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/ASIA INSTITUTE

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Faculty of Arts

The Asia Institute is a School of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Melbourne.

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/ DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

As Director, it is my great pleasure to introduce the Asia Institute, a School of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Melbourne. The Asia Institute is the University of Melbourne's key centre for studies in Asian languages and cultures, and this publication is designed to profile our core activities of teaching and learning, research, and knowledge transfer and partnerships. Our teaching programs include Arabic, Chinese, Indonesian and Japanese languages, as well as Asian and Islamic Studies. The Asia Institute has close links with other Schools and Faculties across the University, and our programs are strongly interdisciplinary in focus. This publication provides an overview of each of our teaching programs, including snapshots of a selection of current students.

Academic staff at the Asia Institute have an array of research interests and specialisations, which may be loosely grouped into three broad categories: language and society, religion and tradition, and popular culture. This publication profiles some of the important research currently being undertaken by our staff, and aims to make their passion and expertise accessible to a general readership. The Asia Institute is regularly called on by local and national media sources to provide expert opinions on a range of topical and historical issues that arise in both scholarly and popular debate. We also host an exciting roster of visiting scholars, as well as several annual conferences and a range of cultural exchange programs. The Asia Institute's close involvement in the broader community is further demonstrated in our affiliation with and hosting

of the Aceh Research Training Institute and the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies in Australia.

The importance of Asia and the Middle East to Australia – and the world – continues to grow at a significant pace. Asia comprises many of Australia's largest and most important trading partners and trade and diplomatic exchanges between Australia and the Middle East continue to grow in both numbers and importance. The Asia Institute strives to provide leadership in the study of the rich intellectual, legal, political, cultural and religious traditions of these vital regions.

On behalf of our staff and students, as well as our alumni and friends, I am delighted to welcome you to the Asia Institute.

PROFESSOR ABDULLAH SAEED

Director, Asia Institute,
University of Melbourne

Director, National
Centre of Excellence
for Islamic Studies

Sultan of Oman
Professor of Arab
& Islamic Studies

/SIDNEY MYER ASIA CENTRE

The Asia Institute is very fortunate to be located within the Sidney Myer Asia Centre. This purpose-built, award-winning building is prominently located on the main Parkville campus of the University of Melbourne, only minutes from the city centre.

The Sidney Myer Asia Centre was designed and built in 2002, specifically to house the Asia Institute as well as Asialink, a University-funded organisation which works to promote public understanding of Asian countries and cultures. The cutting-edge building was designed by visionary Melbourne architects Nation Fender Katsalidis, who were also commissioned to design the nearby Ian Potter Museum of Art. The interior of the building welcomes visitors with its airy open spaces and clean lines.

A light-filled structure with a strong connection to its bustling surrounds, the Centre's facilities include a state-of-the-art 500-seat lecture theatre as well as extensive flexible teaching, research, and meeting spaces. Accessible computer facilities and specialised teaching spaces are included on many of the building's five storeys, and an intimate leafy courtyard is tucked behind the building and links it to a major

library and resource centre. The Asia Institute is fortunate to be able to regularly welcome visiting scholars, as well as to host functions, public lectures, and other exciting events.

The ground floor of the building is adorned with the three-metre-high relief sculpture Spirit Wall by Akio Makigawa. This was the last major work completed by the Japanese-Australian artist before his death. Makigawa was a deeply sensitive artist who enjoyed international critical acclaim. The rusted steel surface and human-scaled forms of Spirit Wall constitute an impressive and welcoming entrance to the Asia Institute and to the University more generally, as each day tens of thousands of students, staff and visitors pass by as they arrive from the main Swanston Street tram depot.

The Sidney Myer Asia Centre cost \$18.5 million to construct, and was celebrated with many prestigious industry awards. An extremely generous \$2 million of the funding for the building was provided to the University by the Myer Foundation to mark the Sidney Myer Centenary Celebration, which recognised the legacy of one of Australia's most successful immigrants.

/SUPPORTERS OF THE ASIA INSTITUTE

The Myer Foundation's contribution to the cost of building the Sidney Myer Asia Centre followed a long history of support for Asian scholarship at the University. One of Australia's best known philanthropic organisations, the Myer Foundation in 1959 established a charitable trust fund to establish what was at that time named a "School of Oriental Studies." This extraordinary donation continues to provide invaluable income for teaching, research and community programs.

The Asia Institute also enjoys the kind support of Sakata Holdings Australia Pty. Ltd. Sakata provide funds for a scholarship that affords high achieving students enrolled in Japanese language studies the opportunity to further pursue their studies either in Japan or in Australia. The value of the award ranges from \$3000 to \$5000, making a real difference to the best and brightest students of Japanese at the Asia Institute.

Finally, the Sultan of Oman Endowed Chair in Arab and Islamic Studies was established in 2003 by a substantial endowment from the Sultanate of Oman. The Chair was conceived to honour His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, under whose leadership Oman

has made a leading contribution to the preservation and promotion of Arab and Islamic civilisation, and as an enduring testimony to the amity and partnership between the Sultanate of Oman and Australia. The Director of the Asia Institute, Professor Abdullah Saeed, currently holds the position of Chair.

DR CHRISTINA MAYER

Program Convenor

/ARABIC STUDIES

Arabic is identified in many Australian government reports and publications as a priority language, one of strategic importance to Australia's national interests. The Asia Institute is proud to deliver a comprehensive Arabic Studies program.

Arabic is spoken by more than 200 million people around the world, and Australia itself has a sizeable Arabic-speaking community. The increasing trade and diplomatic exchanges between Australia and Arab countries makes it important for students wishing to pursue a career in these areas to acquire the language and understand its cultures. The acquisition of Arabic language is also highly desirable for a general understanding of the Islamic world and, equally importantly, for making oneself understood in a very important part of the world.

Scholars writing in Arabic have contributed a great deal to the advancement of scholarship and science. Knowledge of the Arabic language facilitates access, unhindered by language constraints, to this vast body of knowledge. In this era of globalisation, for cultural, economic, political and, in many cases, religious reasons, relations between the Arabic-speaking countries and the rest of the world are becoming increasingly

important. Fluency in Arabic can help facilitate contact-building and professional cooperation, and can play a role in promoting intercultural understanding.

Arabic language classes at the Asia Institute cater for a range of competencies, from beginners to advanced speakers. In our language program we endeavour to help our students develop reading and oral comprehension skills as well as speaking and writing skills enabling them to access and use a variety of written materials and to communicate effectively with native speakers of the language. Students of Arabic at the Asia Institute also receive a comprehensive grounding in important areas of Arab society and culture. As a result, graduates will be able to 'make sense' of Arabic, not only linguistically but also culturally, and to express themselves in Arabic in a linguistically and culturally appropriate way.

Graduates of Arabic Studies regularly pursue postgraduate study. The Asia Institute, as well as the affiliated National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies, proudly hosts world-class scholars in the field and postgraduate research programs are available at both Masters and PhD level. Moreover, knowledge of Arabic provides a competitive edge for postgraduate studies in

a range of other disciplines, as it provides special access to a range of source materials and thus expands research opportunities.

