participants took part in presentations, city walks around Hong Kong and the screening of a documentary film. Upon completion of the program, a small number of outstanding individuals will be selected to spend a year in residency as a visiting scholar at the Harvard-Yenching Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts.
**Collaboration**

**Humanities, Social Sciences and Medicine in Asia**

We are delighted to announce a new, two-year collaboration with the Harvard-Yenching Institute, the Institute of Medical Humanities and Center for History of Medicine at Peking University, and the Key Research Institute of Social History of China at Nankai University. This program aims to introduce to Asian students new theories, themes and approaches in the specific field of humanities and medicine in the modern period. Training workshops will be organized where participants are invited to reflect upon the complex and unique nexus between modernity and medicine both as knowledge and as an institution. Two broad themes have been identified: “circulation of medical knowledge/practices past and present” and “indigenous medical knowledge and biomedicine: interaction and accommodation in Asian societies”. The collaboration will give experts of various disciplines in the field the opportunity to interact with graduate students and young scholars through lectures, and seminars. The first event of the collaboration will be held in July 2015.

**Postgraduate Programs**

**Introducing Our New Cohort**

We are thrilled about the new group of postgraduate students arriving at the Institute for 2014-2015, particularly because all three of the PhD candidates have been awarded funding by the Research Grants Council (RGC) of Hong Kong through the prestigious Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme. We would like to extend our warmest welcome to the five outstanding students joining us this fall:

**Adrian James Wright (4-year PhD)** obtained his Bachelor’s degree in Classics in 2005 and Master’s degree in Japanese Studies in 2008, both from Oxford University. Adrian is interested in the development of Japanese robotic technology and the social implications for ageing populations in East Asia and beyond. His research will be supervised by Dr. Izumi Nakayama and Dr. Gonçalo Santos.

**Fabian Valentin Winiger (4-year PhD)** received his Bachelor’s degree in Sociology and Mass Communication from the University of Canterbury in 2011, and subsequently completed his Master’s degree in Medical Anthropology at Oxford University in 2013. Fabian’s planned topic of research is “Body, Subjectivity and Transnational New Religious Movements”. Dr. David A. Palmer will supervise his research with Dr. Gonçalo Santos.

**Liu Xiaomeng (劉小朦) (4-year PhD)** has studied history at Nankai University since 2008. He obtained his Bachelor’s degree in 2011 and completed his Master’s degree this summer. Xiaomeng is interested in the history of medicine. His proposed doctoral project “Essential Medicine for Household: Transitions of Medical Consumption Culture from Late Imperial to Modern China” will be supervised by Prof. Angela Leung and Dr. Izumi Nakayama.
Ryan Xin Xie (謝欣) (MPhil) completed her Bachelor’s degree in History at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou in 2006 and went on to pursuing graduate studies in History at Jean Moulin University Lyon 3, receiving a Master’s degree in 2009. Ryan is interested in cultural anthropology, and will be supervised by Dr. Gonçalo Santos and Prof. Helen Siu. The tentative topic of her research is “Mr. Z and His Global Empire”.

Samuel K. Leigh (MPhil) earned his Bachelor’s degree in Social Anthropology from Brunel University in 2012. Currently, he is completing a Master’s degree in Visual, Material and Museum Anthropology at Oxford University. Samuel’s proposed project “Re-shaping ‘Shangri-la’: Reconstructing identity online among the Tibetan diaspora” will be supervised by Dr. Gonçalo Santos and Dr. David A. Palmer. Samuel will commence his studies at the Institute in January 2015.

Delegation in Taipei (June 25-28, 2014)

A group led by Prof. Angela Leung went to Taipei this June to promote postgraduate research programs offered by the Institute in 2015-16. Two information sessions were held with the generous assistance of the Research Centre for Humanities and Social Science, Academia Sinica and the Department of Sociology, National Taiwan University. The sessions were attended by students and young faculty with many showing great interest through feedback and enquiries. In addition to information sessions, meetings with partner institutions in Taipei were also held.

