



NZASIA

New Zealand Asian Studies Society Inc

Newsletter

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1. Report from the President

The new years, both eastern and western, are still young enough to warrant a new year greeting to everyone. I hope that 2003 will be a happy, productive and fulfilling year for all NZASIA members and their families.

We can look back on 2002 with some satisfaction, but also with recognition that there is much unfinished work and some big tasks ahead of us. We will be depending on the active involvement of all members to advance the new projects we hope to develop over the next twelve months and more.

The NZASIA Executive Committee that took office last February had four formal, and numerous informal, electronic meetings through 2002, and an actual meeting in Wellington in June. An early decision was to expand Council membership to its constitutional limits in order to have representatives from the newer universities and the teacher education sector. We also agreed to make the NZJAS editorship an Executive Committee position. Committee tasks included an overhaul of the Society's membership database, a revision of the constitution, and a redesign and updating of our website. This housekeeping work has laid the foundations for what we hope will soon be big strides forward. A special thank you to Peter Cozens, Executive Director of the Centre for Strategic Studies, New Zealand, for agreeing to continue as NZASIA's "honorary auditor". Peter has performed this service for the Society over a number of years now, and is unstintingly generous with treasural advice when it is sought.

We were delighted that Asia 2000 Foundation funding was again available for the Postgraduate Research Award Scheme in 2002, and that we were able to offer scholarships to six students (two each from Massey and Canterbury, and one each from Waikato and Otago). Reports by five of the students are published in this Newsletter and give eloquent testimony to the value of the Awards Scheme. We received more than 20 applications for scholarships last year and were impressed with their quality; they are evidence that postgraduate study of Asian topics in New Zealand universities is strong and growing. A notice about the 2003 scholarship round can be found in the *Newsletter*.

A list of our achievements must always include the *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies (NZJAS)* and this *Newsletter*. The significantly improved design and presentation of the *Newsletter* and its solid content make it an increasingly accessible and useful publication. The new *NZJAS* cover designs are giving the journal a distinctive and distinguished look. And the December 2002 issue's special focus on Southeast Asia makes a major statement about the importance of that field of study, and the need for rooting it more deeply in New Zealand universities. The journal is moving from strength to strength.

There is just one important area in which NZASIA did not move forward in 2002, and that is the area of membership recruitment. The Society's membership did not decline last year, but nor did it grow. And the 2001–2002 membership is significantly lower than membership figures for the late 1990s. We need to recover lost members, and to recruit into the Society the Asianists who have recently taken up appointments in our universities and tertiary colleges. We will soon be asking Councillors to undertake campus-based recruitment drives. And I appeal here to all members to help us expand the Society's membership this year.

The NZASIA biennial conferences are always a major event for the Society, and we are grateful to our Auckland colleagues for agreeing to host the 2003 gathering, to be held at the University of Auckland from 21-24 November. The conference theme is *Asia: Images, Ideas, Identities*. Preparation work is now well under way, and there is a conference notice with website details below.

The other major NZASIA initiative in 2003 will be a national survey of Asian Studies in higher education. It is being undertaken in collaboration with, and with funding support from, the Asia 2000 Foundation. The Australian survey conducted by the ASAA in 2001–2002 has helped to prod us into this action. Professor Robin Jeffrey and the other authors of *Maximising Australia's Asian Knowledge* have agreed to let us draw on their questionnaires, and are being extremely generous with advice and offers of help. We anticipate also that the survey and the report that results from it will help us define and delineate new initiatives that we might take over the next few years to advance the study of Asia and promote Asian knowledge among New Zealanders.

In summary, we got a lot done in 2002, and there is good reason to expect that we will get a lot more done in 2003. Thank you to everyone who contributed to last year's work. We look forward to working with you again this year, and with all the new members you help bring on board!

(Pauline Keating)

2. News and Announcements

2.1 National Survey of Asian Studies in Higher Education in New Zealand

All researchers and tertiary-level educators in the Asia field in New Zealand will soon be asked to help with a national survey of Asian Studies by completing a questionnaire. The survey will result in a report that, among other things, makes recommendations about ways in which we can develop and enrich knowledge about Asia among New Zealanders. The report will be ready in time for the NZASIA conference in Auckland in November, and should feed into the Asia Forum that is to be convened by the Asia 2000 Foundation in Wellington at the end of November. We welcome the active involvement of all New Zealand Asianists in this project. You will find further information about it on the Society's website. And you'll be hearing more about it when the questionnaires are ready to be distributed (in early April). See further: www.nzasia.org.nz/member/survey.htm.

(Pauline Keating, Survey Team coordinator)

2.2 Asia 2000-NZASIA Research Awards

For Masters and PhD students in the social sciences and humanities intending to pursue research in Asian studies and to undertake fieldwork in Asia. Applications relating to the Malay world will be considered for a "Malay Studies" scholarship. Special awards will be made in this category through a generous grant from Victoria University's Chair of Malay Studies. Both awards are tenable at any New Zealand university or institute of technology. Information and application forms are available from your institution's Scholarships Office, NZASIA representative, or at www.nzasia.org.nz. See the web site for names of NZASIA representatives in your region. Applications close 5.00pm, Friday 16 May 2003.