There are also a wide range of rewarding career possibilities for graduates fluent in Arabic. For those who choose to work overseas, Arabic language and cross-cultural communication skills open employment opportunities in the Arab world in a large variety of fields (such as the medical and nursing professions, urban planning, building and construction, engineering, international trade or law, journalism, aid agencies, NGOs, international bodies, English language teaching, travel and tourism). And within Australia, graduates of Arabic studies may seek employment in a wide range of fields in both the public and private sector, and in professions serving the large Arab community in Australia.

ARABIC IS SPOKEN BY MORE THAN 200 MILLION PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD, AND AUSTRALIA ITSELF HAS A SIZEABLE ARABIC-SPEAKING COMMUNITY.

THE ASIAN STUDIES PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE IS ONE OF THE LARGEST IN AUSTRALIA. A BROAD RANGE OF ASIAN STUDIES SUBJECTS ARE TAUGHT BOTH WITHIN ASIA INSTITUTE AND ACROSS OTHER SCHOOLS AND FACULTIES, BY SPECIALIST STAFF FROM A VARIETY OF ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES.

/ASIAN STUDIES



DR LEWIS MAYO
Program Convenor

The University offers a comprehensive range of subjects addressing the rich intellectual, cultural, legal, economic, political and religious traditions of Asia. In line with the research expertise of staff at the Asia Institute, teaching focuses on China, Indonesia, Japan, the Middle East and Southeast Asian societies.

Asian Studies is a cross-disciplinary enterprise, enabling students either to study a particular Asian society or group of societies from a variety of perspectives, or to examine a specific social or cultural phenomenon across a range of different countries. The program is extremely flexible in what it can encompass, and is ideally suited to those seeking a broad understanding of human culture.

Student exchange programs to major universities within the Asian region are available to both undergraduate Asian Studies students and to postgraduates with a strong interest in Asia. Additionally, students have special access to a stimulating program of events and activities with an Asian focus organised by both the Asia Institute and the University-funded community outreach unit, Asialink. Students are encouraged to attend the public lectures organised by the Institute, many of which feature high-profile local and international guest speakers. Moreover, they have the opportunity to volunteer at the annual Asia Week festivities, and to join a range of Asia-related student clubs and societies.

Through these and many other means, students of Asian Studies are provided with a dynamic and engaging curriculum of learning both in the classroom and beyond.

Asian Studies subjects are normally taught in English and do not have language prerequisites. It is recommended that students majoring in Asian Studies also study an Asian language but this is not compulsory. Subjects cover an array of topics including human rights in Asian societies, performing and other arts, media, literature, popular culture and many more.

Graduates of the Asian Studies program have consistently progressed to successful careers in every field imaginable, both in government and the private sector. Many have also chosen to continue their studies at a postgraduate level, either by coursework or research. Often, postgraduate students are co-supervised by academic staff from both the Asia Institute and another School, thus maximising the potential for interdisciplinary study.

The Convenor of the Asian Studies program at the Asia Institute is Dr Lewis Mayo, a specialist in Chinese and Inner Asian history, who also does research on the history of the middle-class cultures of the Asia-Pacific region from Canada to Taiwan to Papua New Guinea to Indonesia and New Zealand. Another major branch of his work concerns the historical relationship – in Asian societies and elsewhere – between human society and non-human entities, in particular animals and plants.

/TEACHING PROGRAMS

PHILLIP VAN GAALEN-PRENTICE

Graduate student of Arabic

I first decided to study Arabic after returning from time spent volunteering at a hospital in Nazareth, Israel. The city has a predominantly Arab population and I was fortunate enough to be able to learn and to use some basic Arabic on a day-to-day basis. Having enjoyed this experience I was eager to continue my study of Arabic and so applied to undertake a Graduate Diploma in Arts (Arabic Studies) at the Asia Institute. On completion of this

degree I hope to work for an organisation focusing on aid and development issues within the Arab world.

The staff at the Asia Institute help to make the study of this difficult language both interesting and enjoyable. Their passion for Arabic is demonstrated by their availability to answer even the simplest of questions, and by the constant encouragement that they provide to students to achieve a high

standard of proficiency. Having worked and travelled in the Middle East, I have been impressed by the way that my degree has combined the study of Arabic language with the development of an understanding of both Arab culture and Islam. I highly recommend the experience of studying Arabic at the Asia Institute.

THE STAFF AT THE ASIA INSTITUTE HELP TO MAKE THE STUDY OF THIS DIFFICULT LANGUAGE BOTH INTERESTING AND ENJOYABLE.



LULU VITALI

Graduate student of Japanese

I completed a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Japanese, followed by a Master in Applied Linguistics. I became intrigued by the culture after participating in an exchange program at the end of second year. Living with a host family enabled me to use Japanese every day and to gain a glimpse of ordinary daily life: sleeping on futons, using high-tech toilets, indulging in Japanese baths, sleeping on pillows filled with rice, trying a variety of different foods and catching the train to university during rush hour. I remember waking up one day and thinking "Japanese isn't Japanese translated into English any more

– it's just Japanese!" From that day on, my connection to Japan strengthened.

As a student of Japanese, I have always been puzzled and fascinated by Japanese honorifics and how culture is embedded in their use. Currently, I am researching the use of Japanese honorifics by Japanese and Australians in Melbourne. I am particularly interested in how speakers of Japanese perceive honorifics and what factors contribute towards their use or non-use when interacting, particularly within an intercultural setting.

I always look forward to meeting my supervisor, Dr Jun Ohashi, as his guidance and support are invaluable in helping me shape my thesis. The collegial environment and the friendly atmosphere make visiting the Asia Institute a delight.

/TEACHING PROGRAMS

/CHINESE



DR DU LIPING
Program Convenor

China is a 'rising power' in the western Pacific region whose future importance for Australia is hard to overestimate. China's current levels of investment in research and development and in the tertiary sector indicate that China is poised to make a very rapid transition to a 'knowledge economy'. This is a matter of direct relevance for the career planning of today's undergraduates.

Melbourne is one of the few universities in Australia to offer students the opportunity to complete a major in Chinese language, a minor in Chinese language and a minor in Chinese Studies. Undergraduate students may choose to complement their study of the Chinese language with a range of subjects on Chinese culture and society, acquiring not only a solid basis for language competence in later professional life but also the wherewithal for advancing their social and cultural literacy.

Teaching in the Chinese program is informed by staff research in a wide variety of different fields, including Chinese language teaching and many aspects of contemporary and traditional China.

Chinese is taught across several streams of study to suit the language acquisition level of students upon first enrolling, ranging from beginners with no previous experience through to fluent speakers. Chinese Studies can also be a component in an Asian Studies program at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

A key feature of the Chinese program at the Asia Institute is advanced-level subjects like Chinese Economic Documents and Advanced Chinese Translation, which provide students with experience in applying their Chinese language skills to areas of major professional interest. Our intention is to encourage students to aim for Chinese-

English bilingualism in their professional lives after graduation.

The Chinese program offers students a variety of opportunities for in-country study. The University has exchange programs with a number of top universities such as Peking University, Qinghua University, Fudan University, Nanjing University and Nankai University in China, and National Taiwan University in Taipei. Regular components of the undergraduate program include an intensive summer course taught over four weeks. The University offers a number of exchange places every year.

