

2008 Newsletter of the Centre for the Study of the Chinese Southern Diaspora

About the CSCSD

The Centre for the Study of the Chinese Southern Diaspora at The Australian National University is the only academic centre in the southern hemisphere that promotes research on people of Chinese descent in Southeast Asia, Australia, New Zealand, and the Southwest Pacific. The Centre seeks to stimulate scholarship that reflects the diversity of cultures, places, and political economies in this region, and to contribute critically to the knowledge in the field. In particular, the CSCSD hopes to encourage scholarship that seeks to explore the multifaceted historical and contemporary nature of Chinese diasporic life and experience in the "South Seas" (the Nanyang), its various interfaces with indigenous people and states, its multiple standings in economies, societies and politics, and its global positioning.

Instead of adhering to the outdated conventional narrative framework of Chinese diaspora as a tale of how a unique "Chineseness" manifested itself at different times and places, the CSCSD pursues a regionally and geographically oriented approach, to help free the study of overseas Chinese from its twentieth-century nationalist straight jacket and from the invented tradition of a single or unified Chinese essence.

南方華裔中心創辦於 1999 年, 是以研究和促進東南亞和南太平洋地區華裔為宗旨的學術中心。南方華裔中心謀求研究和反映這個地區在文化、地理、和政治經濟上的多樣性, 同時為擴展這一學術領域作出相應的貢獻。南方華裔中心對這樣一種學術情有獨鐘: 它能夠突破那些陳陳相因的觀念, 去探索華人在南洋的歷史和現狀多方面的經歷, 探索他們與原住民和東南亞國家以及華人不同方言群之間的種種耳鬢廝磨和利益糾纏, 他們在這些國家中經濟、社會和政上的多種角色, 以及他們在全球化中的重新定位。

身處南方大陸, 南方華裔中心對大洋洲及南太平洋地區的華人特別是他們的歷史具有自然的關切。傳統的華人研究框架傾向於講述"華人特有品質" 是如何在不同時代和不同地方發揚光大的故事, 而南方華裔中心更希望去從地區和地理方面入手, 從民族主義的僵硬盔甲中, 從那種被文人墨客創造出來的"統一的、特有的華人真髓論" 中把自己解脫出來。南方華裔中心希望與華人和世界上研究華人的學者一同進步。

CSCSD Activities in 2008

In 2008, the Director of the CSCSD, Dr Li Tana, accepted a visiting research fellowship at the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS) at Kyoto University, Japan. While there she carried out research into the Chinese-language documents in the eighteenth-and nineteenth-century Cham royal archives, as part of a CSCSD research project into the history of Chinese people in that period on the "Water Frontier", the region stretching from the coast of modern Central Vietnam to the Gulf of Thailand.

In her absence, Dr Nola Cooke acted as CSCSD Director, pro tem.

In her capacity as Director, Dr Li was also invited to become a board member of the World Confederation for Institutes and Libraries for Chinese Overseas Studies.

The second issue of *Chinese Southern Diaspora Studies*, focusing on Chinese in Australia, New Zealand and the south-west Pacific, went on-line in October, 2008.

Visiting scholar. Due to Dr Li's absence, no visiting scholar was invited to the Centre in 2008.

Directory of Current PhD Students and Recent Doctoral Graduates Working in Australian Universities on Chinese Southern Diaspora-Related Subjects

McAndrew CHUA

School of Social Sciences, Faculty of Arts, ANU

Email: mcandrew.chua@anu.edu.au

Working Title: 'The Chinese and the Racial Politics of Health in Mid-19th to Early 20th Century Australia'

McAndrew is researching a thesis that will look at the ways public health policies and institutions in mid-19th to early-20th-century Australia contributed to the racialisation and marginalisation of Chinese Australians.

His research interests are in the social history of the Chinese in Australia and the history of medicine and public health in general.

Sophie COUCHMAN

Asian Studies, La Trobe University

Email: sophie.couchman@gmail.com

Title: 'Photographs of Chinese in Australia, 1850s to 1950s'

Sophie's dissertation was accepted in 2008. It explored the way Chinese have been photographed in Australia from the 1850s through to the 1950s. As part of her research she helped develop and currently maintains a website devoted to Chinese–Australian historical images in Australia (www.chia.chinesemuseum.com.au), as well working on the ARC-funded Chinese Heritage of Australian Federation project at La Trobe University (www.chaf.lib.latrobe.edu.au).