2.3 Research Report – by Tan Bee Hoon

Investigating the applicability of "on-line writing labs" (OWLs) in English as a Second Language (ESL) programmes for Asian students at Universiti Putra Malaysia



Bee Hoon (in yellow dress) with Malaysian students in an OWL lab at Massey University.

The purpose of my visit to Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) was to administer two survey questionnaires. The survey aimed to establish the writing needs of English language students and to discern the support for them provided at UPM. I extended my stay at the university beyond the planned four weeks in order to pilot the survey questionnaires in the setting in which they were to be administered.

I had previously received permission from the Head of the Department of English at UPM to undertake survey work among UPM teachers and students. Prior to my departure, I posted the draft questionnaires online, and invited the Wcenter list, an online discussion forum for writing centre practitioners, to comment on them. Upon my arrival in Serdang, I sent letters to all the deans requesting a name list of the lecturers who conduct their courses in English, and permission to administer the survey questionnaires in their faculties.

The survey among the undergraduates involved cluster sampling. Undergraduates who attended each of the three different levels of English proficiency courses were sampled. A timetable for the undergraduate questionnaire administration was

worked out with English proficiency course instructors. The survey with the lecturers was more like a census because every lecturer on the name list provided by each faculty was sent a questionnaire. The questionnaires were meticulously improved by means of feedback from the pilot work, interviewing a few field experts, comments from peer reviews, and email feedback from the distant supervisor. Eventually I was able to print out the final draft of the questionnaires, and they were distributed to 350 lecturers and 418 undergraduates.

I was able, during the time available to me, to fine-tune, pilot, and administer the two questionnaires that are basic to my research. Through meetings and interviews with UPM field experts – people who are skilled at questionnaire design, writing pedagogy, and statistics – I was able to greatly improve the questionnaires. I also gained much invaluable insight and hands-on experience pertaining to questionnaire studies. Furthermore, by introducing myself as a research student at a New Zealand university, and by acknowledging the fieldwork support given to me by the Malay Studies Scholarship, I was able to stimulate considerable interest among UPM lecturers and students about research expertise and opportunities in New Zealand’s tertiary institutions. I provided information about educational conferences that will soon be held in New Zealand and, in turn, was requested to help promote a conference on languages, literatures and cultures organised by UPM.

I encountered some of the typical problems that researchers in the field experience. It was not until my second week at UPM that I had use of an office with a telephone and a networked computer. And it was a struggle to get lecturers to complete and return the questionnaires I sent out to some 350 instructors. Only about 40 were returned after one week. After sending out personalised reminders, making email requests, and doing a lot of door knocking, I was eventually able to collect 118 completed questionnaires from lecturers.

On the whole, however, my fieldwork at UPM contributed significantly towards my overall doctoral research project. Without the Malay Studies Scholarship, I would probably have been restricted to surveying international students from Asia at Massey University. It is unlikely that the findings from a New Zealand-based sample would be directly or accurately applicable to Asian students in their homeland universities. Based on an initial analysis of data collected during my time in Malaysia, it would seem that both lecturers and undergraduates at UPM perceive writing in English to be an important academic and professional skill. Only about 25 per cent of the undergraduates can write effectively in English. Both groups felt more supports are needed to improve undergraduates’ writing in English. They perceive various online writing facilities as very helpful in fostering writing in English. These findings tend to favour the application of OWL theory and practice in Asian ESL settings. Another important benefit from this fieldwork was the opportunity to gain research expertise from established ESL and writing practitioners outside New Zealand. My meetings with these people were enriching and had certainly enhanced my research repertoire.

Bee Hoon is a doctoral candidate in English and Media Studies at Massey University. She spent almost six weeks at the Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) (in Serdang, Selangor) in July-August 2002. A Malay Studies Scholarship helped fund her visit to the UPM. (The Malay Studies Scholarships are contributed by the Chair of Malay Studies at Victoria University of Wellington, and are administered within the Asia 2000-NZASIA Research Awards Scheme.)

2.4 Research Report – by Jane Havemann

Fieldwork in Loboc, Bohol (The Philippines). Studying Community Resource Management of the Nipa Palm



Interviewing in Loboc beside a traditional house with bamboo walls (and nipa roof).

For eight weeks I became the ninth member of a family in the municipality of Loboc, Bohol (Philippines), approximately 26km from the provincial capital Tagbilaran. I took part in much of the daily life of the Lobocanos. I ate the same food as the family and socialised with them. I frequently chatted with my host-father, as he spoke English well, and with my two host sisters who are close to my own age and always invited me to participate in whatever they were doing. One of them was also my research assistant. Their own social networks meant that many people were aware of my presence in the community and I was widely accepted. People were interested in why I was there, and I was often asked why I was alone, what New Zealand was like, and what my marital status was! Being immersed in a family situation also enabled me to learn some of the local dialect, particularly frequently used phrases or words. This was very important, because my host-mother did not speak English. We were forced, therefore, to communicate in what little we knew of each other’s languages. On many occasions I gave great amusement to the family with my failed attempts at correct pronunciation!