The Convenor of the Chinese program, Du Liping, is a graduate of the University of Melbourne whose research interests lie in the areas of traditional Chinese medicine, markets and marketing of traditional medicines, traditional pharmacies and local economy in China.



ANTHONY SWAN
Undergraduate student of Chinese

I am in my final year of a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in Chinese. As a young person, I never imagined I would end up studying Chinese. I studied German and Latin in high school without much success, as I had no previous connection to either language, and in any case was much more interested in art. I completed my first degree in Visual Arts Education, majoring in ceramics. I later worked as a potter.

During this time I started to use traditional Chinese glazes in my work and began to decorate my cups with images of traditional

Chinese painting. I had little understanding of this art, so I decided to attend Chinese painting classes at a Buddhist monastery. As I became more interested in Chinese culture, I went on to study Taijiquan. Eventually I realised that in order to really understand Chinese culture, I would have to learn the language, which I came to find completely fascinating.

The course at the Asia Institute suits me well. Like the Chinese language itself, it is structured and logical. As well as being interesting and challenging,

the classes have also, perhaps surprisingly, been fun. I'm sure some of the lecturers could well be comedians as well as academics. Furthermore, the breadth of the subjects offered in the Arts degree has also allowed me to study my mother's first language, Swedish, concurrently with Chinese.

When I become sufficiently proficient in Chinese I hope to undertake postgraduate studies in translation and interpreting and one day work as a translator.



NAOMI SOONG KAUFMAN

Honours student
of Islamic Studies

Since picking Islamic Studies as my major in my undergraduate Arts degree I am repeatedly asked why I – a non Muslim female with no political inclinations and 13 years of Catholic education behind me – would want to get into Islamic Studies.

Like many university students, I started out with little idea of what I wanted to do with my degree. I chose general studies including an Introduction to the Muslim World mainly because of the media

hype surrounding the region. This class highlighted my serious lack of real understanding about the conflicts in the region and the nature of Islam.

Studying Islamic Studies has not only increased my knowledge of the underlying issues influencing every conflict in the region, it has also educated me about the true nature of Islam as opposed to the cultural manipulations that fill today's media. The staff at the Asia Institute are dedicated

to furthering this kind of understanding through guest lecturers, sharing resources between universities as well as taking the time to help students personally.

Currently, I'm completing my Honours year before moving onto a Masters in Islamic Studies. I'm confident that this area of study makes it possible for me to enter a variety of exciting and relevant fields that significantly impact the nature of the world today.



SUPRIYANTO ABDI

Scholarship recipient
and current PhD candidate

I first came to the Asia Institute in 2003 to pursue a Masters program in contemporary Asian analysis with the support of Australia Development Scholarship. I had previously studied Islamic Studies in Indonesia, and I found my postgraduate study at this Institute and my contact with academic staff and other students from different academic disciplines here to be very worthwhile.

My academic interests were in Islamic thought, discourses and movements in face of contemporary social, economic and political change and transformation. My contact with a range of academic backgrounds and approaches at the Asia Institute was instrumental in introducing me to various different theoretical and disciplinary approaches.

After completing my Masters program in 2005, I joined a research centre working on human rights issues in my home country of Indonesia for a couple of years. In 2009 I was offered a Melbourne International Research Scholarship and International Fee Remission Scholarship by the University of Melbourne to pursue my doctoral study at the Asia Institute. I happily accepted the offer and commenced my PhD study in July 2009.

My rewarding previous experience of studying at the Institute as well as the stimulating academic environment and impressive range of expertise and resources it offers are key reasons why I decided to come back and continue my studies here. I am now at the stage of building a solid foundation for my PhD project on dynamic encounters between Islam

and liberalism in contemporary Indonesia, and I find the academic guidance and supervision offered by academic staff here very helpful and constructive at this critical stage.

A black and white portrait of Dr. Michael Ewing, a man with glasses and a goatee, looking directly at the camera. He is positioned in front of a bookshelf filled with books. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the subject.

DR MICHAEL EWING

Program Convenor

/INDONESIAN

Indonesia's geographic proximity and its regional influence mean that deepening our understanding of its peoples, politics, history, languages and cultures is of vital strategic importance to Australia. The Indonesian program at the Asia Institute is among Australia's finest, and is taught at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Indonesia has undergone remarkable changes during the democratisation process of the past decade and continues to develop in dramatic and dynamic ways. As the most influential member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the fourth most populous country in the world, it is an increasingly important force in international affairs.

Indonesia is culturally diverse, comprising hundreds of different ethnic groups and languages with rich literary traditions, spread over thousands of islands. It has the world's largest Muslim-majority population but also includes significant Christian, Buddhist and Hindu minorities. The national language of Indonesia – Indonesian or Bahasa Indonesia – has made an important contribution to the country's unity. Based on Malay, Indonesian is closely related to the national languages of three

other Southeast Asian countries – Malaysia, Brunei, and Singapore – thus giving access to more than 250 million people on Australia's doorstep.

Research and teaching expertise in the Indonesian program includes the social context of religion in Indonesia, language documentation and endangerment among the languages of the country, contemporary Indonesian literature, and Indonesian language teaching methodologies and applied linguistics.

The Indonesian program at the Asia Institute provides thorough training in the language as well as a broad understanding of contemporary Indonesian culture, politics and society. Subjects are designed and taught with an understanding that expertise in Indonesian studies can enhance employment opportunities in commerce, education, government and cultural affairs, among many other fields. The program is also an excellent foundation to engage in further in-depth research on aspects of Indonesian society through postgraduate study.

Dr Michael Ewing, the Convenor of the program, is a recognised leader in Indonesian language scholarship, having studied and taught at a number of prestigious

institutions in the US and Indonesia. Recently, Dr Ewing has been working in the field of endangered languages to document the Allang language of Ambon Island, Maluku. As the author of *Grammar and Inference in Conversation: Identifying Clause Structure in Spoken Javanese*, as well as a number of articles on both Javanese and Indonesian, his research also covers the complex relationship between interpersonal interaction and grammar in conversational language, using corpus-based linguistic analysis. Dr Ewing is Deputy Director of the Asia Institute.

THE INDONESIAN PROGRAM AT THE ASIA INSTITUTE PROVIDES THOROUGH TRAINING IN THE LANGUAGE AS WELL AS A BROAD UNDERSTANDING OF CONTEMPORARY INDONESIAN CULTURE, POLITICS AND SOCIETY.

THE ISLAMIC STUDIES PROGRAM AT THE ASIA INSTITUTE PROVIDES STUDENTS WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY MUSLIM SOCIETIES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT FROM A BROAD AND MULTIDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE.

/TEACHING PROGRAMS

/ISLAMIC STUDIES



ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR SHAHRAM AKBARZADEH

Program Convenor

Dedicated teaching staff provide expertise in areas ranging from modern Islamic hermeneutics, political thought and gender issues, to the study of economics and finance in Muslim societies. Academics are supported by the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies (NCEIS), a unique cross-institutional network that is funded by the Australian government. More information about NCEIS is included on page 21 of this publication.

