

NEWSLETTER

February 2019



Highlights

Congratulations to Dr. David A. Palmer and his team for obtaining a \$6.2 million CRF grant from RGC

Dr. David A. Palmer, Associate Professor of the Institute and Sociology, and his international team have obtained a HKD 6.2 million grant from the highly competitive Collaborative Research Fund Scheme (2018-2019 exercise) administered by the Research Grants Council for three years on the project “Infrastructure of Faith: Religious Mobility on the Belt and Road.” This is the second CRF grant that the Institute has obtained in two years, the first one being “Making Modernity in East Asia: Technologies of Everyday Life” (2016-2017 exercise) coordinated by Institute Director Angela Leung.



This project will investigate the religious impact of China’s intensification of ties and infrastructures linking it to the rest of Asia, now subsumed under the label of the “Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).” An unintentional effect of the BRI is to facilitate and intensify religious circulations between the nations of Eurasia. Religion is central to the culture and national identity of most BRI and adjacent countries, and, often, their political system and ideology as well.

The project will develop critically needed expertise for Hong Kong, China and Asia on the religious dimensions of BRI ties and their implications for relations with the Chinese world, with applications in the fields of public policy, education, and intercultural and interreligious understanding. The outputs of the project will create a critical mass of scholarship that will become a foundational reference for reshaping the social scientific study of religion in China and Asia, and the geographical and geopolitical study of Asia.

Co-Principal Investigators include Li Ji, Georgios Halkias, and Qian Junxi (all are from HKU), James Frankel (CUHK), and Ho Wai Yip (HKUed). The international, interdisciplinary team of 21 scholars in anthropology, geography, sociology, history, political science and religious studies, will conduct workshops and case studies on transnational religious circulations between China and Asian countries relating to Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Chinese religion and new religious movements that will be situated within broader historical and geopolitical contexts. This will combine both a macro-level mapping of the broad routes of religious circulation, and specific studies related to each major region and religious tradition, focusing on routes, borders, and urban hubs.

Institutional partners of the project include the American Institute for Pakistan Studies, Islamabad; the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore; the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies; the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies, Saudi Arabia; the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Ethnic and Religious Diversity; the Oxford University Centre for Islamic Studies; and the School of Social Sciences, Singapore Management University.

Featured News

Visit by Professor Wang Gungwu, Sin Wai-Kin Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Humanities

The Institute hosted the visit of Prof. Wang Gungwu (王賡武) as Sin Wai-Kin Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Humanities in November 2018. Prof. Wang, former Vice-Chancellor of HKU, eminent historian of China and Chinese diaspora in South East Asia, is currently University Professor of National University of Singapore and Academician of Academia Sinica, Taiwan.

Prof. Wang delivered a public lecture on “China’s South: Changing Perspectives” on November 12 in front of an enthusiastic audience of more than 250 who responded to this inspirational and eloquent speech with a standing ovation.



Prof. Paul Tam (left), Prof. Angela Leung and guests enjoying Prof. Wang’s speech

On November 14, Prof. Wang led a public forum in Chinese on the rise and decline of modern China from the perspective of global history (從全球史看近世中國的興衰) together with Prof. Ge Zhaoguang (葛兆光), prominent historian from Fudan University, Shanghai, and Prof. Chu Yun-han (朱雲漢), leading political scientist from Academia Sinica, Taiwan. The three speakers inspired a lively discussion with the audience on the role of China in recent global history.

Transcripts and recordings of the lecture and the forum are available through the Institute’s website:



From left: Prof. Chu Yun-han, Prof. Ge Zhaoguang, Prof. Angela Leung, and Prof. Wang Gungwu

The lecture: www.hkihss.hku.hk/events/wang-gungwu-lecture

The forum: www.hkihss.hku.hk/events/public-forum-2018

Prof. Wang also joined a tea gathering with recipients of “Wang Gungwu Prize for undergraduate and postgraduate students in History” organised by Department of History on November 13. The prize was established in 2013 with a generous donation from Prof. Wang to encourage history study in the University.