I was fortunate to arrive in the Philippines just as my supervisor, Peter Urich, was also making a visit. Peter not only speaks the local dialect (Visayan), but also has numerous contacts made over sixteen years through frequent trips to the Philippines. For the first few days I essentially “tagged along” with Peter to his meetings with NGO, academic, and government staff in Cebu, Tagbilaran, and Bilar. This was very useful not only in terms of meeting people whom I could later come back to see, but also for familiarising myself with the new places and people I was encountering.

Whilst living in Bohol I conducted over thirty interviews with nipa growers and owners in Loboc and the adjacent municipality of Loay. I asked questions about issues such as land ownership, nipa management and decision-making, about environmental sustainability, how the nipa had changed through time, the future that nipa growers envisaged for the nipa swamps, and how pressures to convert nipa land to other land uses were being dealt with. I conducted additional interviews with members of a community in Loay whose members had used nipa as a secondary source of livelihood in the past, until their nipa lands had been converted to a fishpond by a local businessman. I asked them questions about how this had occurred and what resistance there had been. I also talked with members of a community in an area that had been declared a Protected Area to see how the declaration had affected them and their management of nipa.

I met and spoke with a wide range of people. They included barangay (village) captains, local entrepreneurs concerned about nipa conservation and livelihood, the Loboc and Loay mayors and members of their planning and agricultural staff. I met with NGO staff at PROCESS (Participatory Research, Organization of Communities and Education towards Struggle for Self-Reliance), with people from BANGON (Bohol Alliance of Non-Governmental Organisations) and SWCF (Soil and Water Conservation Foundation), and with staff at the Central Visayas State College of Agriculture, Forestry and Technology (CVSRAFT). I had a number of meetings with staff at DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) in Tagbilaran and at the regional office in Cebu. Staff at PPDO (Provincial Planning and Development Office), BEMO (Bohol Environment Management Organisation), and BFAR (Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources) were also very helpful. In addition, my research assistant and I spent countless hours at the *Bohol Chronicle* office in Tagbilaran searching through newspapers from 1985 to the present, looking for any relevant reported material.

Towards the end of my stay in the Philippines I conducted two focus group discussions with nipa owner/growers; one meeting in Loay and one in Loboc. These were facilitated in the vernacular by Marin Labonite from Research, Development and Extension, and Tom Reyes, the community forester, both at CVSRAFT. During the focus group discussions community members conducted resource mapping of nipa to show where nipa was and who it belonged to. Other issues that were discussed included nipa management, the ecological role of nipa, problems faced by nipa owners-growers, the history of ownership and future plans for nipa.

I feel extraordinarily lucky to have experienced the hospitality and generosity not only of my host family, but of the nipa owners and growers in Loboc and Loay. No one ever refused to be interviewed, and on many occasions I turned up on a cold-call to arrange an interview time and was invited to conduct the interview then and there. People were as grateful to me for being interested in their stories as I was grateful to them for sharing those stories. There were, inevitably, some difficulties and frustrations. I had preconceived ideas about what I would find in Loboc. Those preconceptions, of course, shaped the research questions I had prepared before leaving New Zealand. When I got into the field and started talking to people, I discovered that the situation was quite different from what I had envisaged. For example, although the government owns the nipa land, it is not harvested or managed communally. Many cultivators work within relatively well-defined boundaries in the nipa swamps, and their land has been inherited from countless generations of ancestors. Therefore, my original questions that related to common property were not relevant.

Another difficulty was lack of background information on Loboc and Loay's natural environment, particularly in relation to the nipa. Neither the municipality nor DENR in Tagbilaran could tell me where the protected area was. Although the Loboc MPDC possessed a land-use map that included nipa, it was in fact inaccurate and did not include all the nipa that was actually present. Loay municipality has not yet finished producing their land-use map, but I am told that nipa will not feature on it. Unfortunately, the lack of resources available to the government departments hinders their ability to collect and disseminate environmental information. Perhaps one of the biggest problems I faced was the language barrier. I had a bilingual research assistant, but she had not had training in an environmental field, and so some of the concepts I wanted to discuss (the term "ecosystem", for example) were unfamiliar to her, making it difficult to convey my meanings to interviewees. At times my research assistant also struggled to relay information to me in English. It would have been great to have had some language training, but the eight-weeks I spent in Loboc did not really allow me enough time to learn much Visayan, other than a few words or phrases. Although many people do speak a certain amount of English, I certainly needed my research assistant in order to communicate. As language helps to construct meaning, and I was unable to participate in Visayan, I do wonder how much information I missed in the process of translation. Time constraint was another difficulty. As I found out more about the big picture of nipa management in Loboc and Loay (as well as elsewhere in Bohol), I realised that I had more questions that I wanted to ask, more issues to follow-up, and more people that I would have benefited from talking to. Unfortunately, time was finite! I will have to wait until next time to pursue the unanswered questions.

My fieldwork has been crucial to my overall postgraduate program. Interviews with local people, government department staff and NGOs would not have been possible without an opportunity to visit the Philippines. Similarly in order to get a 'feel' for the place (where and how people live) it was imperative that I go there and live amongst the community.