Islamic Studies subjects are available at undergraduate level both as a major within a Bachelor of Arts, or as a breadth component to another degree. Students who specialise in Islamic studies develop transferable skills that will greatly enhance their career options. They are also able to expand on their interest and knowledge through an articulated structure of higher degree study at the Asia Institute, either through research or coursework. The interdisciplinary nature of Islamic Studies at the Asia Institute allows many postgraduate students to also be co-supervised by academics from related Schools across the University of Melbourne.

Islam is one of the fastest growing religions in the world. It is embraced by approximately one-fifth of the world's population.

Numerous studies and reports commissioned by governments in Australia and throughout the world have identified the study of Islam as a key strategic priority. Increasing worldwide understanding of Islamic history and culture, and of Muslim societies, is crucial to improving national security and cultural exchange.

With this in mind, the Islamic Studies program at the Asia Institute has been expertly crafted to be particularly attractive to students interested in working in areas where success depends on their understanding of Islam and Islamic culture. Examples of such areas include foreign affairs, international trade, immigration, ethnic affairs, journalism, social work and teaching.

The Islamic Studies teaching program addresses the issues relevant to the development of Islam as a religion and civilisation from its origins to the present. It draws on broad multidisciplinary perspectives provided by a range of other Schools at the University, with subject areas including anthropology, Arabic studies, cultural studies, history, Indonesian studies, philosophy, political science and Islamic Studies. This truly interdisciplinary approach is in line with the most advanced academic scholarship today.

Students in the program are encouraged to develop their interests in Islamic Studies and in another area of study that will provide them with skills to analyse issues relevant to Islam and Muslim societies with a reasonable understanding of Islamic world view, its value system, and particular historical experiences.

The Convenor of the Islamic Studies program, Associate Professor Shahram Akbarzadeh, is an internationally recognised scholar and regular public commentator. He is an active researcher specialising in the politics of Central Asia, Islam, Muslims in Australia and the Middle East, and is the founding editor of the Islamic Studies Series published by Melbourne University Press. Associate Professor Akbarzadeh is Deputy Director of the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies and has produced key reports for the Australian Research Council (ARC) on Australian based scholarship on Islam, and also for the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) on Muslim integration in Australia.

IN ADDITION TO THE CORE LANGUAGE SUBJECTS, ENRICHMENT SUBJECTS SUCH AS JAPANESE THROUGH THE MEDIA, GRAMMAR IN ACTION AND MANY MORE HELP STUDENTS TO DEVELOP THEIR COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN VARIOUS TYPES OF TEXTS, INTERACTIONAL CONTEXTS AND STRATEGIC ASPECTS OF MEANING MAKING.

/JAPANESE

The Japanese program at the Asia Institute is committed to addressing one of the key University agendas, encouraging classroom integration of domestic and international students. The program's curriculum is designed to encourage intercultural communication.

Japan continues to be ranked in the top five most positively seen nations in the world (the second most positively seen in 2007 and 2008, and the fifth in 2009), according to BBC World polls. This positive image is associated with various aspects of Japanese culture and society reflecting both new and traditional values, and it continues to attract international attention. Here in Australia, advanced education technology and pedagogical developments have led to Japanese being one of the most popular LOTE (languages other than English) subjects in the last two decades.

At the Asia Institute, a Japanese language subject for beginners alone attracted an enrolment of 600 students in 2009, while the total number in Japanese subjects has exceeded 1300 in the same year. This is an unprecedented figure in any LOTE subjects in the

University, or indeed in the nation. It is a clear indication that Japanese language subjects have significant educational roles and responsibilities.

The Japanese program at the Asia Institute provides students with a well-balanced educational experience. In addition to the core language subjects (taught at a range of levels, from beginner to advanced) which are designed to maximise acquisition of the language, enrichment subjects such as Japanese through the Media, Grammar in Action and many more help students to develop their communication skills in various types of texts, interactional contexts and strategic aspects of meaning making. Japanese Studies subjects such as Contemporary Japanese Society and Social Problems in Japan help students understand the complexity and diversity of the society, and to challenge stereotypes.

Japanese language subjects provide students with a unique environment where international students and domestic students communicate in their common non-native language. Students introduce themselves to one

another solely in Japanese, talk about where they were born, raised and educated, and discuss various international and domestic social issues from cross-cultural perspectives (integrating all participants' cultural backgrounds) outside the established native to non-native (of English language) norms. Teaching staff create a meeting place where students from a variety of cultural backgrounds can explore intercultural language activities on an equal basis to promote intercultural competence as well as communicative competence.

Dr Jun Ohashi, the Convenor of the Japanese program, has considerable experience teaching Japanese in both Australia and the UK. His research has included a new interpretation of Japanese linguistic politeness phenomena from non-Western perspectives, as well as a study of the communicative acts of thanking and their social meaning in Japan and in Australia. His other research interests include gendered and generational variation of speech act realisation, and cross-cultural investigation of public signs and exhortations.



DR JUN OHASHI
Program Convenor

A black and white close-up portrait of Dr. Ikuko Nakane, a woman with dark hair, looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. She is wearing small hoop earrings. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a window or a wall with a grid pattern.

/RESEARCH PROFILES

/LANGUAGE AND LAW – FORENSIC LINGUISTICS IN JAPAN

My research field is sociolinguistics: I am interested in how people use language to negotiate social roles in various institutional contexts.

In recent years, the focus of my research has been language and law. This field is also called forensic linguistics. One of my research projects examines how interpreter mediation affects the trajectory of discourse and the legal process in interviews with Japanese detainees conducted by the Australian Federal Police. For example, in an article published in *Applied Linguistics*, I examined how police officers construct their speech turns when giving 'police cautions' (such as the caution informing a right to silence) – which are actually quite complex in their grammatical constructions as well as their meanings – and how interpreters render them. The cautions are usually spoken rapidly in a flat tone and often almost recited. This, coupled with the complexity of the structure of police cautions, makes it a challenging task for interpreters to render them accurately so that the suspects can understand the meanings of these statements and their legal implications.

Using a number of discourse analytic tools and my expertise in 'silence in communication', I have also analysed how silence is managed in interpreter-mediated

police interviews. In another study in this project, I analysed interpreters' 'conversational repairs' (attempts to rectify problems in conversation) and discussed what impact such repairs may have on the outcome of investigative interviews. This work was presented at IJET (International Japanese English Translation Conference) in 2009 to which I was invited to share my work with practicing interpreters.

More recently, I have been analysing courtroom discourse in Japanese criminal courts. While there is substantial research into courtroom discourse (and legal interpreting) in Common Law countries such as Australia, UK and the USA, studies in courtroom discourse in Roman Law-based countries such as Japan are still scarce. The main focus of this project is on issues in courtroom discourse involving defendants from non-Japanese speaking backgrounds. Currently I am working on a study in which I analyse partial use of interpreting in criminal court proceedings. Partial use of interpreting entails intercultural communication (in Japanese) between speakers of Japanese as a second language and legal professionals, some examples of which I found problematic in that non-native Japanese speakers may be perceived negatively when they

experience difficulties (even when they are subtle) in communicating in Japanese.