International Collaborations

SSRC InterAsian Connections VI: Hanoi (December 4-7, 2018, Hanoi)

The Institute, as one of the founding organisers, participated in the Sixth Social Science Research Council Inter-Asian Connections conference held on December 4-7, 2018 in Hanoi, Vietnam. Hosted by the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences (VASS), this conference, composed of eight selected workshops, aimed to showcase cutting-edge research from across the social sciences and related disciplines that underlines the re-definition of Asia as a region by its connectedness and dis-connectedness. Dr. Izumi Nakayama of the Institute was co-director of the workshop, “States of Fortifications: Connecting Asia through Technologies of Food and Health,” with Prof. Melissa Caldwell of UCSC. They plan to edit a journal special issue with selected papers from the workshop.



Workshops directors and representatives of organisers

China Made Workshop with Colorado Center for Asian Studies

The Institute commenced a 3-year interdisciplinary research collaboration on “China Made: Asian Infrastructures and the ‘China Model’ of Development” with the University of Colorado Center for Asian Studies, led by Prof. Timothy Oakes, with a research grant of USD 390,000 from the Henry Luce Foundation. Core project team members include, Prof. Emily Yeh (Colorado University), Dr. Max Hirsh (HKU), Ms. Dorothy Tang (MIT & HKU), and Dr. Alessandro Rippa (Colorado University). Three workshops were planned. The first workshop “Conceiving Infrastructures in a Chinese Register” was held at University of Colorado on October 17-19, 2018, focusing on ways to conceive, theorize, and research China’s infrastructural developments within and beyond its borders. The second workshop “Infrastructural Urbanism in China” will be hosted by HKIHSS on January 9-10, 2020.



Teaching and Learning

Institutional Enhancement Scheme Supported by Lee Hysan Foundation

Visiting Professor



Prof. Helen F. Siu, Professor of Anthropology, Yale University, was visiting professor at the Institute for the calendar year of 2018 under the scheme. She has organised intensive one-to-one research tutorials with students from the Graduate School. To further the agenda of the “Hubs, Mobilities and the Asian Urban” Cluster which she leads, she and Prof. Eric Tagliacozzo (Cornell University) finalised volume 3 of the *Asia Inside Out* trio for Harvard University Press, due to be published in early 2019. She is also developing a China-Africa Initiative with Prof. Chen Zhiwu (Asia Global Institute, HKU). To connect research themes of Asian infrastructure, mega-events, popular culture and political space, Prof. Siu has assumed a leading role in a documentary film project on Cantopop and political movement. She has also developed a community project “Creative Community Enhancement: Meeting the Globe with Tradition” with Prof. Ellen Hertz (University of Neuchâtel) and a few colleagues in Hong Kong.

Congratulations to James Wright and Fabien Winiger for having completed their PhD Studies

Having completed their PhD dissertations, two Institute graduates are starting their careers in Europe. Mr. James Wright is currently a Michelin Fellow at the Centre for French-Japanese Advanced Studies in Paris (CEAFJP). Mr. Fabian Winiger has been awarded a postdoctoral fellowship at the Theological Seminar of the University of Zurich in Switzerland.

New Graduate Seminar Course in Spring Semester

Prof. Angela Leung will teach a postgraduate seminar titled “Technology and Everyday Life in Modern East Asia: Artefact, Knowledge, Practice, and Infrastructure (IHSS 6003)” in this spring semester. More information is available at: www.hkihss.hku.hk/en/teaching/courses-offering-in-2018-19/

Lee Hysan-HKIHSS Fellowship

Call for Applications to Research Postgraduate Studies at HKIHSS, 2019-20

HKU First Clearing Round

Application period: December 2, 2018 to April 30, 2019

About our programs and application procedures:

www.hkihss.hku.hk/en/teaching/application-details/

Video of HKIHSS:

www.hkihss.hku.hk/en/teaching/overview/

Enquiries: (Email) ihssrpg@hku.hk

(Phone) (852) 3917-5772

Online application: www.gradsch.hku.hk

This Fellowship, established under the Institutional Enhancement Scheme, aims to support HKU postgraduate or senior undergraduate students in the disciplines of Humanities and Social Sciences to undertake overseas research training for a period of up to one academic year.

