

# Asia and Europe: Histories of Entanglement

## ICAS Preconference in The Hague

2019 marks three decades since the end of the Cold War, its aftermath marked by the 'end of history' thesis. Political and ideological transformations converged around an elite consensus concerning liberal democracy and global capitalism. Yet talk of a peace dividend notwithstanding, optimism has given way to disillusionment and resentment, in many Western and non-Western countries. Indeed, the current historical moment is marked by unprecedented challenges, including xenophobic nationalism, systemic racism, an indefinite global war on terror, and a collective ecological malaise. The post-WWII narrative of unilinear progress, and the Enlightenment ideal of collective prosperity, is now questioned.

The ICAS Conference Pre-Event on 15<sup>th</sup> July at Leiden University College in The Hague poses crucial questions about collective imaginings, in Asia and Europe, in regard to the historical conditions which shape today's world at local and global levels. How do the histories of Europe and Asia interact, converge, and diverge? What are the enduring legacies and sentiments of these narratives?

This event starts with a keynote address by Naoki Sakai. It is followed by a roundtable and report on the *Me, Asian?* series of dialogues conducted with Asian/Dutch communities in The Hague. This leads to a block of interdisciplinary panels dealing with entangled histories of Asia and Europe, regarding collective narratives, women and political violence, popular culture, and the commodification of Asian healing traditions. Alongside a *Global History of Asia* student exhibition, the event will conclude with a theatre performance, *Hotel De Jong*, based on a 1907 event during the Second Peace Conference in The Hague.

Time	Program
10.00 – 10.15	Welcome by prof. Judi Mesman (dean of LUC)
10.15 – 11.00	Keynote by Naoki Sakai, Cornell University.
11.00 – 11.15	Break
11.15 – 12.15	Roundtable
12.15 – 13.30	Lunch & Asia in Global History poster exhibition
13.30 – 15.00	Presentation on the "Me, Asian?!" project
15.00 – 15.30	Break
15.30 – 17.00	Parallel sessions
17.00 – 17.30	Break
17.30 – 18.30	Theatre performance by 7MRP The Hotel De Jong
18.30 – 20.00	Reception with walking dinner

Program details can be found below.

## KEYNOTE

Naoki Sakai is Goldwin Smith professor of Asian Studies at Cornell University, and is a member of the graduate field of History. He has published in a number of languages in the fields of comparative literature, intellectual history, translation studies, the studies of racism and nationalism, and the histories of semiotic and literary multitude - speech, writing, corporeal expressions, calligraphic regimes, and phonographic traditions. He has led the project of TRACES, a multilingual series in four languages - Korean, Chinese, English, and Japanese (German, Italian, and Spanish will be added in 2008) - whose editorial office is located at Cornell, and served as its founding senior editor (1996 - 2004). In addition to TRACES, Naoki Sakai serves as a member of the following editorial boards, positions east asia cultural critique (in the United States), Post-colonial studies (in Australia), Tamkang Review (in Taiwan), International Dictionary of Intellectual History (Britain and Germany), Modern Japanese Cultural History (Japan), ASPECTS (South Korea) and Multitudes (in France).

The tentative keynote title is: The End of Pax Americana and the Nationalism of Hikikomori

## ROUNDTABLE

The roundtable will discuss the themes brought forward in the keynote, and will be moderated by Maja Vodopivec and Ajay Gandhi (LUC). Roundtable participants include:

- Barnita Bagchi, Utrecht University
- Jin-Heon Jung, Freie Universität Berlin
- William Marotti, UCLA
- Ethan Mark, Leiden University

## POSTER EXHIBITION

*Asia in Global History* class explores the global conditions that shaped the historical narratives in Asia, from the Middle East, Central Asia, via India and China, to Japan. The class starts with the early 19th century and colonialism of the European powers. The intrusion of the European modern institutions, such as nation-state, nationalism, the Enlightenment idea of progress, modern international law and self-determination, to name only some, had profound consequences on how Asian peoples started thinking about themselves and the ways to respond to that intrusion. A number of ideas, such as pan-Islamism, pan-Asianism, communism, but

also ultra-nationalism and fascism had been developed in reaction to the Western modernity brought with colonialism or a threat from it. This class focuses on global interconnectedness of the events and ideas through space and time, spanning from colonialism to the post-cold war era. The students in their presentations and posters will focus on social movements throughout Asia: from early independence movements to contemporary uprisings, and the ideas underpinning them. The posters are result of their work on these topics, and are hoped to give a comprehensive and nuanced overview of Asian history since the turbulent encounter with the West to the present-day.

## **ME, ASIAN?!**

In 2018-2019 LUC has organized a series of seven evening events for young adults from Asian descent living in The Hague. The series title is 'Me, Asian?!' to denote the wide variety of Asian identities that people might experience, including variation in the extent to which they identify as Asian in the first place, ranging from not at all or hardly (Me, Asian?) to very strongly so (Me, Asian!). The goals of the series of events are to (a) bring together different Asian groups to reflect on their heritage and cultural identities; (b) provide these young people with a platform to exercise agency; (c) inform LUC staff and students of the pertinent issues that are relevant to Asian communities in The Hague. The events cover topics such as migration history, cultural memory, family life and parenting, Asian wellbeing practices, and Asian representation in film, literature, and art. The first four events have attracted a total of more than 200 participants (with participation per event ranging from 40 to 80).

The event series will culminate in a report for the general public, a short documentary made by LUC students, and a scholarly report, the latter two to be presented at the ICAS preconference event.