Institutional Enhancement Scheme and Lee Hysan-HKIHSS Fellowship

The Institute received a generous donation from the Lee Hysan Foundation in 2013 to establish the Institutional Enhancement Scheme to help nurture HKU students. The three-year scheme will enable the Institute to invite world-renowned scholars to visit the University for up to a semester. Also established as part of the scheme, the Lee Hysan-HKIHSS Fellowship will give our students the opportunity for academic exchange overseas.

We are pleased to have Prof. Francesca Bray, Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Edinburgh, visit the Institute this fall. She will teach a seminar course along with Dr. Gonçalo Santos, and speak on “Men plough, women weave”: Joseph Needham, feminism and the history of science and technology in China’ at the Ninth Joseph Needham Memorial Lecture. Also, as the first recipient of the Lee Hysan-HKIHSS Fellowship, our postgraduate student Peter Kwai Hin Tam is spending a semester at Columbia University this fall to work under the mentorship of Prof. Dorothy Ko.

The Institute is looking forward to hosting Prof. Ronnie Hsia Po-chia, Edwin Earle Sparks Professor of History at Pennsylvania State University, next spring.
Publications


Chronicling transformations in perception and practice of sexual relationships and marriage across various urban settings in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, Profs. Deborah S. Davis and Sara L. Friedman investigate how the marital “rules of the game” have changed substantially since the 1980s. In examining the unprecedented changes manifest in law and popular expectations for romantic bonds and the creation of new families, the book challenges long-held assumptions that marriage is the universally preferred status for all men and women, that extramarital sexuality is incompatible with marriage, or that marriage necessarily unites a man and a woman. It also illustrates the wide range of potential futures for marriage, sexuality, and family across these Asian societies. The chapters in this volume were produced from papers presented at the “International Workshop on Marriage in Cosmopolitan China” co-organized by the Institute, with contributions from Dr. Jun Zhang (Research Assistant Professor, HKIHSS) and Dr. Petula S. Y. Ho (HKU Social Work and Social Administration), and the book project is partially sponsored by the Institute as well.


In his latest book, Prof. Paul A. Cohen, Visiting Scholar at the Institute, explores the fascinating interplay between history and popular memory. Highlighting the frequently neglected distinction between both, he examines how storytelling becomes a powerful tool for shaping popular sentiment in moments of crisis. The book compares countries of radically different cultural, religious, and social character worldwide, all of which experienced severe crises in the twentieth century, and demonstrates the unifying and restorative power of compelling story, even when it has been seriously distorted by myth or political manipulation. In the end, Prof. Cohen suggests that given the near-universal nature of this phenomenon, the interplay between story and history may well be rooted in certain human propensities that transcend cultural difference. Prof. Cohen had presented this project at the Institute’s China Interdisciplinary Lunchtime Seminar Series on January 17, 2012.

Upcoming Activities

Conferences

International Conference on “Text and Context: Redemptive Societies and New Religious Movements in Modern and Contemporary China and Southeast Asia” (November 8-9, 2014, HKU)

“Redemptive societies” refers to a wave of universalist and syncretistic religious movements that appeared in early 20th century China and Vietnam and continue to expand in a variety of Asian contexts. Surrounding this topic, the conference will bring together scholars from Germany, Canada, Japan, France, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore, mainland China and Taiwan. The conference is an initiative organized under the “Rethinking Spirituality and Religion in Asia” Cluster.
International Conference on “Food and Health”
(December 16-17, 2014, HKU)
Six panel sessions have been planned for the two-day event jointly organized by the Institute and the Asian Society for the History of Medicine (ASHM). They are, namely (1) food as a source of poison; (2) food as a source of healing; (3) milk and health; (4) food, nutrition, and nation; (5) food as a part of the study of medicine; and, (6) the movement of food. Participants include scholars from Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, Singapore, Japan, Korea, India, the United States, Germany, and France. Prof. Francesca Bray, Professor of Social Anthropology from University of Edinburgh, will be the conference’s keynote speaker.