Ms. Anna Iskra, PhD student at the Institute, is the eighth Lee Hysan-HKIHSS Fellowship recipient. She is currently visiting at the Department of Anthropology, Harvard University, under the mentorship of Prof. Arthur Kleinman from January to May, 2019.



Upcoming Events

CRF Project “Making Modernity in East Asia: Technologies of Everyday Life, 19th – 21st Centuries” (MMEA)

MMEA Subproject Workshops

“Weather, Climate and Everyday Life: Environmental Technologies in Modern East Asia” (May 16-18, 2019, HKU)

Convened by Prof. Fan Fa-ti (State University of New York at Binghamton University), this workshop will gather scholars from the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan and Taiwan to examine the relationships among weather/climate, technology and everyday life in modern East Asia.

“Making East Asian Foods: Technologies and Values, 19th to 20th Centuries” (May 30-31, 2019, HKU)

Convened by Prof. Angela Leung and Dr. Izumi Nakayama, an international conference will be held in Hong Kong in May 2019. Over 20 local and international scholars from China, Taiwan, Japan, Vietnam, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Hong Kong will participate, presenting papers on various Asian everyday foods and their values generated by changing technologies.

MMEA Lecture Series



Prof. Fan Fa-ti (left) from State University of New York at Binghamton and Prof. Jakob Klein from SOAS, University of London will give public lectures in May. Details will be announced soon!



More information: mmea.hku.hk

Roundtable Panel at the 9th Tensions of Europe Congress (June 27-30, 2019, Luxembourg)

The CRF MMEA team will present the project in a panel at the 9th Tensions of Europe (ToE) Congress, to be held on June 27-30, 2019, in Luxembourg. Prof. Angela Leung, Dr. Izumi Nakayama, Dr. Max Hirsh and Prof. Fan Fa-ti will present the main objectives, the structure, and the mid-term findings of the collaborative research project with Dr. Mikael Hård (Darmstadt University of Technology, Germany) as the discussant. As first of its kind in the region, the MMEA project proposes a bold new way of understanding East Asian modernity through the lens of technological processes between the 19th century and the present. MMEA participants will engage with their European colleagues in discussions on the reframing of Euro-centric “failure/success” narratives of technological change, based on East Asian experiences.

Spirituality, Religion and Society Lecture Series (March – April, 2019, HKU)

Organised by Dr. David A. Palmer and Dr. Li Ji, the “Rethinking Spirituality and Religion in Asia” Cluster will host two lectures in the March and April.



March 21, 2019: “The Boxer Crisis in Comparative Perspective: Visions of Divine Intervention and Monuments of Martyrdom” by Prof. Jeffrey Wasserstrom (left), Chancellor’s Professor of History, UC Irvine.

Early April, 2019: Dr. Benjamin Schewel, Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Groningen, the Netherlands.

Interdisciplinary Lunchtime Seminar Series (Spring 2019, HKU)

The Interdisciplinary Lunchtime Seminar provides a platform for scholars to share their ongoing original research projects with HKU colleagues and students. The series is coordinated by Dr. Christine Luk together with two newly arrived colleagues, Dr. Zhang Chaoxiong and Dr. Elvan Cobb, in the spring semester.

Dr. Stephen Chung On Ng (Centennial College) will speak on “Unearthing a South China Ammonite: Palaeontology in Hong Kong” on February 26.

Seminars by Dr. Jason Petrus (History, HKU), Dr. Elvan Cobb (HKIHSS, HKU), Dr. Elizabeth LaCouture (History, HKU), Dr. Du Chunmei (History, LingnanU), and Dr. Zhan Yang (Applied Social Sciences, PolyU) have been scheduled for March and April. More details will be announced soon!