Jane will soon complete an MPhil in the International Global Change Institute at the University of Waikato. Her Asia 2000-NZASIA Research Award helped fund eight weeks in the Philippines (July-August 2002).

2.5 Research Report – by Glen McCabe

The Structure and Support Base of Japanese Soccer



At Expo '70 Memorial Park, just before a Gamba Osaka home game

My fieldwork visit to Japan ran from Friday 13 September to Wednesday 9 October 2002. During these three weeks I explored many economic and social aspects of contemporary soccer in Japan. First, I investigated the public face of soccer culture by going to matches, a total of seven. Of these, four were home games of Gamba Osaka, two of Yokohama Football Club (the two clubs I chose as case studies) and one of the Shonan Bellmare club. I watched from a variety of positions (for example, on the home and away end embankments and from seated areas), noticing the distinction between the more active fans behind the goals and the passive majority, and the effect these differences had on the spectacle as a whole.

With soccer in Japan still largely seen as just one of several options in the entertainment market, the type of matchday atmosphere is crucial to the clubs' success or failure. Presence at matches thus gave me valuable insights into the health of the clubs, as well as supporter attitudes. I also tried wherever possible to make conversation with fellow spectators. Those who would talk openly to foreigners made some revealing off-the-cuff comments about their feelings towards the home team, or about the often-flimsy reasons ("I like the colours of their uniform") why they come to matches. And at my first Yokohama FC match, one such conversation led to an invitation to the annual team BBQ, where I talked with several players, the manager and the club's founding general manager. The attitudes of team members, and the differences between the attitudes of managers and players, gave insights into how the various actors perceive their place in the sports/entertainment market, and how teams such as Yokohama FC are moving rapidly away from a corporatist orientation towards gearing their organisation to relations with the local community. I also talked to a mid-ranking manager at Gamba; he explained his club's 'corporate-style' organisational emphasis on success, an approach that contrasts strongly with Yokohama FC's family emphasis.

I also investigated the academic study of soccer in Japan. Meetings with eight researchers at four universities (Tsukuba, Hitotsubashi, Ritsumeikan and Osaka University of Health and Sport Sciences) gave me invaluable perspectives on sports policy, soccer-related grassroots volunteer movements and Japanese body culture, as well as much soccer-specific statistical information and sociological analyses. The information I collected has broadened my understanding of the environment in which soccer in Japan operates; it also sheds light related to the analysis of my case studies. And the contacts gained through these meetings will prove invaluable when I need to tap further specialist advice and feedback.

The difficulties I encountered included the high cost of doing anything in Japan, and gaining access to interview subjects. Especially at larger clubs like Gamba, direct approaches are largely futile, and I had to rely on limited contacts in academia to arrange interviews. Even so, the fieldwork made an invaluable contribution to my post-graduate programme. Prior to going to Japan, secondary sources such as journal articles and TV documentaries had given me what I thought was a good grasp of the sociological realities of soccer in Japan, such as the impression that popular teams drew huge crowds every week. By actually going to matches, however, I was able to see half-full stadia; in fact, some were less than half-full. Secondary sources, in other words, can be less than reliable. Secondly, discussions with specialist researchers helped me to probe issues I was unsure about, and to fine-tune the focus of my thesis. I now have a better understanding of the differences between Japanese and Western academic approaches to the sociology of soccer, and better appreciate the differences between Japanese and Western contexts in relation to factors such as regional affinity. I was also able to discuss key parts of my thesis with specialists – issues such as the interaction and synthesis of structure and support aspects of Japanese soccer. Associate Professor Whang Soon-Hee at Tsukuba was particularly helpful, giving me detailed advice about which paths might lead to feasible conclusions.

The fieldwork was an opportunity to collect detailed information about both background and soccer-specific issues that I could not have had access to in New Zealand. As a result of my visit, I now see a clear connection between local government policy towards sporting facilities and its effects on grassroots support; previously I had considered this connection to be fairly insignificant. And although many clubs now maintain websites, data about spectator attendance, for example, is still only available in print form – another reason why last September's visit has greatly assisted my research. The most important aspect of my visit to Japan last year, however, was the opportunity to meet with key actors and develop relationships with them. Such meetings are critically important for foreign researchers. Electronic communications can help maintain such links, but they cannot initiate them. This applies to links with both Japanese academic sports-study specialists and the professional athletes. Nothing can replace the personal connections that a visit to Japan makes possible. And I now have the opportunity to harness these contacts, because from April 2003 I will be doing two years' graduate research at Tsukuba University. Funded by a Japanese Ministry scholarship, with the opportunity to enter a Master's or PhD course, this is an outstanding opportunity, of which I am very proud. I will have the chance to interact with leading researchers on a regular basis, and thus my fieldwork in 2002 has been critical to not only the success of my Canterbury MA thesis, but also my career prospects.

Glen submitted his MA thesis on soccer culture in Japan at the University of Canterbury in February. His three weeks in Japan last September was partly funded by an Asia 2000-NZASIA Research Award.

