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From the MAI Director’s Desk

March is an exciting and refreshing month in Australia as a new academic year starts. MAI’s event activities also vigorously resume. They include MAI 2014 kick-off gathering and Trans-Asia as method seminar, which will be jointly organized with the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies. Another significant event in this month is a special symposium in honour of Associate Professor Helen Marriott of Japanese Studies who is officially retiring this semester. Please find all the details in this bulletin and their updated information on the MAI webpage. We really hope that you participate in these events and enjoy intellectual exchange and conversation with colleagues.

Look forward to seeing you at these events!

Prof. Koichi Iwabuchi

The next MAI Bulletin is scheduled for Tuesday 1 April 2014. If you have news on any events or other announcements that you would like us to include, please forward this to MAI-Enquiries@monash.edu, by Friday 28th March 2014.

MAI EVENT/SEMINAR/FORUM

Mon@sia

Mon@sia 2014: An informal gathering to welcome the new academic year

Thursday 6th March 2014, 3:30pm – 5:00pm, ACJC Seminar Room, Building H Level 8, Monash University Caulfield Campus

To refresh ourselves at the beginning of the new academic year, MAI is organizing an informal gathering. This will be a great opportunity to hear from MAI, Centre Directors and MAI friends regarding planned activities, forthcoming seminars and ongoing projects. Let us all get together also, to exchange informally with each other, on our diverse interests and research projects on Asian regions, and to foster a sense of togetherness! In addition to MAI friends, anyone interested in the study of Asian regions is welcome to join us! (RSVP: halina.bluzer@monash.edu)

Trans-Asia as Method with CSEAS

“Borderless spirituality in a plural Asia: tomb-sites and normative national pieties”

Speakers: Dr Lewis Mayo (the Chinese Studies Program at Asia Institute, Melbourne University) & Dr Julian Millie (co-convenor of the Monash Anthropology program)

Monday 17 March 2014, 12.00pm–1.30pm, ACJC Seminar Room, Building H Level 8, Monash University Caulfield Campus

Light lunch will be provided.
For Chinese Indonesians, the category of "national religion" has been a disquieting one, at least since the revolutions of the mid 20th century that produced the present-day nations we know as Indonesia and China. Membership in the Indonesian nation has been contingent on every Indonesian citizen formally aligning himself or herself with one of the nationally-defined and nationally-approved religions. This has created problems for those whose personal religious commitments were eclectic or non-existent, and for adherents of forms of religion which did not have official endorsement. Chinese folk religion, by and large, did not receive official sanction from the Indonesian state, and particularly during the age of heightened Sino phobia under the New Order, involvement in it was often seen as foundationally incompatible with a commitment to the Indonesian nation. (Significantly, Chinese folk religion was also the target of state opposition in the People's Republic of China, and it has been given ornamental status at best in China, right up until the present.) Scholars of Indonesian Islam have long emphasised the difficulties encountered by highly indigenised or heterodox forms of Islamic practice in the post-revolutionary era, and especially under the New Order, where the state has often colluded with the proponents of Islamic modernity, such as the major Indonesian Islamic organizations, to oppose these styles of Indonesian Islamic practice and belief.

In light of these phenomena, pilgrimage sites ‘shared’ by followers of Chinese popular religion and the spiritual current known as Kejawen (Javanese belief) are important sites of contemporary religious expression and observance, for they display ways of being religious and/or spiritual that cut across the ideals that have gained normative force in contemporary Indonesia and China. In this talk, Julian Millie and Lewis Mayo will reflect on their research concerning the tomb at Mount Kawi (Gunung Kawi), near Malang in East Java. The Malay and Chinese language guides to the pilgrimage sites associated with the tomb and its occupant, the Sino-Javanese holy man Eyang Jugo, are particularly illuminating; since they make representations about a site in which highly indigenised Islamic and Chinese Indonesian folk religion converge. These texts and the religious beliefs and practices to which they relate are the very entities, which the category of national religion in modern Indonesia has defined itself against. They also represent a very different set of images of Chinese Indonesian culture from those which are often promoted in the literature on the subject, which has often stressed the loyalty of Sinophile Indonesians to a normative or orthodox vision of Chinese culture, be it that of Confucianism or that of Chinese nationalism. Yet this is something more than a case of religious and cultural syncretism or hybridity: what can be seen in these texts, one can argue, is a convergent form of religious universalism in which local geographies of spiritual power - both "Chinese" and "Javanese/Islamic" - are joined quite seamlessly to large religious cosmologies - Chinese, Javanese, Indic and Muslim. These texts embody what was meant by Denys Lombard's representation of Java as a "crossroads of civilization".

(Previous publications from this collaboration: 2010 'Driving under the new order'. Inside Indonesia 99: Jan-Mar, 2010)
Centre for Southeast Asian Studies

“City Islam and Indonesian popular culture: a roundtable discussion”

Speaker: Candra Malik and Delita Sartika

Wednesday 5 March 2014, 2.00pm-, Meeting Room, Building 55, Gallery Building, Monash University Clayton Campus

In this roundtable discussion, Candra Malik will reflect on the changing spiritual needs of Indonesia’s urban Muslims. Delita Sartika will present on dakwah in contemporary Indonesian Islamic novels/films. This discussion will be conducted in English and Indonesian.

Candra Malik is a young Indonesian dervish and observer of socio-religious affairs who writes songs, essays, poems, short stories, and books on religious themes. He hosts a television program and has produced two albums and five music videos and now producing his third album.