Recent Activities

MMEA Project

RGC Collaborative Research Fund Symposium (December 6, 2018, CityU)

MMEA project team (Profs. Angela Leung, Christian Daniels, Naubahar Sharif, Gonçalo Santos, Suzanne Gottschang, Max Hirsh, Robert Peckham, Daniel Trambaiolo and Lawrence Zhang), MMEA advisor Prof. Fan Fa-ti, and postgraduate students Mr. Liu Xiaomeng and Mr. Xing Linzhou attended the RGC’s Collaborative Research Fund Symposium at City University of Hong Kong on Dec 6, 2018. Through an oral presentation and a poster display, Prof. Leung and the team members shared the CRF team’s year-long research experiences and outcome with RGC panel members.



MMEA Second Plenary Conference, Keynote Lecture, and Advisory Board Meeting (December 10-11, 2018, HKU)



The CRF MMEA Project held its Second Plenary Conference on December 10, 2018. Participants of the seven subprojects (food, pharmacotherapeutics, gynocentric technologies, transport and material infrastructure, history of automation and the future of work, epidemic intelligence, and weather forecasting) presented their projects followed by in-depth discussions on future plans.

A half-day meeting was held on December 11 between the International Advisory Board of the CRF and the management committee. The meeting was also attended by representatives of international partners and Prof. Soto Laveaga. Participants discussed and suggested strategic plans for the upcoming year, including the construction of the project website and a virtual museum.

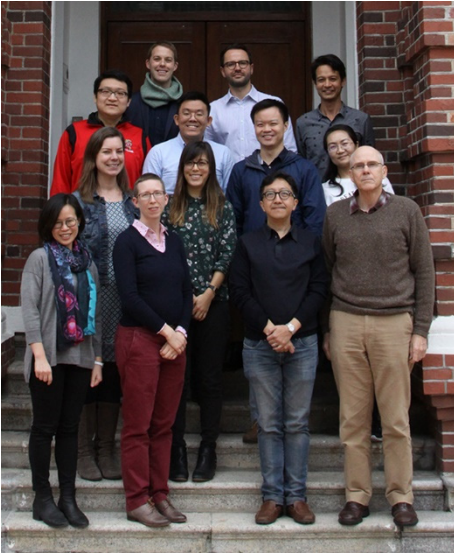
On the occasion of the plenary conference, a public keynote lecture by Prof. Gabriela Soto Laveaga (Harvard University) on “Hormones, Hospitals, and the Green Revolution: Thinking about Scientific Innovation and Health Care

Models Using Mexico as the Pivot” was organised. More than 40 scholars including local and overseas collaborators, Advisory Board members, invited experts and graduate students took part in the conference, with a bigger public audience for the keynote lecture.



From left: Prof. Gabriela Soto Laveaga delivering the keynote lecture; Dr. Kim Tae-ho joining the discussion with Prof. Soto Laveaga after lecture; Prof. Soto Laveaga (middle), Prof. Angela Leung (left) and Prof. Suzanne Moon (right)

MMEA Subproject Workshop “Transport Infrastructure and the Making of Modern East Asia”
(December 12-14, 2018, HKU)



Coordinated by Dr. Max Hirsh, the workshop-cum-fieldwork on “Transport Infrastructure and the Making of Modern East Asia” was held on December 12-14, 2018. 10 papers were presented by scholars across disciplines including anthropology, geography, history of technology, science and technology studies and urban planning. On December 13, participants visited West Kowloon High-Speed Railway Terminus and Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Boundary Control Facility at Chek Lap Kok.

MMEA Lecture Series

Prof. Melissa Caldwell of UC Santa Cruz, lectured on “Culinary Colonialism and the Frontiers of Russian Food Cultures” on September 5, 2018. Prof. Caldwell is the outgoing editor of *Gastronomica: the Journal of Critical Food Studies*, and Co-Director of UCSC Multi-Campus Research Program on Studies of Food and the Body. In the lecture, Prof. Caldwell examined Russian strategies of culinary colonialism and considered the legacies of intentional state projects to recognize, celebrate, and incorporate cultural diversity as fundamental to a uniquely Russian national culinary heritage.