Although there is a common perception that a strong emphasis on verbal 'performance' found in adversarial systems would not be found in inquisitorial systems, I have found clashes of two different versions of events emerging in Japanese courtroom discourse. While the conviction rate is 99% in the Japanese criminal justice system, defendants' behaviour during questioning is said to have serious consequences for leniency, for example whether they receive a suspended sentence or go to jail. Through the analysis of problems in intercultural courtroom discourse, I discuss how such problems affect the legal process and interact with ideologies about 'foreigner crimes' in Japan, as well as relating to intercultural communication issues in the Japanese criminal justice system.

**INTERPRETER MEDIATION
AFFECTS THE TRAJECTORY
OF DISCOURSE AND THE
LEGAL PROCESS.**

DR IKUKO NAKANE

Member of the International Association of Forensic Linguists and also one of the founding members of the Japan Association for Language and Law.

/RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD: AN INDONESIA CASE STUDY

The project I will be working on as Future Fellow at the Asia Institute is entitled Religion and Spirituality in the Contemporary World: An Indonesia case study. My aim is to explore how people today perceive themselves and their purpose as human beings, and their place within the cosmos, against the background of the current social, political and cultural conditions commonly referred to as 'late modernity' or 'post-modernity'. Given that religious thought is a reflexive exercise seeking to comprehend the purpose of our existence, it not only reflects our most profound understandings of our current state but also constitutes an attempt to shape the future, a future we otherwise encounter without choice as we are propelled forward by the current of our own unconscious tendencies.

Emerging trends in our cosmologising are thus situated at the very cutting edge of our evolving consciousness, and there is no better way to understand the present moment in our history than to study such trends. The dynamics of contemporary religions reflect the structural predicaments of contemporary societies, and understanding trends in religion leads to a better understanding of our changing life experiences. Few authors have attempted to theorise major new global trends in religion today. Of those who have, most have directed their attention to the sensational topic of religious fanaticism and violence rather than at the much more

pervasive and indicative trends and transformations within the religious mainstream.

While there is a growing literature on contemporary forms of religion in Western societies, there is an urgent need to extend this research by documenting similar trends in developing countries in our region, and most importantly in Indonesia. Indonesia has experienced significant religious conflict in recent years. This has been an ongoing concern for the Indonesian government and for Australia, especially in the wake of the Bali bombing in 2002. Recent research on religion in Indonesia by Australian and other researchers thus has focused heavily on small Islamic radical fundamentalist groups such as Jema'ah Islamiyah. This research is valuable, but the broader social and religious trends that give rise to a wider phenomenon of religious revivalism and other, progressive new forms of religiosity in Indonesia are rarely considered, even though parallels with global trends, such as the rise of New Age religiosity, have been documented elsewhere in Asia.

Based on my own intensive research on Hinduism and Islam in Indonesia since 1992, I argue that new religious trends in Indonesia are as varied as their counterparts in the Western world, and display a similar range of features. The objective of my Future Fellowship project is thus to conduct innovative research that will focus squarely at the late modern character of Indonesian society

and religion, and the dynamics between them. The results will illuminate similar trends at home from the reflexive vantage point of a comparison with a different cultural tradition facing the same challenges of globalisation as we do.

I am delighted to be undertaking this research at the Asia Institute. Asian Studies is a major cross-faculty research strength at the University of Melbourne and world-class Asia scholarship is conducted across all faculties. The University has more than 80 experts on Asia, teaches more than 250 Asia-related subjects, and holds hundreds of Asia-related public events every year. Moreover, the University boasts excellent specialist library resources on Asia, numerous Asian postgraduate students and eminent alumni, and long-standing partnerships with leading Asian universities. The Asia Institute has a rich history of scholarship on Indonesia, and in my Fellowship I hope to continue in the legacy of well-known recently retired Professors Merle Ricklefs, Charles Coppel and Arief Budiman.

PROFESSOR THOMAS REUTER

Chair, World Council of Anthropological Associations. President (2002-2005) and Fellow, Australian Anthropological Society. Fellow, Asian Studies Association of Australia and Indonesia Council.

The Asia Institute is honoured to welcome Professor Thomas Reuter from 2010 as a Future Fellow.

An internationally recognised leader in Indonesian scholarship, Professor Reuter is a 2010 recipient of the Australia Research

Council (ARC)'s prestigious Future Fellowship award. This is a research-only appointment of six years' duration. Professor Reuter was previously awarded an ARC Queen Elizabeth II Research Fellowship (2001-2006) and Post-doctoral Research Fellowship (1998-2001).

Professor Reuter has published extensively including seven monographs, most recently editing *The Return of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia* (Monash University Press, 2010).





/RESEARCH PROFILES

THE DYNAMICS OF CONTEMPORARY RELIGIONS REFLECT THE STRUCTURAL PREDICAMENTS OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETIES, AND UNDERSTANDING TRENDS IN RELIGION LEADS TO A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF OUR CHANGING LIFE EXPERIENCES.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR DR MAILA STIVENS

Principal Research Fellow,
Asia Institute, and formerly
Director of Gender Studies,
University of Melbourne.

/IMAGINING NEW ASIAN CHILDHOODS

My current research project, *Imagining New Asian Childhoods*, analyses the cultural politics surrounding childhoods in contemporary Asia.

This Australian Research Council-funded project explores the ways in which the child and childhoods have become increasingly powerful focal points of cultural contests around national, racial, ethnic and class identities and boundaries. I am examining a range of popular cultural productions and state-staged and managed cultural contests, to argue for the increasing importance of children as powerful symbols within national, racial, ethnic and class imaginaries.

The central focus of my research is on the ways in which the idea of the child and children's rights have been imagined and theorised by a range of social groupings, institutions and agencies and how these changing imaginaries operate politically in contexts marked by dramatic social transformation.

A dominant theme in global writing on modern childhood and youth has been the loss of the space of childhood with capitalism/postmodernity and the commoditisation of childhood. Such accounts are often deeply inscribed simultaneously with notions of progress and with dystopic images of decline and pollution by outside forces. For example, throughout Asian

countries there has been great concern (both from more conservative forces and from feminists) about a growing sexualisation of girls, both in terms of media representations and fashion, and more literally in terms of sexual exploitation. This, it is often argued, is the result of modernity, 'Westernisation'/globalisation or indeed 'Westoxification'.

Children and young people form a substantial portion of the population of Asia, but are often overlooked in scholarship on the region. While poverty obviously continues to be a serious problem in some sectors of these societies, at the same time the recent spectacular economic development within the Asian region has produced dramatic, far-ranging and diverse changes in household, family and subjectivities across the region. This project aims to contribute to understandings of the lived experience of children and young people in the region by documenting the development and form of contemporary Asian childhoods and youth and their links to both dramatic economic and demographic developments and the recent spectacular changes in gender and family relations.

Greatly improved child mortality rates and moves to birthrates far below replacement level in a number of places (including South Korea, Thailand, Japan,

Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong) have been changing the shape of childbearing and childhoods. With massively expanding educational provisions in particular, childhoods for many children have been transformed; expanding consumerism, similarly, has had manifold effects, including the development of new consumption-based identities, and the construction of new childhood cultures around play, toys and new commodities.