2.6 Research Report - Robyn Andrews

Community maintenance and Development within Calcutta's Anglo-Indian Community



At lunch with an Anglo-Indian family in their home.

I am studying the ways in which the Anglo-Indians of Calcutta are maintaining and building their identity as a distinct community. I returned to India in early February this year to follow up the fieldwork research I had undertaken in early 2002. During this year's month-long visit to Calcutta, I stayed in a central city Anglo-Indian hostel. Also staying in the hostel were a number of young Anglo-Indian men, who live there long-term, the Anglo-Indian family who run the hostel, and the administration staff of the Anglo-Indian school with which the hostel is associated. Being based in the hostel meant that I had constant access to a large group of Anglo-Indians. As well as being beneficial for my research, the hostel people also provided me with good company. They all knew why I was there and seemed happy to talk with me about their lives, including me in many of their day-to-day activities. Participant observation is my primary method of data collection, and so the hostel experience was intrinsic to my project.

My days were extremely full – much more so than when I'm at home in Palmerston North. 'Bed tea' was brought to me in my room before 7am every morning. The day then filled with various activities, including interviews and updating my fieldwork journal. The day invariably ended with a late dinner with one or other of my research participants. On more than one occasion the hostel gateman earned extra baksheesh for letting me in after midnight. Members of the Anglo-Indian community, no matter what their socio-economic position, are extremely hospitable. Along with their Christianity and Western lifestyle, hospitality is one of the community's hallmarks. My fieldwork was, in part, made up of a series of social events. Included in my itinerary was attendance at some personal milestone events such as a wedding blessing, a 25th wedding anniversary celebration and the dedication of a baby in a Baptist ceremony. I attended a Valentine's Day Ball as well as several house parties (I will need to take dancing lessons before I go back). I also participated in the Christian dimension of their community life by attending a variety of church services and pilgrimages.

My fieldwork had more formal components as well. I collected several life stories and interviewed some key figures in Calcutta's Anglo-Indian community about their perceptions of the community's health and longevity. One of the objectives of this year's fieldwork trip was to increase my understanding of the Anglo-Indian schooling system. For this purpose, I carried out interviews with a number of people involved in the schooling system: members of Anglo-Indian School boards, school principals, the present Member of the Legislative Assembly, past Members of Parliament, the founder of an education centre set up for Anglo-Indian 'dropouts'. I also met with the recently retired Catholic Bishop who had had the overall responsibility for the Catholic Anglo-Indian schools. The hostel I stayed in houses the administrative quarters of a century-old Anglo-Indian school in Kalimpong (in the Himalayan foothills near Darjeeling), where large numbers of Calcutta's poor Anglo-Indians receive a sponsored education. I was able to talk with a range of people associated with this school – from board members, to past and present pupils, to parents of present pupils. Information from all of these sources has given me a good overview of education among the Anglo-Indians of Calcutta and of their various education institutions. It seems to me, and I shall argue this in my thesis, that although Anglo-Indians were the founders of English-medium schools in India, Anglo-Indian students are now disadvantaged in these schools.

Another fieldwork objective was to discern and understand the community's marriage patterns. I spoke to a number of people about marriage partner preferences, mixed marriages, and other marriage trends. One of the eroding influences on the community is the increasingly frequent practice of marrying outside the community. This leads to increasing assimilation of Anglo-Indians into the majority population – a process compounded by the fact that children of non-Anglo-Indian fathers are not regarded as Anglo-Indian; the Indian Constitution states that they are not. By returning to visit people I had spent time with a year ago I gained a better appreciation of the way in which these people's lives change over time. Without return trips it is more difficult to perceive and understand the dynamics of change operating on both a personal and community level. I hope to make a final visit to Calcutta before completing this research.

The biggest problem I encountered was lack of time to do all I wanted to do. My first visit was two months long. This year's visit was limited to one month, and I had a huge amount to do in a relatively short period of time. Fortunately I remained healthy throughout my stay, and so was able to keep up a hectic pace. I had maintained email contact with many of the people I met in 2002, and so was able to get down to work the minute I arrived. As I now look back on my visit, I see it as a very productive time in terms of data collection and gaining further insights into the dynamics of the community I am studying. I'm sure my feeling of needing to do more than I actually accomplished is shared by many researchers. There is only one way to do this type of anthropological research and that is to be in the field among the people whose lives you are interested in understanding. Without being in Calcutta I could not have carried out interviews or collected life stories. Nor would I have been able to experience the challenges of living in a large, Hindu-dominated city, challenges that the people I am studying constantly face. Some of my experiences of living in Calcutta mirrored those of the community members. This fieldwork trip, a year after the first, gave me further insights into the community that I did not gain the first time round.

Robyn is a PhD student in Social Anthropology at Massey University. She is investigating issues relating to community identity and community maintenance among Calcutta's Anglo-Indians, and received an Asia 2000-NZASIA Research Award to help fund a fieldwork trip to Calcutta (now officially known as Kolkata) in February this year.

2.7 Research Report – by Siân Halcrow

Subadult Health in Prehistoric Southeast Asia



Excavation of an Iron Age adult burial.