From left: Prof. Melissa Caldwell speaking at the lecture; Prof. Robert Peckham and Prof. Helen F. Siu engaging in a lively discussion with Prof. Caldwell after lecture

“Rethinking Spirituality and Religion in Asia” Cluster

“Infrastructures of Faith” Planning Workshop (Oct 26, 2018, HKU)

Serving as the foundation for their successful application for the CRF, the RSRA Cluster under the leadership of Dr. David A. Palmer held a planning workshop for a collaborative research project on “Infrastructures of Faith: Religious Mobilities on the Belt and Road,” which has built up a team of 20 scholars of anthropology, sociology, geography, religious studies and history in the countries in the region of the “New Silk Road”. Participants from Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, Germany, the Emirates, Indonesia, Singapore gave presentations on their research on the entanglements of religion and BRI-related infrastructural, migratory and political changes in China, the Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia, Laos, Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, the Maldives, Dubai and Saudi Arabia.



Spirituality, Religion and Society Lecture Series

Coordinated by Dr. David A. Palmer and Dr. Li Ji, the “Spirituality, Religion and Society Lecture Series” featured three talks in the fall semester 2018. On September 10, the Cluster co-organised a public lecture with Faculty of Social Sciences on “The Chinese Pursuit of Happiness: Meaning, Morality, and Everyday Life” by Prof. Richard Madsen, Distinguished Professor from UC San Diego.

In October, the Cluster hosted talks by Prof. Peter van der Veer and Dr. Tam Ngo, both from Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity in Göttingen, Germany.



Prof. Peter van der Veer (left), Director of the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, delivered a public talk on “Nationalism and Religion in India and China” in the Institute lecture hall, packed to its capacity, on October 24, 2018.

He outlined how intellectuals in India and China in the late nineteenth century formulated their response to European imperialism and attempted to situate the position of religion in a modernizing society.

Dr. Tam Ngo, Research Fellow, Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity spoke on “Dynamic of Memory and Religious Nationalism in a Sino-Vietnamese Border Town” on October 25, 2018.

Prof. John Lagerwey (right), Research Professor of Chinese Studies, Centre for China Studies of CUHK, lectured on “Is There a Chinese Cultural Essence?” on January 23, 2019.

“Hubs, Mobilities, and the Asian Urban” Cluster

The “Hubs, Mobilities, and the Asian Urban” Cluster co-organised a forum on “The Political Economy of China-Hong Kong Relations during the Trade War” with Society for Hong Kong Studies (SHKS) on January 4, 2019. Prof. Ching Kwan Lee (UCLA), Chair of the Executive Board of SHKS, delivered the welcoming remarks. Prof. Hung Ho-fung (Sociology, Johns Hopkins University), Prof. Ngo Tak-wing (Government and Public Administration, University of Macau) spoke on the forum. Prof. Helen F. Siu (Anthropology, Yale) chaired the panel discussion, and Prof. Ray Kin-man Yip (Public Policy, CityU) served as discussant.



Public Program

Contemporary Chinese Documentary Series - Meet the Director (February 15, 2019, HKU)

The Institute screened the documentary film “The Virtue in The Valley” (群羊嘅嘢) directed by Jamyang Tashi (加洋扎西). Screening with it is “The Search” (覓食) directed by Losang Nyima (羅藏尼瑪) at May Hall on February 15, 2019. Film Director Jamyang Tashi joined the post-screening discussion through skype with Mr. Chen Chung-yu (Supervisor), Prof. Wang Dan (Education, HKU), and Dr. Li Ji (HKIHSS & China Studies).