The region has seen the emergence of the modern, so-called 'quality child' as a 'product': new middle classes in particular have been engaged in the active production of well-educated, well-fed, well-tutored and well-protected children. They embody for both parents and nation great hopes for a modern, prosperous future; yet at the same time they are also sources of anxiety in a risk-laden world, not only for their parents but for the societies at large. We have seen continuing cultural contests and indeed panics in some cases surrounding ideas about the value of children, about birthrates, the disciplining and abuse of children, children's rights versus parents' rights, and the child and consumption.

In *Imagining New Asian Childhoods*, I make a strong case for bringing the study of childhoods more centrally into the analyses of politics, economics and culture in the region, seeing

the highly developed cultural contests and moral panics about children and the youth as highly significant markers of fracture lines within regional societies. Although the child and childhood have been prominent within NGO and international rights claims in the last decades, they have until very recently been notably absent from much contemporary larger social and political theory-making about the region and beyond. This has meant that children's rights have been too long absent from many central theoretical discussions about forms of citizenship, democracy and governance within modernising orders in Asia.

ASIA HAS SEEN THE EMERGENCE OF THE MODERN, SO-CALLED 'QUALITY CHILD' AS A 'PRODUCT'



**/FLYING ACROSS SPACE
AND TIME: TRANSFORMATION
OF THE CULTURAL ECOLOGY
OF SHANGHAI**



**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
ANNE MCLAREN**

Xinchang water town,
photo by Anne McLaren

In September 2009 I travelled on a German-built magnetic-levitation (Maglev) train from Shanghai city to the new international airport in the coastal Pudong region. The high-speed Maglev train floats across an elevated magnetic rail. From the window I had the sensation of sitting in a low-altitude aeroplane flying over rooftops, streets and canals at breakneck speed. The speedometer in the carriage pushed relentlessly upwards, at its peak registering 431 kilometres an hour. Midway through our journey, I held my breath as a returning Maglev passed us with a sudden shudder on a parallel track. Too soon we arrived at our destination. The journey of 30 kilometres had taken less than eight minutes.

Arriving at the airport, I reflected on the journey in time and space represented by the advent of the Maglev to coastal Shanghai. When I had first come to this region to do fieldwork in 1994, I had travelled by ferry over the Huangpu River, and then by hired taxi over the network of dirt roads until they petered out by the coast. The final trip to my chosen village was by tractor. At that time I had come to investigate the bridal laments performed by village women with a view to improving our understanding of the status of women in pre-socialist China and the roles they had played in China's performative and ritual culture. This research project culminated in a book, *Performing*

Grief: Bridal Laments in Rural China (University of Hawaii Press, 2008).

In 2009 I received a three-year Discovery Grant from the Australian Research Council ("Ethnoecology and the State in China") to carry out further investigations of folk traditions, specifically folk epics that were prevalent in the lower Yangzi delta villages into the contemporary period. The folk epics tell stories about founding ancestors, heroic figures, and significant local events. Repressed by the state in both imperial times and the early socialist era, folk epics encode the ecological wisdom of the traditional rice paddy culture of the Lake Tai region.

Coursing through the delta region is the major artery of the Yangzi River; its numerous tributaries and canals serving as veins to one of the most densely settled areas on the planet. Boats were the main form of transport well into the 20th century. As the boatman poled his barge along the waterways he would entertain his clients with popular ballads and songs. Labourers in the rice fields sang songs to lighten their toil. Many of these songs were incorporated into the best known folk epics of the region. People lived in charming 'watertowns', with timber dwellings built around water channels. These still dot the region but most are likely to be sacrificed in the race to modernise. I viewed

the once graceful houses of watertown Xinchang, which are now mostly in a state of disrepair and crammed with the families of the poor. In decades past, people used to catch fish from the rivers and draw fresh water for daily use, but now the water is stagnant and polluted.

The delta is transforming beyond recognition and the former rice paddy ecology is now in sharp decline. However, it is important to understand the ethnoculture of the delta region before the immediate contemporary period. Folkloric perspectives make an important contribution to understandings of the differences between elite practices and values and those practised by non-elite populations. It is these differences that underpin the formation of historic ethno-identities within Chinese space.

**REPRESSED BY THE STATE IN BOTH IMPERIAL
TIMES AND THE EARLY SOCIALIST ERA, FOLK
EPICS ENCODE THE ECOLOGICAL WISDOM
OF THE TRADITIONAL RICE PADDY CULTURE
OF THE LAKE TAI REGION.**



/JAPANESE POPULAR MUSIC: CULTURE, AUTHENTICITY AND POWER

I have been researching and writing about popular music in Japan since the late 1990s. This interest arose from my experience working in the Japanese music industry in the early to mid 90s, as a translator and a consultant to a Japanese rock band. I purchased my first Japanese music on CD in 1989, and, ever since, my engagement with this area of research has been closely informed by the music itself, and the musicians who write and record it.

I am particularly interested in the role of language in popular music, the connections between the television and music industries, the social organisation of fans, and pop cultural consumption as a source of identity work. My book, *Japanese Popular Music: Culture, Authenticity and Power* (Routledge, 2008 [PB 2009]) is the first full-length academic monograph in English on mainstream Japanese popular music. It describes and analyses a variety of trends in postwar Japanese popular music, including indigenous Japanese popular

music, postwar history, technology, business and production practices, and language as symbol in pop music.

The book addresses a variety of thematic concerns in the music industry, such as cultural originality versus creativity; musical authenticity in light of technological changes in the postwar era; and the power relations between players in the music business. I approach these topics from a foundational understanding that, while popular music can be termed the

background music of our everyday lives, it is importantly not merely about sound. My study of popular music is also a study of the large social collective of creative musicians, executive producers, distribution intermediaries, and interpretive audiences – in other words, human beings themselves – who contribute to its production and definition.

Japan is the world's second largest music market, and as such no single volume could attempt to fully explore the myriad expressions of postwar popular

/RESEARCH

PROFILES

MY BOOK, JAPANESE POPULAR MUSIC: CULTURE, AUTHENTICITY AND POWER, IS THE FIRST FULL-LENGTH ACADEMIC MONOGRAPH IN ENGLISH ON MAINSTREAM JAPANESE POPULAR MUSIC.

music. As such, I have limited my research to mainstream popular music that has enjoyed chart success. More specifically, I have focused on the charts that relate to hōgaku (Japanese pop) music rather than Western rock and pop or more traditional styles. I contend that today's Japanese pop artists do not necessarily view their artistic roots as lying in the West; instead, they claim their music has been influenced by Japanese pop musicians who have created their own independent canon. For this

and other reasons, J-pop (as it is widely known) is viewed not as a copy but is received as fresh and innovative in its own market.



ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR CAROLYN STEVENS

Member of the American Anthropological Association; Association for Asian Studies (USA); Japan Anthropology Workshop (JAWS); Japanese Studies Association of Australia; and the International House of Japan, Inc.