## **PARALLEL SESSIONS**

### **1. Women and Political Violence in Asia and Europe**

This panel will take a comparative take on the issue of political violence conducted by women in Asia and Europe. Throughout history, both women and men have engaged in political violence. However, women (especially women-mothers) engaged in political violence have often been seen as abnormal, their brains have posthumously been examined, and the media and the public have been captivated by these women. A group of scholars in feminism, psychology, memory studies and media will attempt at developing an interdisciplinary approach in understanding factors which prompted women from Europe and Asia to engage in political violence to achieve their political objectives.

Moderated by Judi Mesman (dean of LUC), with panelists:

- Setsu Shigematsu, Associate Professor, UCR
- William Marotti, Associate Professor, UCLA
- Maja Vodopivec, Assistant professor, LUC The Hague
- Special guest: May Shigenobu, Beirut, Lebanon. Journalist and daughter of Japanese Red Army member Fusako Shigenobu, see an excerpt from Shane o'Sullivan's documentary "Children of Revolution" (daughters of Fusako Shigenobu and Ulrike Meinhof talk about their mothers)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dr2k6REXyHk>

## **2. Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Study of Traditional Medicine – Can East meet West?**

The ritual means of addressing situations of sickness, stress, and anxiety by way of a combination of special language and special actions are universal across human societies. Asian practices of body-mind-spirit approach are growing in many Western countries in health and healthcare practices. This growth is due to several factors: dissatisfaction with biomedical models of care and growing diversity in many Western European countries leading to increasing attention to alternatives models of care. In the present day, people routinely consult specialists in naturopathy, Ayurveda, and holistic health approach, among others which has become a widespread and influential set of concepts and practices within Western healthcare, education and neuroscientific communities. Examples of this interface are evident is studies integrating Chinese medicine in the treatment of Type 2 diabetes (Ho et al, 2016) or investigating the clinical benefits of mindfulness. There are several limitations emergent in the rapid transition from the heterogeneous Asian context of origin to the West, one involves the varying spiritual nature of the techniques. Not only does the study of healing and other health beliefs and practices have the potential to yield insight into traditional and historical systems of knowledge, but such study often has implications for modern practices of health. Therefore, this panel aims to present innovative and cross-disciplinary approaches to the study of healing and health practices across a wide range of cultures and geographic areas, from antiquity up to the modern period.

Moderated by Min Cho and Jyothi Thrivikraman (LUC), with panellists:

- Henk Blezer, Leiden Institute for Area Studies, Leiden University
- Maarten Bode, Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, University of Amsterdam
- Geoffrey Samuel, University of Sydney (Visiting Professor at School of Languages and Cultures) and Cardiff University (School of Religious and Theological Studies)

### 3. Popular culture and politics in Asia

This panel includes papers from leading and emerging scholars studying relationships between popular culture and politics. It aims to explore the ways in which the growth in globalised Asian popular culture might have shaped the youth's understandings of the world and the political. Asian popular culture has entered the global scene. Japanese anime, Chinese action films, Korean TV-dramas, and Bollywood films, etc. are now available on a global scale. They do not only entertain people in Asia and beyond, but also shape the logic of formal politics, with the increasing importance of the entertainments in contemporary political discourse being seen in everything from all forms of popular culture. Indeed, popular culture does matter to (world) politics, especially for the young citizens. It is generally believed that young citizens have struggled to see the relevance of formal politics in their everyday lives. However, as suggest in this panel, the young citizens have used popular culture texts not only to learn about social and political issues but also actively to engage in the public sphere. Thus, this panel aspires to unpack (1) *what roles might popular culture play in the political socialisation of the youth and their expressions of political agency*; (2) how the materiality of popular culture may contribute to global political dynamics; and (3) how its myriad influences might be assessed, perceived, or interpreted. A central concern of this panel is to empower researchers across disciplines and to foster dialogues across disciplinary and methodological boundaries.

Moderated by Barnita Bagchi (Utrecht University), with panelists:

- Cho Young-chul (Chonbuk National University, South Korea)
- Svetlana Kharchenkova (LIAS, Leiden University)
- Mari Nakamura (LIAS, Leiden University)
- Roshni Sengupta (LIAS, Leiden University)

### 4. EU – Asia relations: Challenges and Opportunities

This panel looks at various ways in which the Europe and Asia are, and ought to be, engaging with each other in dialogue on economic, political and security issues. Europe and Asia share a long history of economic and political exchange in the past. Today, with an increasingly multipolar global order in the post-cold war era, relations between Europe and Asia have regained some of their former importance. Europe and Asia share a number of economic, political and security challenges such as the global stability of the international economic system and concerns about maritime security. Yet each has unique economic, development and geopolitical problems and interests, as well as different fundamental values, cultures and political systems, which complicates their relationship. With the continuing increase in China's power, escalating tensions between China and its neighbouring countries in Asia, and ongoing friction between China and the United States, we might

therefore ask how Europe should position itself in relation to these new configurations of global and regional power? What significance do Europe-Asia relationships have in this global context, on the threshold of the 21st century?

Moderated by Ed Frettingham (Leide University College), with panelists:

- Chris Wirth (GIGA Institute of Asian Studies, Germany)
- Mamad Forough (LIAS, Leiden University)
- Yih-Jye Hwang (LUC, Leiden University)

## THEATRE PERFORMANCE

The 7MRP The Hague Theatre Group presents the dramatic story of the [Korean mission to the 1907 Hague Peace Conference](#). It is based on the story of Korean hero Yi Jun. In 1907, Japan is moving to make Korea a protectorate. The Korean Emperor sends a secret mission to the 1907 Hague Peace Conference, headed by diplomat and lawyer Yi Jun. Will the mission be a success? Will anyone at the conference listen?