Distinguished Lectures
The first talk of the 2014-2015 Distinguished Lecture Series will take place on October 24, 2014. The Institute announces with great delight that Prof. Richard Wong, Chair of Economics and Philip Wong Kennedy Wong Professor in Political Economy at the University of Hong Kong, will speak at this event.

Prof. Wong is an Honorary Professor at the Institute and a Principal Investigator of the “Hubs, Mobilities and the Asian Urban” Cluster.

Public Lectures and Seminars
Twin Events Presented by Prof. Andrew Kipnis (September 10-11, 2014, HKU)
Prof. Andrew Kipnis, Anthropology, Australian National University, will visit HKU in September 10-11, 2014. He will give a research seminar on “Urbanization and Transformations of Family and Gender in Shandong” at the Institute on September 10 and will speak on “The History of a Chinese Conglomerate in Three Registers” at the Contemporary China Studies Public Lecture at the Faculty of Social Sciences on September 11, co-sponsored by the Institute.

This seminar will be held to celebrate the publication of Brahman and Dao: Comparative Studies of Indian and Chinese Philosophy and Religion, edited by Ithamar Theodor and Yao Zihua (Lexington, 2014). It will be chaired by Dr. David A. Palmer, Honorary Associate Professor of the Institute. Panelists include Prof. Yao Zihua, CUHK Philosophy; Prof. Huang Yong, CUHK Philosophy; Dr. Ithamar Theodor, University of Haifa Asian studies; and Ven. Dr. Guang Xing, HKU Buddhist Studies. This is the first event of the “Rethinking Spirituality and Religion in Asia” Cluster.
Departmental Seminar Series

The series returns this November with thought-provoking presentations. We look forward to these upcoming talks:

November 12: “Dutch ‘Foreign Asians’ and the (re)definition of the colonial subject” by Dr. Oiyan Liu, HKIHSS
November 26: “Reincarnation in Africa” by Prof. A. F. Robertson, The University of Edinburgh

Lunchtime Series on Interdisciplinary Studies

Dr. Lawrence Zhang and Dr. Jun Zhang will coordinate the series in 2014-2015, and we have an exciting roster for the fall semester:

September 16: Prof. Joseph Bosco, CUHK Anthropology
September 30: Dr. Huang Yu, CUHK Anthropology
October 21: Prof. Ling Minhua, CUHK Centre for China Studies
November 4: Dr. Wang Aihe, HKU Chinese
November 18: Dr. Courtney Fung, HKU Politics and Public Administration
December 2: Prof. Cameron Campbell, HKUST Social Science
December 16: Dr. Florian Knothe, HKU University Museum and Art Gallery

Contemporary Chinese Documentary Series

Meet the Director: “Harvest” (麥子) by Director Guo Jing (郭淨) and “My Himalayan Vulture” (我的高山兀鷲) by Directors Tashi Sange and Zhou Jie (紮西桑俄、周杰) (September 26, 2014, HKU)

The first session of the 2014-2015 Contemporary Chinese Documentary Series presents two stories of Tibet from different perspectives.

In “Harvest”, filmmaker Guo Jing goes to Xidang village at the foothills of Kawagebo Snow Mountain to tell the story of villagers during harvest on a summer day. Seeing the filmmaker, women of the village flock towards the camera. They show old photographs, put on festive costumes, and pose for pictures. In an instant, Guo’s camera lens not only served as a tool to observe Tibetan life but became an object with which the villagers played about.
On the other hand, filmmakers Tashi Sange and Zhou Jie explore the secret behind the dramatic decline in the number of Himalayan Vultures in Qinghai province. By doing so, they have offered a local perspective on the disappearance of a creature whose existence is closely related to the Tibetan tradition of celestial burial and plays an important role in maintaining ecological balance of the pastoral grasslands.