/RESEARCH PROFILES

/NEWLY PUBLISHED BOOK: THE PHILOSOPHY OF MULLA SADRA AND MARTIN HEIDEGGER: FROM ESSENCE TO BEING (LONDON: ICAS PRESS, 2010)



DR MUHAMMAD KAMAL

In this unique parallel analysis, Muhammad Kamal delves into the most controversial subjects of Islamic and Western existential philosophy.

He describes the philosophical 'turn', ontological difference, becoming, and nothingness in the ontology of Mulla Sadra and Martin Heidegger. Through analysing the ontological enterprises of Sadra and Heidegger, Dr Kamal shows they both held that Being is the sole reality, and both stood in opposition to Plato's metaphysics.

Despite hailing from different regions and eras, both Sadra and Heidegger saw Plato's philosophy

as an established philosophical tradition that led to a state of untruth – or, in Heidegger's terms, the oblivion of Being. As Dr Kamal explicates, Heidegger's opposition to Plato became manifest in his deconstruction of the history of ontology, while Mulla Sadra's opposition to Plato was through his criticism of the Iranian philosopher Suhrawardi's doctrine of the principality of essence.

These new interpretations of being by two philosophers brought new life to both Islamic and Western schools of philosophy and have formed the basis of much of modern ontology, epistemology, and philosophical psychology.

Muhammad Kamal's research centres on investigating the philosophy of existence in Western and Eastern traditions. He has published widely in both English and Kurdish, including authoritative texts on Hegel, the Frankfurt School of philosophy, and the history of Islamic thought. A Kurd originally from Iraq, Dr Kamal has previously studied and worked in Pakistan and Germany.

/TAIWAN STUDIES PROJECT: STRENGTHENING TIES AND CROSSING DISCIPLINES



The Asia Institute is home to a number of scholars with an active interest in the study of Taiwan's culture and society.

Their research examines traditions of Taiwan culture that derive from mainland China, as well as Taiwan's Austronesian languages and cultures – associated with Taiwan's indigenous populations – and Taiwan cultural and social traditions that derive from other places, including Japan, the USA, Western Europe and Southeast Asia. There is also strong interest in the influence of Taiwan culture on other places, including other parts of East and Southeast Asia, the Americas and Australasia. Asia Institute research on Taiwan is interdisciplinary, and brings together anthropologists,

historians, linguists, scholars of folklore and researchers working on popular culture.

In the last decade the Asia Institute has supervised more than a dozen postgraduate students working on topics connected with Taiwan culture from Honours to PhD level, and this includes some of our most successful graduates. Largely through the initiative of Asia Institute postgraduates and staff a national conference entitled "Taiwan Today", which brought together postgraduate researchers from all over Australia, was held at the University of Melbourne in 2007. In 2009 a Taiwan Studies Research and Reading Group was set up at the University of Melbourne, and this is actively

supported by Asia Institute postgraduates and staff.

The Asia Institute plans to organise two linked conferences on Taiwan in 2010 – an international conference titled "Spatial Cultures and Cultural Spaces in Taiwan: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives", and a postgraduate workshop that will bring together postgraduate researchers working on Taiwan topics from other parts of Australia and overseas. There is a strong commitment to strengthening ties with researchers in Taiwan and with colleagues in Taiwan studies working in other parts of Australia and overseas.



/NCEIS: NATIONAL CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR ISLAMIC STUDIES

Mr Budiarnan Bahar (Consul-General, Republic of Indonesia), Ms Liz Beattie MP, Professor Abdullah Saeed (Director, NCEIS) and Mr Hamed Al-Hajri (Consul-General, Sultanate of Oman) pictured at the official launch of NCEIS, held at the Asia Institute in October 2007.

The Asia Institute is honoured to host the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies (NCEIS), a teaching and research facility of elite standing in Australia. NCEIS is funded by the Australian Federal Government to provide outstanding higher-education-level programs in Islamic Studies. The Centre is a dynamic collaboration between the University of Melbourne, Griffith University and the University of Western Sydney. It has been committed to delivering a world-class, multidisciplinary program since its launch in 2007.

The Centre aims to meet the learning needs of aspiring and existing Muslim community leaders as well as teachers and other professionals interested in Islam and Islamic culture. NCEIS is striving to achieve an international profile among scholars and students of Islam, and to deliver a multidisciplinary teaching and research program of Islamic studies at national and international levels. Subjects taught to students of Islamic Studies at the Asia Institute and partner institutions have been developed through a unique process of consultation with key stakeholders from the Muslim community as well as leading academics.

As well as bringing together established expertise in teaching and research at the participating universities, NCEIS plays an important leadership role in public debates on contemporary Islam, particularly in the Australian context. The Centre has an active research publication, and offers professional development programs for the community, government and corporate organisations. The Centre also regularly hosts public events such as seminars, workshops and lectures. In 2010, visiting scholars scheduled to appear in the NCEIS calendar of events include US academic Professor Emeritus Amina Wadud, who is internationally famed for her championing of women's rights.

The public events and community consultation facilitated by the Centre are central to the Asia Institute's program of knowledge transfer and partnerships. As detailed on page 23 of this publication, knowledge transfer and partnerships are integral to the University of Melbourne's strategy of Growing Esteem. NCEIS shares the Asia Institute's commitment to treasuring the two-way exchange of ideas between the University and the broader community.

Since its inception, the Centre has been under the expert Directorship of Abdullah Saeed, Sultan of Oman Professor of Arab and Islamic Studies. Associate Professor Shahram Akbarzadeh is currently serving as Deputy Director. Professor Saeed is a recognised leader in researching one of the most important issues in Islamic thought: the negotiation of text and context, *ijtihad* and interpretation. He has published widely, including authoring or co-authoring 17 academic books and many chapters of books and journal articles. Professor Saeed travels regularly and is actively involved in interfaith dialogue between Muslims, Christians and Jews.



**NCEIS PLAYS AN IMPORTANT
LEADERSHIP ROLE IN PUBLIC
DEBATES ON CONTEMPORARY
ISLAM, PARTICULARLY IN THE
AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT.**

**PROFESSOR
MICHAEL LEIGH**

Speaking at the launch
of ARTI in Aceh in 2007.

**/ARTI: THE
ACEH RESEARCH
TRAINING INSTITUTE**

The Asia Institute is very proud to have contributed leadership and important resources to the Aceh Research Training Institute (ARTI), from its establishment in 2006 until June 2010. ARTI was established in direct response to the physical, psychological and human devastation caused to Aceh by the Indian Ocean tsunami of 26 December 2004. The damage wreaked by the tsunami followed many years of armed conflict in the area.

The central focus of ARTI has been on building research capacity and providing critical skills for a new generation of Acehnese living in a significantly changed society. In particular, research conducted under ARTI has hoped to explore the impact of these societal changes and to contribute to current understandings of societal rehabilitation in Aceh and other similarly affected communities.

ARTI has been a dynamic collaboration between four Indonesian and eight Australian universities supported by both the Myer Foundation and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). It has been jointly directed by Professor Bahrein Sugihen at Syiah Kuala University (Unsyiah) in Banda

Aceh and Professor Michael Leigh at the University of Melbourne's Asia Institute.

