Monash Asia Institute Bulletin
August 2015

CONTENTS

✪ From the MAI Director’s Desk
✪ MAI Seminar/Forum

*Trans-Asia as Method*

Australian Decadence/Asian Decency?: marriage equality and same-sex freedoms

*Japanese Studies Centre Seminar*

Motivational profiles and second language identity: A longitudinal case study of adult learners of Japanese

*Asian Cultural and Media Studies Research Cluster*

Cluster Research Day

✪ POSTPONED: NCAS seminar

Declining Sovereignties or Empowerment? A West Papua Discussion through the lens of Charlie Hill-Smith’s Strange Birds in Paradise

✪ Book Launch: *Asia Literate Schooling in the Asian Century*

✪ International conference: *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies 2015*
From the MAI Director’s Desk

The second semester has just started at Monash and we will have many exciting events to come. In August, Mridula Nath Chakraborty, who joined Monash Asia Institute this year, will give an inaugural talk. We also have Japanese Studies Center’ monthly seminar and Asian Cultural & Media Studies Research Cluster will organize a research day. Please be noted that MAI will also hold a Research Day on 24 September (Thurs). This time, we will discuss a fundamental question of how Monash can innovatively enhance the study of “Asia”. The detail will be announced soon. Please keep on checking the forth-coming event details in the bulletin and the MAI web page!

Prof. Koichi Iwabuchi

MAI SEMINAR/FORUM

Trans-Asia as Method

Australian Decadence/Asian Decency?: Marriage equality and same-sex freedoms

Speaker: Mridula Nath Chakraborty (MAI, Monash University)
Discussant: Olivia Khoo (School of Media, Film & Journalism, Monash University)

Date: 10:30-12:30pm, 14 August (Friday)
Venue: N102 meeting room located on Level 1 of the Menzies building, Monash Clayton Campus

Light lunch and refreshment will be served before & after the seminar

Abstract: Amidst the chilling winter in Australia this year, one issue seems to be giving many a heat-rash. Even as the ‘debate’ around same-sex marriage hots up and cries of alarm go up, there has been an unusual moment of ‘solidarity’ with Asia. According to Senator Eric Abetz, Australia should not legalise gay marriage because no Asian country has adopted marriage equality. Adding fat to fire, Federal Agriculture Minister Barnaby Joyce claimed that if Australia does pass same-sex marriage, Asian countries are likely to view us as decadent. The pronouncements of Abetz and Joyce effect a curious reversal of the business-as-usual moral hierarchy between the West and the Rest that measures democracy in terms of a hegemonic conception of sexual freedom (among other things). This paper intervenes in the fraught issue of marriage equality and LGBT mobilisation with reference to South Asia and Australia. It examines the force-field around same-sex discussions that hinge on the concept of the identification and the isolation of sexuality as an available marker of being. I argue that the Australian stance that since it has to do business in the Asian Century, it should follow the example of its anti-gay neighbours, is, on the one hand, a blanket assessment of Asian nations as compulsorily & nationally
heteronormative (in the interests of a liberal democratic politics of representation), and on
the other, a negation of the multiplicities, not only of sexualities, but homosocialities that
co-exist and celebrate their existence in ways unrecognisable to Western notions of
hegemonic and homophobic sexuality. I offer a reading of alternative ways of being, as
opposed to identification, from a South Asian perspective, that might have a bearing upon
how we may view the same-sex marriage debate in Australia.

Dr Mridula Nath Chakraborty joined the Monash Asia Institute in February 2015. Trained
in a classical English literary canon at Delhi University, India, her research interests
include postcolonial literatures, literatures of the Indian subcontinent in English and in
translation, translation theory and practice, studies in nationalism, feminisms and
diasporas, public intellectuals, identity politics, culinary cultures, global Englishes and
Bombay cinema. Her recent edited collection of essays, Being Bengali: at home and in the
world (Routledge 2014), is an enquiry into the socio-intellectual history of this eclectic
linguistic group from Eastern India and Bangladesh. She has co-edited A Treasury of
Bangla Stories (Srishti 1999) and her translations have appeared widely. In 1996, she
received an AK Ramanujan Award for the most felicitous translations from two Indian
languages, Bangla and Hindi, into English. Most recently, Mridula’s work has been in
public diplomacy between Australia and India. She has facilitated deep-impact literary and
cultural exchanges between Australia and India through Literary Commons! (2014-15), a
tri-nation Autumn School in Literary Translation (Kolkata 2013) and ALIF: Australia India
Literatures International Forum (Sydney 2012). ALIF was nominated for an Australian Arts
in Asia Award by the Honourable Tony Burke, Minister of the Arts and Immigration in 2013.