Digital technology plays a key role in both documentaries. It connects locals and outsiders and enables them to communicate with each other beyond language. The outcome of this encounter is the creation of a new method known as village video. Through this, locals and outsiders are able to work together to document changes in environment and culture as well as establish new indigenous knowledge systems by action research.

A discussion session with Dr. Guo and Prof. Ma Jianxiong, Associate Professor in Chinese Anthropology at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology will follow the screening.

Recent Activities

Conference on “Ecologies of Urbanism in Asia II: Cities, Towns, and the Places of Nature”
(June 9-12, 2014, HKU)

Held over four days in June, “Ecologies of Urbanism in Asia II: Cities, Towns, and the Places of Nature” was the second conference organized by the Environmental Sustainability and Political Ecology Cluster. 31 participants from various top institutions in Hong Kong, India, Europe and North America took part in panel sessions organized around five themes: (1) The Cultivated City; (2) Conservation in the City; (3) Building and Dwelling in the City; (4) The Work of Water in the City; and, (5) City and Technology.

In addition to the intensive discussions, participants went on walking tours in both Hong Kong and Macau. Through these field trips, they were able to gain a better understanding of the historical development of urban spaces in the region and investigate local ecological sustainability issues.
Advanced Summer Training Workshop on Historical Anthropology (歷史人類學高級研修班)
(July 17-28, Singapore and Malaysia)

Jointly organized by the Institute and Sun Yat-sen University, the 11th Advanced Summer Training Workshop on Historical Anthropology gathered 22 scholars and students who travelled to Singapore and Malaysia to learn more about overseas Chinese societies. Fieldwork was conducted in a number of locations, including Malacca, Penang, Perak, and Port Klang, with intensive discussions following each session.

Clockwise: Group photo taken at St Paul’s Church in Malacca; Statue of a Sikh guard at the entrance of Leong San Tong Khoo Kongsi in Penang; Originators of the Advanced Summer Training Workshop on Historical Anthropology – Prof. Chen Chunsheng, Prof. David Faure, Prof. Helen Siu and Prof. Liu Zhiwei – in Singapore; and, participants at Kuan Yin Teng, one of the oldest Chinese temples in Penang

Distinguished Lectures

The Institute was privileged to host three Distinguished Lectures this spring:

**Star Wars vs. Seopyeonje: The Images of Science and Technology in South Korea** (March 4, 2014)

Prof. Kim Dong-Won, President of the D. Kim Foundation for the History of Science and Technology, drew a large audience with his provocative lecture on the popular image of science and technology in South Korea and its link to the crisis in science and technology that began in the late 1990s.
The Role of the ERC (European Research Council) in Funding Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences Domain in Europe (May 20, 2014)
During a highly informative session, Prof. Alain Peyraube, Founding Member of the Scientific Council of the European Research Council (ERC), generously shared with the audience the European research funding landscape, ERC’s objectives and funding criteria.

New Networks of Knowledge: How to Achieve Benefits for the Individual and Society at Large (May 21, 2014)
Prof. Milena Žic-Fuchs, Chair of the Scientific Review Group for the Humanities of the European Science Foundation, reflected upon the challenges to multi-disciplinary or trans-disciplinary approaches to research and ways to reap possible synergy between empirical and orientational knowledge.

Public Lectures
Life in North Korea from Two Perspectives: for Ordinary North Koreans and for Expatriates Working There (May 7, 2014)
Based on five years’ of experience as head of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in Pyongyang, Ms. Katharina Zellweger (Stanford University) presented an insightful lecture about life in North Korea for ordinary North Koreans as well as for expatriates.

The Body Anatomic and the Body Politic in Modern China (May 26, 2014)
Dr. David Luesink (University of Pittsburgh) led an interesting discussion on the changes in Chinese perceptions and understanding of the human body and anatomy during the early 20th century, demonstrating that intellectual history of modern China is not detachable from the history of science and medicine.