HEW Wai-Weng

Political and Social Change, College of Asia and the Pacific, ANU

Email: waiweng.hew@anu.edu.au

Title: 'Contesting Chinese and Islamic Identities in Malaysia and Indonesia: The Case of Chinese Muslims'

Wai-Weng's research is a comparative study of changing identities amongst Chinese Muslims in Malaysia and Indonesia within their political, historical and cultural contexts. Considering the social changes in both countries, this study will investigate how Chinese Muslims, as a minority Muslim group and minority Chinese group, engage with the discourse and representation of Islam and Chineseness. The study uses content analysis to examine the existing literature and relevant documents, besides interviews and participant observation.

His research interests including ethnicity, religion, culture diversity, identity politics and social movement.

Mei-Fen KUO

School of Asian Studies, La Trobe University
Email: lc956050@yahoo.com.tw

Title: 'Making Chinese Australia: The Role of the Sydney Chinese Community, 1892-1912'

Mei-Fen received her doctorate in late 2007. Her thesis traced the making of a distinctively Chinese-Australian community at a time of growing urbanism and emerging Australian and Chinese nationalism, from the 1880s through to the early years of the twentieth century, principally in Sydney and Melbourne. It focused on two main issues: the construction of Chinese-Australian identities and patterns of social leadership, and the part played by Chinese-language newspapers in this process from the early 1890s.

Mei-Fen recently published:

- "The *Chinese Australian Herald* and the Shaping of a Modern 'Imagined' Chinese Community in 1890s Colonial Sydney", *Chinese Southern Diaspora Studies*, 2, 2008: 34-53.

LOH Kah Seng

Asia Research Centre, Murdoch University
Email: K.Loh@murdoch.edu.au; lkshis@gmail.com

Title: 'The 1961 Kampong Bukit Ho Swee Fire and the Making of Modern Singapore'

Kah Seng's thesis is a social history of post-World War Two Singapore. It examines the role of Bukit Ho Swee, an urban kampong slightly west of the Singapore River on the fringe of the urban core, in the transformation of the country from colony to modern, independent state. It looks at the kampong's history from the late colonial period and the impact of the great fire that destroyed it and made 15,694 people homeless on 25 May 1961.

Kah Seng has recently published:

- "Approaching Life and Death: History and Memory in Interviews with Individuals Formerly Suffering from Leprosy in Singapore". *s/pores*. 1 (2), January 2008.
 - <http://spores.wordpress.com/2008/01/12/approaching-life-and-death-history-and-memory-in-interviews-with-individuals-formerly-suffering-from-leprosy-in-singapore>
- "'Our lives are bad but our luck is good": A Social History of Leprosy in Singapore', *Social History of Medicine*, 21 (2), August 2008. Advance Access copy: <http://shm.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/reprint/hkn035?ijkey=mO8JvJeXPNwgAbV&keytype=ref>

NG Tien Eng

School of Humanities and Social Sciences, La Trobe University, Melbourne
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Working title: 'Politics of Coexistence in Global Context: A Peace and Conflict Study in Ethno-religious Politics of Muslim Malays and Diasporic Chinese in Malaysia'

Charlotte SETIJADI-DUNN

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Title: 'Negotiating Chineseness: Young Jakarta Chinese in Post-Suharto Indonesia'

Charlotte's dissertation project in anthropology looks at everyday forms of identity construction among young ethnic Chinese in post-Suharto Indonesia, especially in relation to political activism, peer socialisation and consumption of popular culture as potential sites where ethnic identities are negotiated. She completed her fieldwork research in Jakarta, Indonesia, in 2007 where she was also a visiting fellow at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies

Her research interests include consumerism, multiculturalism, Chinese diaspora studies, popular culture, and cosmopolitanism.

TAN Teng-Phee

Asia Research Centre, Murdoch University

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Title: 'Everyday Politics behind Barbed Wire: Case Studies of Chinese New Villages in Malaya during the 'Emergency', 1948-1960'

Teng-Phee is currently finalising his thesis that examines Chinese New Villages during the Communist Emergency in Malaya. By using a social historical approach and the tools of oral history, he seeks to reconstruct the other side of the story based on the perspectives of the New Villagers, and examine how they responded to government policies and interacted with one another behind barbed wire.

Teng Phee has published a research note entitled "Like a Concentration Camp, *Jah*: Chinese Grassroots Experience of the Emergency and New Villages in British Colonial Malaya", in this issue of *Chinese Southern Diaspora Studies*.