The overall aim of my PhD research is to produce a large-scale comparative analysis of subadult health in prehistoric Southeast Asia. For this purpose I will use skeletal samples from the Mun and the Chi River Valleys (tributaries of the Mekong River) in Northeast Thailand, samples that span from the Neolithic to the Iron Age (2500BC to AD500). I anticipate that, by using a biocultural approach, a comparison of health among the samples may illuminate the natural and cultural environmental factors that are important in influencing the health of a population. Changes in the cultural environment occur over time with the development of complex societies. This study can contribute to understanding the development of the socio-cultural developments in Thailand, a question pertinent to current archaeological investigations being carried out in this area.

Fieldwork is an integral part of my programme of study. Data collection from skeletal samples is essential if I am to address adequately my research questions relating to subadult health and growth in prehistoric Southeast Asia. I have just completed a first period of fieldwork in Thailand, from 25 November 2002 to 15 March 2003. There were two main components of this time in the field. The first was data collection from prehistoric subadult skeletal samples, housed at the Thailand Fine Arts Department in Phimai, and excavation of archaeological samples from the Northeast Thailand site of Ban Non Wat. Data collection involved the study of a total number of 140 subadults from the archaeological sites of Mung Sema, Noen U-Loke and Ban Lum Khao. I investigated and recorded bone elements present, estimation of age of death, collection of metric measurements of long bones and cranial bones, and any dental and skeletal

pathology. Radiographs were acquired of long bones and dentition to assess growth and dental age respectively. A photographic record of dentition and pathology of the samples studied was also undertaken.

The second component of my fieldwork involved the excavation, data collection and curation of the skeletal remains from the site of Ban Non Wat in Northeast Thailand. This was carried out alongside Dr Nancy Tayles from the Anatomy and Structural Biology Department, University of Otago. The excavation at Ban Non Wat is part of the “Origins of Angkor Archaeological Project” run by the Otago University’s Department of Anthropology and the Fine Arts Department of Thailand. This is a multidisciplinary research collaboration investigating the development of the Iron Age as a precursor to the development of the Angkorian civilisation. The 2001-2003 excavation seasons have uncovered an archaeological sequence that spans from the Neolithic through to the late Iron Age, with a total of 118 human burials. This site is important archaeologically, as Neolithic burials are rare in Thailand and no large cemeteries have been excavated until now. This site therefore gives a unique insight into the period from the Neolithic to the Late Iron Age. This extended period of occupation has additional research potential as it provides an opportunity to see if there is any health change over the whole prehistoric period in question.

Sample size in bioarchaeology is always an issue when exploring age structure of the sample, changes in health over time and differences in health between sites. The large, well-preserved sample uncovered from this site will be particularly useful for addressing these questions. It is also interesting to note the discoveries of extremely rich grave offerings with very early interments at this site. This poses interesting questions surrounding the existing theories of social organisation development in Southeast Asia (a subject on which Otago’s Professor Charles Higham has recently published). Other activities undertaken while in Phimai included the analysis and preparation of osteological reports on two subadult individuals excavated from the archaeological site of Ban Kra Buaeng, Northeast Thailand. These were submitted to the director of the excavation, Dr Rachanie Thosarat of the Fine Arts Department of Thailand.

I was also lucky enough to visit an excavation in Lopburi, Central Thailand, directed by Dr Sawang Lertrit, an archaeologist from Silpakorn University, Bangkok. I was invited to present a “hands-on” tutorial on aspects of human osteology. In this tutorial I aimed to assist the students in identifying human bone in the field and develop their understanding of techniques of field recording, excavation and curation of human bones. Visiting this excavation was also invaluable in terms of meeting and making contacts with researchers in Southeast Asian archaeology.

My activities at the site, which included excavation, lifting, field data recording and curation of the human remains, form the basis of my practical training as a bioarchaeologist. The large number of burials uncovered presented a challenging workload, and provided me with an opportunity to develop my skills in excavation considerably. As a result of this fieldwork and data collection I plan this year to present papers at the New Zealand Archaeological Association Conference in April and a general paper, a requirement of my Asian Studies Research Grant (University of Otago), describing some of my preliminary results. In

2004 I plan to present my results to at least two international conferences including the American Association of Physical Anthropology Conference and the Palaeopathology Association Meeting.

Siân is a PhD student in Biological Anthropology at the University of Otago and is making a study of subadult health and disease in prehistoric Southeast Asia. She has planned two periods of fieldwork in Northeastern Thailand. The first, late November 2002 to mid-March 2003, was supported by an Asia 2000-NZASIA grant.

2.8 Membership Renewal and Society Promotion

Members are reminded that their 2003 NZASIA membership should be renewed as soon as possible. See membership notice at the end of the *Newsletter*. In a publicity drive, a promotional flier has been placed on the Society's website. Members are requested to use this flier in a campaign to increase membership of the Society.