Departmental Seminar Series
In April, the Departmental Seminar Series continued with Dr. Jun Zhang’s talk “Driving toward Modernity: The Making of Urban Middle Class in the Age of Automobility in South China”. Through looking at automobile consumption, Dr. Zhang explored the making and meaning of class in contemporary China.
Then, in June, it was Dr. Max Hirsh’s presentation “Now Everyone Can Fly: Emerging Infrastructures of Low-Cost Aviation in the Contemporary Southeast Asian City”. Dr. Hirsh shared anecdotes from fieldwork conducted in Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore and illustrated how low-cost aviation networks reshaped both social and spatial dynamics of contemporary Southeast Asian cities. He also used airport design as a means to investigate the disconnect between states and urban planners.

Lunchtime Series on Interdisciplinary China Studies
The spring session of our Lunchtime Series concluded with four talks. First was “The Great Retreat and Its Discontents: Reexamining Cultural Revolution Mass Politics in South-Central China” given by Prof. Wu Yicheng from the University of Toronto in March. In April, Prof. Loretta Kim of HKBU History presented “The Pen is as Mighty as the Sword: Documentary and Literary Views of Hailanča”, followed by “‘Ride the Wind’ with Mozart’s ‘Jupiter’ Symphony: Music, Aesthetics, and the Sublime in Chinese Modernity” by Dr. Joys Hoi Yan Cheung of CUHK Music. Dr. Gonçalo Santos at the Institute wrapped up the semester with “Do flush toilets have politics?”. 
**Institute’s News**

**Documenting the Oral History of Overseas Chinese in Cuba**

Since November 2012, Dr. Louie Kin Shuen (Honorary Research Associate) has been recording and documenting the oral history of surviving overseas Chinese still living in Cuba today. The 20-month research project funded by the Lee Hysan Foundation concluded recently. And through his fieldwork in various locations around Cuba, Dr. Louie has built up an archive that includes interview transcripts, photographs, as well as voice and video recordings.

Dr. Louie has in addition produced a 157-page written report that is available for viewing on the Institute’s website (www.hkihss.hku.hk/en/research_training/cuba/index.html). Plans are underway to make this valuable repository of information available to students as well as scholarly community alike. A book manuscript is also to be published by Oxford University Press, Hong Kong in 2015.

**More on our website**

Our website’s pages on Research and Training now offer more information on our new research clusters, “Science, Technology, and Medicine in Asian Societies”, “Hubs, Mobilities and the Asian Urban”, and “Rethinking Spirituality and Religion in Asia”, as well as on our upcoming collaborative projects. To visit, simply follow this link: www.hkihss.hku.hk/en/research_training/overview/index.html

**Personalia**

**Sin Wai-Kin Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Humanities**

Prof. Zhang Guangda, Department of History, National Chengchi University, November 16-22, 2014.

Prof. Ronnie Hsia Po-chia, Department of History, Pennsylvania State University, January to April 2015.

**Hung Leung Hau Ling Distinguished Fellow in Humanities**

Professor David Der-wei Wang, Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University, July 2014 to December 2015.

**Visiting Professors**

Prof. Francesca Bray, School of Social and Political Science, University of Edinburgh, November to mid December 2014.

**Honorary Appointments**

Prof. Ronnie Hsia Po-chia, Department of History, Pennsylvania State University has been appointed as an Honorary Professor of the Institute with effect from September 2014. Prof. Hsia will also be visiting the University during the period between January and May 2015.

**Staff Appointments**

Ms. Emily Lai, Office Attendant, from August 2014.

**Staff Departures**

Ms. Kwok May Ling, Office Attendant and Ms. Milin Wong, Clerical Assistant retired from the Institute from July 1, 2014. We wish them great days ahead in the next chapter of their lives.

If colleagues have news to share with the Institute, please email your materials to sycheng2@hku.hk.

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