Japanese Studies Centre Seminar

Motivational profiles and second language identity: A longitudinal case study of adult learners of Japanese

Speaker: Dr Naomi Kurata, Japanese Program, Monash University
Date/Time: 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm, 12 August 2015
Venue: Japanese Studies Centre Auditorium, G17 building 54, Clayton Campus

This paper reports on some early findings from research on motivational profiles and
trajectories of intermediate students of Japanese at an Australian university. Data were
generated through a series of narrative interviews with three learners over a one-year
period. Drawing on Ushioda’s (2009) theory called “A Person-in-context Relational View
of Emergent Motivation, Self and Identity”, the study explores the complex nature of the
learners’ motivation by considering the influence of some social and contextual factors,
including their identities as learners/users of Japanese and their learning experiences. It
also discusses how these factors contributed to the dynamic nature of their motivation.

Naomi Kurata (Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics, Monash) is a lecturer at Monash University.
She is the author of Foreign Language Learning and Use: Interaction in Informal Social
Networks (London: Continuum, 2011). Her research interest includes teaching/learning Japanese as a foreign language, heritage language education, sociolinguistics and second language acquisition.

**Asian Cultural and Media Studies Research Cluster**

**Research Day**

**Date/Time:** 11:00-13:00, 18 August 2015  
**Venue:** ACJC Seminar rooms, Building H, 8th floor (H8.05), Caulfield Campus

Please join us for lunch as we hear from ACMS research cluster staff as they present their latest research.  
Enquiries to Olivia Khoo (olivia.khoo@monash.edu)

**POSTPONED seminar**

“Declining Sovereignties or Empowerment? A West Papua Discussion through the lens of Charlie Hill-Smith’s Strange Birds in Paradise”

Please be noted that the above seminar scheduled on 5 August 2015 has been postponed.

**ALL INQUIRY to:** joseph.cheer@monash.edu

**Book Launch Invitation**

**Asia Literate Schooling in the Asian Century**

5:00-7:00pm, Friday 21 August 2015

**Venue:** Asia Education Foundation, 4th Floor, Sidney Myer Asia Centre, Cnr Swanston St & Monash Rd, Carlton

Globalization, migration, transnational movements and the development of the tiger economies of Asia have led education leaders and policy makers around the world to view schools as key sites for developing ‘globally competent’, ‘Asia literate’ citizens who have the capabilities to live, work and interact with the people, cultures and societies of Asia. This is the first book to critically scrutinise and analyse the concepts, policies and practices of schooling involved in building intercultural relations with the diverse, contemporary manifestations of ‘Asia’ as part of the broader, international debate about the future of intercultural schooling in a global world. Asia Literate Schooling in the Asian
Century brings into dialogue scholars who are at the forefront of current thinking, policy and practice on Asia-related schooling: Christine Halse, Koichi Iwabuchi, David Walker, Rui Yang, Fazal Rizvi, Dianne Toe, Julie Dyer, Alex Kostogriz, Bob Adamson, Anne Cloonan, Elizabeth Bullen, Trish Lunt, Aaron Koh, Michiko Weinmann and Chengxin Pan.

Launched by Professor John Ingleson, Vice-President, Asian Studies Association of Australia

RSVP by 14 August: diana.langmead@deakin.edu.au

**International Conference**

**Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Conference 2015**

**MAIN THEME:** Undercurrents: Unearthing Hidden Social and Discursive Practices

**DATES:** 7-9 August 2015

**VENUE:** Airlangga University, Surabaya, Indonesia

**ORGANIZERS:** Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Society, University of Indonesia and Airlangga University

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:** Prof. Abidin Kusno, University of British Columbia, Canada

For the detail: http://culturalstudies.asia/iacs-2015-conference-information/

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**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.

The next MAI Bulletin is scheduled for Tuesday 1 September 2015. 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 August 2015

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