2.9 New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies

The next issue of the *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* will include the following articles:

- Badri Honour Narayan, 'Violence and Contesting Narratives: A Study of Myth and Reality'
- Erich Kolig, 'Muslims in New Zealand'
- Law Kam-ye, 'The Civic Disobedience of Malay Muslims: The Tudung Incident in Post-9/11 Singapore'
- Chan, Selina Ching, 'Interpreting Chinese Tradition and Identity: A Clansmen Organization in Singapore'
- Thang Leng Leng, 'Deconstructing Japanization – Reflections from the "Learn from Japan" Campaign in Singapore'
- Ian Holliday & Michael Gallagher, 'Electoral Systems, Representational Roles and Legislator Behaviour in Hong Kong'
- Kawai Junji, 'Syncope in the Te-form with Auxiliary Verbs'
- Obana Yasuko, 'The use of kare/kanojo in Japanese Society Today'
- Michael Haugh, 'Japanese and Non-Japanese Perception of Japanese Communication'
- Raquel Hill, 'A Mobile Phone of One's Own: Japan's Generation M'

There will also be a feature review of recent books that deal with Partition, as well as a number of other reviews.

(Brian Moloughney, Editor, *NZJAS*)

3. Reports from the Regions

3.1 News from Victoria University

Teaching

The proposal for the introduction of a BA Honours programme in Chinese is presently making its way through the internal approval processes in Victoria University. It is expected that if approved, this programme will become available to our students from 2004 onwards. Also, under the auspices of the Asia 2000 Scholarship, the Chinese Programme presently has 6 students studying Chinese in China (5 at Nanjing University; 1 at Zhejiang University).

Research

Gerald Chan is currently on leave to the University of Cambridge to co-ordinate a China project in collaboration with the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London. The project looks into China's international development in strategic, legal, economic and trade areas. For interest and information, please check www.riia.org, then click on 'Research' and then 'Asia'.

The Sarawak Connection



Dr Murray with a Dayak Poultry Contract farmer.

The Institute of Geography, School of Earth Sciences at VUW has an on-going research and exchange program with the Faculty of Social Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), Kuching. Developed over the past decade the arrangement has allowed Geography Honours students to spend up to a month undertaking fieldwork in Sarawak. The experience has been invaluable, giving young New Zealanders a rare opportunity to work, mainly in the rural areas of this rapidly developing part of the world.

Dr Warwick Murray and Dr Philip Morrison recently returned from fieldwork in the State where they worked with a colleague, Dr Dimbab Ngidang, from UNIMAS on a study of a contract farming scheme. What made this particular example of contract farming so fascinating was the way in which a quasi market for poultry was created by the State in order to simulate market conditions to train indigenous (Dayak) farmers in commercial farming and enterprise skills. The private poultry market is largely controlled by several large integrated Chinese run companies who also offer farming contracts

but only to experienced large and relatively sophisticated commercial farming operations. As part of the 8th Malaysia Plan this particular farmer-training scheme we studied is designed to provide a more gentle market environment for the incubation of commercial farming skills within families without a commercial background. In addition to publishing the research Drs Murray and Morrison will also use much of the material in their own Geography and Development Studies teaching programs. More information on the School of Earth Sciences may be found at www.geo.vuw.ac.nz.

Publications

Sekhar Bandyopadhyay: 'Hindu solidarity and dalit identity: discourses of hegemony in colonial Bengal', *Prachya: a journal on Asia; past and present*. [University of Calcutta], Number 1, November 2002, pp.1-41.

Tim Beal: The Strategic Contributions of Small and Medium Enterprises to the Economies of Japan and Malaysia: Some Comparative Lessons for Malaysian SMEs The Seventh International Conference on Global Business and Economic Development, Strategies For Sustainable Globalization Business Responses To Regional Demands & Global Opportunities, Bangkok, Thailand, 8-11 January, 2003, pp1337-1354 (with Moha Asri Abdullah).

(Sekhar Bandyopadhyay)

3.2 News from Otago University

"Tsugaru and Otago: Comparative Research on History, Literature, and Music" is a collaborative, interdisciplinary research project directed by Dr Nanyan Guo that has recently received funding from the Asia 2000 Foundation of New Zealand. The research will be conducted by scholars from the University of Otago and three Japanese institutions: University of Tokyo, Hirosaki University and Joetsu University of Education. This project has four main aims: 1) Developing a mutually beneficial and ongoing exchange relationship between Otago and its sister universities in Japan (Hirosaki and Tokyo); 2) Enabling New Zealand's scholars to conduct research in Japan, and Japanese scholars in New Zealand; 3) Enhancing the quality and level of research on two peripheral regions (Tsugaru and Otago) through comparative analyses of both regions' history, literature and music; and 4) Bringing fresh insight to the understanding of the two regions' formation of identity, the role in the nation-state, and the potentiality of being a centre of cultural interactions. Scholars involved into this project are Dr Nanyan Guo (Otago University), Professor Seiichi Hasegawa (Hirosaki University), Dr Henry Johnson (Otago University), Associate Professor Hidemichi Kawanishi (Joetsu University of Education), Dr Kanako Kitahara (Hirosaki University), and Associate Professor Masami Nakao (Tokyo University).