Professor Leigh has previously served as Director of the Asia Institute as well as the Institute of East Asian Studies at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, and earlier was responsible for the Program for the Development of the Social Sciences throughout Indonesian Universities and Islamic Institutes, based in Banda Aceh and Jakarta. His research interests are centred around political economy, resource politics and political change in Southeast Asia, with specific reference to Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Burma and Brunei. Professor Leigh has published widely in these and related fields over a period of more than four decades, and has served on the editorial boards for numerous scholarly journals.

Under Professor Leigh's leadership, the primary activity of ARTI has been a rigorous program of research training designed to build and intensify the research capacity of Acehnese academics. This unique research training has been carried out at the Aceh Research Centre (Pusat Latihan Penelitian Ilmu Sosial dan Budaya – PLPISB) of Unsyiah in

**ARTI HAS BEEN CRUCIAL
TO THE REBUILDING OF AN
AREA THAT FOR TOO LONG
HAS SUFFERED HAVOC
AND NEGLECT.**

Banda Aceh, which Professor Leigh has regularly visited for lengthy time periods. The PLPISB has a long and continuing history as an active research centre. Its recently refurbished building and annex provide seminar, library, office and some accommodation facilities for ARTI.

The research training offered by ARTI has been three-tiered, and ranged from an introduction to the basic concepts of quality academic research, through to mentorship and guidance on the preparation of proposals, budgets, and the sharing of research findings. Participants who have successfully completed all three levels of training are currently fine-tuning their work and sourcing suitable publications. ARTI has been crucial to the rebuilding of an area that for too long has suffered havoc and neglect. A detailed report on the project is scheduled to be published in early 2010. ARTI's website – www.arti.unimelb.edu – will provide more detailed information including a copy of this report in both English and Indonesian.

THE ASIA INSTITUTE'S PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES REGULARLY FEATURES LEADING SCHOLARS FROM AROUND AUSTRALIA AND THE WORLD. GUEST SPEAKERS ARE CAREFULLY SELECTED TO COMPLEMENT OUR TEACHING AND RESEARCH, AND TO APPEAL TO STUDENTS AND STAFF AS WELL AS ALUMNI AND INTERESTED MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

/KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AND PARTNERSHIPS

"Knowledge transfer and partnerships" is a phrase used to describe the two-way flow and uptake of ideas between the university and the broader community. This is a core principle at the Asia Institute and at the University of Melbourne more broadly.

The role of universities is changing. They are no longer exclusive knowledge habitats, but rather they are access points. In this climate, it is imperative that universities develop strong bilateral relationships with government, business and the community and become increasingly visible, relevant and accessible to society's changing needs.

To meet this challenge, the University of Melbourne has implemented its Growing Esteem strategy, which identifies three core elements essential to our success. The University's traditional academic tasks of research as well as teaching and learning have been expanded to include the third activity of knowledge transfer and partnerships. This is in recognition of the full range of benefits that a world-renowned University such as Melbourne generates when it works in partnership with business, government and community to address issues of local, national and global significance.

In all cases, the University's contribution will be characterised by its reputation for excellence and quality.

The University of Melbourne's program of knowledge transfer and partnerships is designed to build a stronger, more resilient relationship with the community and is underpinned by three principles:

- › to generate intellectual capital in ways that mutually benefit the University and the external partners with which it engages;
- › to link with the University's teaching and research activities; and
- › to be responsive and relevant to international, social, economic, environmental and cultural issues.

The Asia Institute is firmly committed to upholding these principles. As detailed on page 21 of this publication, teaching programs at the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies (NCEIS) are informed by close consultation with community groups. Many of our teaching programs actively encourage students to go on exchange programs to Asian countries, and many of our postgraduates conduct field research across the region. As explained on the facing

page, the Aceh Research Training Institute (ARTI) plays a crucial role in rebuilding this devastated area, very close to Australia's northern states. Each year, Asia Week brings together students, staff and community groups in a range of social and scholarly activities that highlight the unique cultures of our region. Finally, the annual Melbourne Conference on China is an important opportunity for leading China scholars from around the world to meet and share ideas.

In 2010, the Asia Institute is pleased to launch a public lecture series unequalled in the nation. Lectures are carefully selected to complement the teaching programs we offer, as well as the research strengths of our academic staff. Moreover, lectures are tailored to be of interest to academics, current students at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, as well as interested members of the general public.

Public lecturers for 2010 include Professor Amina Wadud, a distinguished US scholar who spoke in February on "Muslim Women and Gender Justice: Methods, Motivation and Means." Professor Wadud is a regular guest at leading international institutions and is an expert on Islamic feminism. Her 1992 book,

Our'an and Woman, has been translated into seven languages. Following Professor Wadud's lecture, Faculty of Arts International Scholar Koichi Iwabuchi delivered a thought-provoking lecture on "Multicultural questions without multiculturalism: the Japanese discourse of 'multicultural co-living'". Koichi Iwabuchi is Professor of Media and Cultural Studies at the School of International Liberal Studies of Waseda University, Tokyo, and a guest of both the Asia Institute and the School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne.

For more information on free public lectures and other events presented by the Asia Institute, please visit www.asiainstitute.unimelb.edu.au.

/EXECUTIVE MASTER OF ARTS

The Executive Master of Arts (EMA) is a next generation graduate program designed to deepen knowledge of key academic disciplines while also equipping students with the kinds of professional skills that will assure them of exciting career destinations. It is the first program of its kind in Australia and has been developed in consultation with the industry, government and community sectors.

The EMA will work for students who want a degree of influence in a world of expanding opportunities. It is a program that aims to foster ethical leadership and social engagement by bringing together traditional Arts disciplines such as philosophy, literary studies and politics with strategic knowledge in fields such as planning and finance. It does this from an Arts perspective and with the interests of humanities and social science students in mind. It will allow students to apply their knowledge to the real world by providing them with networking opportunities with opinion-makers, employers and fellow students.

/MASTER OF ISLAMIC STUDIES

The Master of Islamic Studies offers a multidisciplinary approach in areas such as Islamic law, theology, politics, conflict resolution, education and global media. The degree explores methodological issues in several key areas of Islamic studies and addresses the issues relevant to the development of Islam as a religion and civilisation from its origins to the present. The program addresses both historical and modern Islamic studies and incorporates the latest research, approaches and teaching methods in the field.

In this program students are encouraged to develop their interests in Islamic Studies, and to engage in a broad range of subjects, taken from other streams available as electives. This breadth will provide students with skills to analyse issues relevant to Islam and Muslim studies with a reasonable understanding of the Islamic worldview, its value system, and particular historical experiences.

/MASTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The Master of International Relations is a multidisciplinary and professionally-oriented course, which includes a focus on the Asia-Pacific region. This brand new program has been designed to further students' intellectual understanding and to expand career opportunities in government, the private sector and in the NGO sector.

In the Master of International Relations, students will acquire a deep knowledge of key developments in international relations, and become active global citizens with a keen cross-cultural awareness and understanding. Further, students will examine international history, governance and law and how they impact the social and political landscape, while gaining relevant and practical skills for employment in the field. An optional internship allows students to apply their skills and gain career-oriented work experience in international organisations, government, business, media and non-government organisations.