From left: Mr. Chen Chung-yu (middle), Dr. Wang Dan, and Dr. Li Ji in the post-screening discussion



Public Lecture

Dr. Ghassan Moazzin, JSPS Postdoctoral Fellow at The University of Tokyo, gave a public lecture on “Gold and Silver: German Bankers and the Financial Internationalisation of China, 1885 – 1919” on November 27, 2018. In his talk, Dr. Moazzin explored how the interaction between German and other foreign bankers and Chinese officials, bankers and merchants led to the rapid internationalisation of Chinese state finance and the Chinese banking sector on the China coast. He argued that foreign banks were not simply another form of imperialism but acted as nodes within the emerging global network of capital flows and provided the financial infrastructure that made modern economic globalisation in China possible.



Interdisciplinary Lunchtime Seminars Series

During the fall semester 2018, the Institute hosted six lunchtime seminars. In September, Dr. Leung Shuk Man (SMLC & Chinese, HKU) spoke on “Hong Kong Identity Through Youth and Student Cultural Revolution Discourse”, and Dr. Mark Meulenbeld (Chinese Culture, PolyU) talked about “Local Gods and Trans-local Rituals: The Role of Daoism for ‘Popular Religion’ in Hunan”. In October, Dr. Anna Grasskamp (Academy of Visual Arts, HKBU) presented her project on “Ocean Objects: ‘Chinese’ Shells in a Global Context”. Two speakers - Dr. Chen Fong-fong (UMAG & Fine Arts, HKU) and Dr. Vincent S. Leung (History, Lingnan University) shared their research findings in November. Dr. Chen talked about “Making Their Presence Felt: Photographic Mediums and the Rise of a Mass Audience”, and Dr. Leung spoke on “Empires, Capital, and Time: The Politics of the Past in Early China”. In December, Dr. Luo Yu (Chinese and History, CityU) gave a presentation on “The Domestic Lives of Village Videos: Making Sense of the World through Grassroots Media in Southwest China”.

On January 15, 2019 Dr. Mia Moy Bennett (Geography, HKU) kicked off the spring semester 2019’s series. She spoke on “Material Consequences: Chinese Iron Demand and Steel Supply in the Arctic”. Dr. Mao Sheng (Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica) spoke on “1962: A Year of Significance for Xinjiang” on February 12.



Clockwise from top left: Drs. Leung Shuk Man, Mark Meulenbeld, Anna Grasskamp, Chen Fong-fong, Vincent S. Leung, Luo Yu, Mia Moy Bennett, and Mao Sheng

Book Talk by Prof. Paul A. Cohen (January 8, 2019, HKU)

Prof. Paul A. Cohen gave a talk on his recently published memoir *A Path Twice Traveled: My Journey as a Historian of China* on January 8, 2019. Prof. Cohen, Associate of Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies at Harvard University, Professor Emeritus of History, Wellesley College as well as Visiting Scholar at the Institute, is an influential historian of modern China. In this memoir, he traces the development of his work from its inception in the early 1960s to the present, offering fresh perspectives that consistently challenge us to think more deeply about China and the historical craft in general. The memoir is published in 2019 by the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies, Harvard University.



(Left) Prof. Paul Cohen responding audience's questions. (Right) Dr. John Wong exchanging views with Prof. Cohen

Personalia

Staff Appointments

Dr. Elvan Cobb and Dr. Zhang Chaoxiong have been appointed as Postdoctoral Fellows from January 2019. Mr. Martin Tse has been appointed as Assistant Lecturer from December 2018. Miss Guo Huiwen has joined the Institute as Research Assistant from September 2018.

Visiting Scholar

Prof. Paul A. Cohen, Associate, Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies, Harvard University; Professor Emeritus of History, Wellesley College, returns to the Institute as Visiting Scholar from January to February, 2019.

Staff Departures

Dr. Kyoungjin Bae, Postdoctoral Fellow, left the Institute w.e.f. December 1, 2018. Dr. Emily Fong, Teaching Assistant, left the Institute w.e.f. December 21, 2018. We wish them every success in their future endeavors.

Hong Kong Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences

Room 101, May Hall, The University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong | www.hkihss.hku.hk

General Enquiries:

(852) 3917-5007 | ihss@hku.hk

Postgraduate Programs:

(852) 3917-5772 | ihssrpg@hku.hk

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