Dr Jing-Bao Nie received a Marsden grant with Associate Investigators Dr Nanyan Guo and Arthur Kleinman (Harvard University). The research is on Japanese Doctors' Human Experimentation in Wartime China: Ethical Challenges and Socio-cultural Dimensions. To develop effective biological weapons, between 1932 and 1945 Japanese doctors conducted a series of barbarous experiments on Chinese, Russians, Mongolians, Koreans, Americans and others. These experiments included vivisections; intentional infection with diseases such as plague, anthrax, cholera and typhoid; trials of unverified treatments; experiments for fun; and studies of the tolerance of the human body to extreme conditions. In circumstances similar to the crimes committed by Nazi doctors, thousands of people were experimented upon, tortured, and murdered in factories of death throughout China. However, as a result of complex historical, political and cultural factors in China, Japan and the international community, these atrocities are far less publicised and studied than those conducted by the Nazis. Although a number of archival, historical and journalistic works on these atrocities have appeared since the 1980s, no systematic intellectual effort has yet been given to the moral issues of war crimes committed by Japanese doctors. This project attempts to take up this long-overdue task. As an interdisciplinary and international project, its aim is to examine the ethical and complicated socio-cultural dimensions of these forgotten atrocities, with special attention to challenges for today, especially for bioethics and medicine.

(Henry Johnson)

4. Conferences

4.1 15th NZASIA International Conference

Asia: Images, Ideas, Identities. 21-24 November 2003, The University of Auckland

Regular surveys, in New Zealand and elsewhere, show "Asia" to be the region of most importance for the future. But how can informed, meaningful and relevant knowledge about "Asia" be produced? This conference will bring together, from across a wide range of disciplines, specialists in the study of Asia from New Zealand, Australia, Asian countries and further afield, as well as government, business people and members of the community with an interest in the region. Through its invited speakers, individual contributors and panellists, it will draw on the experience of other countries in developing knowledge and understanding of "Asia" in order better to inform future interaction - political, commercial, economic, academic and intellectual - with and among countries and peoples of the Asian region. Among the confirmed international speakers will be specialists from Singapore, Australia and the United States. Details are still being finalised but will be posted on the relevant page of the conference website. The Organising Committee will welcome proposals for papers and also for panels. *Asia: Images, Ideas, Identities* follows the successful 14th NZASIA International Conference *Asian Futures, Asian Traditions* hosted

by the University of Canterbury in 2001, and attended by over 120 participants from Asia, Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand. For further information see: www.nzasia.org.nz/conference/ConferenceHomePage.htm.

4.2 Indonesia Council Open Conference 2003

Following the success of the 2001 Open Conference in Melbourne, the Indonesia Council will hold its second Open Conference in Canberra on 29-30 September 2003 to follow the annual Indonesia Update. This multi-disciplinary conference provides a forum for the presentation of new and innovative work on Indonesia, with particular emphasis on the involvement of newer Indonesianists and postgraduate students. The 2003 conference will be hosted by the Australian National University with the support of the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies (RSPAS) and the Indonesia Project, Division of Economics, RSPAS. There will be no registration fee for the conference. The Indonesia Council now invites proposals for papers and panels. Papers will be presented in plenary and concurrent panel sessions of three papers with a discussant. Proposals for papers should include a title and an abstract of 150 words as well as biodata of 100 words. Papers should be no more than 20 minutes duration (equivalent to 2000 words). Completed papers will be required by 1 September. Proposals for panels should include either a suggested panel title only or the titles and abstracts of three papers of 20 minutes duration. Proposals for panels may also include a suggested discussant. A selection of papers will be published in the *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*. Proposals for papers and panels should be received by Friday 17 May 2003 and may be emailed to indonesiacouncil@yahoo.com or posted to:

The Indonesia Council
c/o Dr Robert Cribb
Division of Pacific & Asian History
Australian National University
Canberra ACT 0200 AUSTRALIA

Phone: (02) 6125 4247
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5. People in NZASIA

Bill Willmott has been elected a Life Member of NZASIA by Council, in particular for his contribution to the furtherance of relations between New Zealand and China.

6. Membership

We remind you that the membership fee includes a subscription to the *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* (published twice yearly). The subscription period runs from 1 January to 31 December. Other benefits of membership include the *Newsletter*, conference participation with reduced rates (including reciprocity with ASAA conferences), the potential for networking with other members, the benefits of keeping abreast of developments in Asian Studies in NZ (including scholarship opportunities), and the opportunity to become actively involved in those developments. Please send a cheque for the subscription amount, along with any recent changes of detail such as title, institution, postal or email address. If you are a new member, please contact us using the form found on our website: www.nzasia.org.nz.

- New Zealand subscribers: NZ\$50 for individuals and NZ\$75 for institutions.
- Australian subscribers: AUS\$50 for individuals: AUS\$75 for institutions.
- All other subscribers: US\$40 for individuals: US\$50 for institutions.
- Associate Membership: NZ\$10; AUS\$10; US\$5

Subscriptions should be sent to:

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15th NZASIA International Conference

Asia: Images, Ideas, Identities

21-24 November 2003

The University of Auckland

www.nzasia.org.nz/conference/ConferenceHomePage.htm



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The views expressed in the Newsletter are those of the contributors and not the official position of NZASIA