Delita Sartika is a PhD candidate in Monash’s School of Languages, Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics. Her research analyses Islamic expression in recent Indonesian popular culture.

Japanese Studies Centre and the Language and Society Centre

A Symposium in honour of Helen Marriott, Japan, “Australia and the global context: Connections across languages and societies”

15 March 2014, 11.00am–5.30pm, Japanese Studies Centre Auditorium, Building 54, Monash University Clayton Campus

This one-day symposium marks the retirement of Associated Professor Helen Marriott from Monash University, and, reflecting the themes of her own work and that of her many students and colleagues, will address issues of language, society, and culture, across Japan, Australia and the wider global context.

Please register online at: http://artsonline.monash.edu.au/jsc/registration/

Download the Symposium program (Word)

Seminar and Event

"Student-centered learning: Contemporary Malaysian & Australian perspectives"
Organized by University Utara Malaysia & Monash University

Monday 10 March 2014, E561 Menzies Building, Clayton, 10-2 pm
A seminar on student-centred learning – contemporary Malaysian and Australian perspective will be held on Monday, March 10 at Monash University’s Clayton campus.

Light lunch will be provided. Please register: Matthew.Piscioneri@monash.edu

For the program, please see: http://artsonline.monash.edu.au/mfj/download/March%20Seminar%202-3.pdf

The event is supported by the Monash Malaysian Studies Centre and Associate Dean Education Office from the Faculty of Arts.

Launch of the David Hanan Collection of Indonesian Films

An Invitation to the launch of the David Hanan Collection of Indonesian Films is a rare opportunity to celebrate decades of study and dedication to Indonesian Film and culture and to experience some rare footage of a gone-by-era.

Monday 3rd March 2014, 6pm – 7.30pm, The Japanese Studies Centre, Building 54, Clayton Campus (near the bus stop opposite the Law Faculty)

For enquiries, contact Archivist Bronia Kornhauser (bronia.kornhauser@monash.edu)

David Hanan has a long history of association with Monash University. After teaching literature at Monash and Melbourne Universities, and taking a Post-graduate Diploma in Film Studies at University College London, Mr Hanan established Film Studies courses in the Department of Visual Arts at Monash.

Mr Hanan set up links between the Indonesian film world and Australian film festivals and filmmakers during his seven year term as honorary company secretary of the Melbourne International Film Festival and was the editor of Film in South East Asia: Views from the Region (Hanoi: SEAPAVAA and the Vietnam Film Institute, 2001).

During his time at Monash Mr Hanan taught film form, film history, documentary film, film theory, Asian cinema and European cinema, and in 2000 introduced a unit in video and DVD production. He is currently completing a book on Indonesian cinema from 1950 to 2010.

In addition to teaching, PhD student supervision and research; he has been involved in over a dozen Indonesian Film subtitle translations and initiated several film preservation projects. He is currently a curator of ‘Between Three Worlds DVD’ (a division of the MAI Press) that distributes South East Asian films internationally.

Announcements

Joint Monash/Melbourne University Library display of Asian books

A current project of Asian Libraries in Melbourne (the collaborative venture between Monash and Melbourne University Library Asian collections) is a joint display of rare and
special items from both libraries. The display case in the Asian Studies Research Collection in the Matheson Library (Clayton campus) contains some rare Chinese books on loan from the University of Melbourne Cultural Collections. In the Baillieu Library at the University of Melbourne is a combined display of Monash and Melbourne material on the themes of 'Asian arts' and 'Asian scripts'. The Monash Library material on display at the Baillieu Library includes Indonesian, Javanese, Khmer and Jawi script items from the Southeast Asian Pamphlets and Balai Pustaka collections, some Dutch East Indies-era books featuring traditional Indonesian designs in their bindings from the Indonesian Historical collection and books of contemporary Japanese art, Korean traditional weaving and Tibetan Buddhist visual art. The University of Melbourne has contributed Chinese New Year prints and bamboo books and some rare Japanese woodblock printed books.

Please drop by the Asian Studies Research Collection in the Matheson Library (lower ground floor) or the Baillieu Library (ground floor and 3rd floor) at the University of Melbourne to have a look! The Monash display is up until the end of April and the Melbourne display until the end of March. You can read more about the project at https://blogs.monash.edu/library/2014/02/19/asian-arts-exhibition/

 Completion of a PhD degree by David Treisman

David Treisman was awarded his doctoral thesis last week on the subject of: 'New political macroeconomics and international financial markets: asset pricing and the ASEAN process of financial integration '. As a former Monash Asia Institute doctoral candidate who spent most of his postgraduate time with us in researching and writing the thesis, I am sure you will join me in congratulating David for his much deserved success. His examiners were very impressed with his work. I am also pleased to add that David's completion last week continues the MAI's 100% completion rate to date. We have another former MAI student under examination and four more in the pipeline. Our best wishes to them all.

(by Marika Vicziany, former Director of the Monash Asia Institute and ongoing Director of the National Centre for South Asian Studies at the MAI).

About the MAI Bulletin

The Monash Asia Institute Bulletin incorporates news items from the research centres of the Monash Asia Institute, partner organisations and other groups working to promote Asian Studies in Australia.

For further information about the Monash Asia Institute, this Bulletin and our events: http://artsonline.monash.edu.au/mai/

To unsubscribe, please send an email to: Monash-Asia-Institute Enquiries, MAI-Enquiries@monash.edu