

asia info

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Meeting in the marketplace?

Plural societies and NZ - Dr Natasha Hamilton-Hart

The term “plural society” comes to us from John Furnivall, a colonial civil servant who spent much of his life in Southeast Asia. His mid-Twentieth Century books on the perversities of colonial rule in Netherlands India (now Indonesia) and Burma (now Myanmar) have gained the stature of classics in the field of Southeast Asian studies. His idea of the “plural society” still circulates widely, and may offer something to those of us with an interest in both New Zealand’s changing ethnic make-up and our ties with a heterogeneous Asia.

What did Furnivall mean by a “plural society”? He referred to the concept in many of his writings, but perhaps the best-known passage that captures the idea comes from his *Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India*:

“In Burma, as in Java, probably the first thing that strikes the visitor is the medley of peoples – European, Chinese, Indian and native. It is in the strictest sense a medley, for they mix but do not combine. Each group holds by its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideas and ways. As individuals they meet, but only in the marketplace, in buying and selling. There is a plural society, with different sections of the community living side by side, but separately, within the same political unit.”

I was reminded of this passage on reading the latest annual *New Zealanders’ Perceptions of Asia and Asian Peoples* survey commissioned by the Asia New Zealand Foundation. While the survey showed a strong majority recognised the importance of Asia for New Zealand, views on immigration from Asia were mixed and

most respondents reported very superficial contacts with Asian people. For 89 percent, their main contact with Asians was through shopping or other commercial transactions – an approximation of Furnivall’s idea of mixing only in the marketplace.

The picture is sobering. The marketplace may be a win-win territory in material terms (at least when markets are not in meltdown mode) but it proves a very limited basis for social cohesion. Interactions motivated by “the desire for individual material advantage”, to use Furnivall’s words, make for a thin gruel on which to feed a society. This may not matter in the short term. Indeed many of Asia’s plural societies are prosperous, dynamic places. When times are tough or unstable, however, societies held together mainly through the medium of market exchanges have often been susceptible to the spread of malignant social stereotypes that political opportunists can then exploit, furthering an uncivil – and, in the worst cases, violent – political atmosphere. The fragile social fabric Furnivall identified continues to take its toll in many parts of Southeast Asia.

Stereotypes can do their own damage. The Asia New Zealand Foundation report came out barely a month after the furore over New Zealand First MP Richard Prosser’s toxic anti-Muslim comments. Although duly decried by many public figures, Prosser’s rant provided an unsettling glimpse of the extent to which prejudice resonates within parts of New Zealand society. It also did nothing positive for our image. Among the news organisations that picked up Prosser’s comments were the Indonesian official news agency, Antara, and Indonesia’s *Republika* newspaper. On the *Republika* website, Indonesian readers posted their reactions. I found the responses humbling in their willingness to distinguish Prosser’s views

from those of New Zealanders at large, and (for the most part) their ability to rise above his ignorance and apparent ill-will. Happily in this case, the incident concluded not just with an unreserved apology from Prosser but with something perhaps more transformative – the invitation to Prosser from a young Muslim couple to join them for dinner, to meet them as people rather than the dehumanised stereotypes conjured up in Prosser’s original commentary.

New Zealanders may congratulate themselves on the generally civil way this incident was resolved. We’ve been spared the ethnically or religiously tinged violence that continues to surface in many plural societies – and also avoided the draconian sedition laws that, in some places, appear to stand as bulwarks against public incivility. But we have been reminded of the prejudice that can exist within apparently multicultural societies, when the thin bonds of commerce are the main form of intergroup interaction. New Zealanders appear very well aware of Asia’s growing importance as a marketplace. To make the most of our ties with this important part of the world education about Asia is, of course, a good thing. Robust and socially embedded ties, however, grow when, as Furnivall might have put it, we mix outside the marketplace.

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Interactive dashboards shine light on businesses

- Laura Browne

The Growing New Zealand Business team have developed a series of interactive dashboards to allow business people and other stakeholders to explore data.

The GNZB project is undertaking an exciting new initiative to increase engagement with New Zealand small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). GNZB is a research project carried out by staff and research students at The University of Auckland Business School and the New Zealand Asia Institute (NZAI) under the leadership of Professor Hugh Whittaker.

The project is based on a survey of SMEs from 2010/2011 that yielded almost 2000 responses. This research has been used for academic publications and, importantly, is forming a knowledge base that can deliver more general insights to survey participants and SMEs.

To generate more engaging research output, the GNZB team released interactive dashboards on the Business School website making certain parts of the survey data available to the public. The data visualisations are created using Tableau software. Currently there are two series available, the first focuses on “CEOs and their reasons for business involvement” and the second explores the topic of “Innovation and internationalisation”.

The team presented the initiative at the Innovative Manufacturing and Materials Showcase at the Engineering faculty and received very encouraging feedback from practitioners. To explore the interactive dashboards, visit www.business.auckland.ac.nz and search for “GNZB data visualisations”.

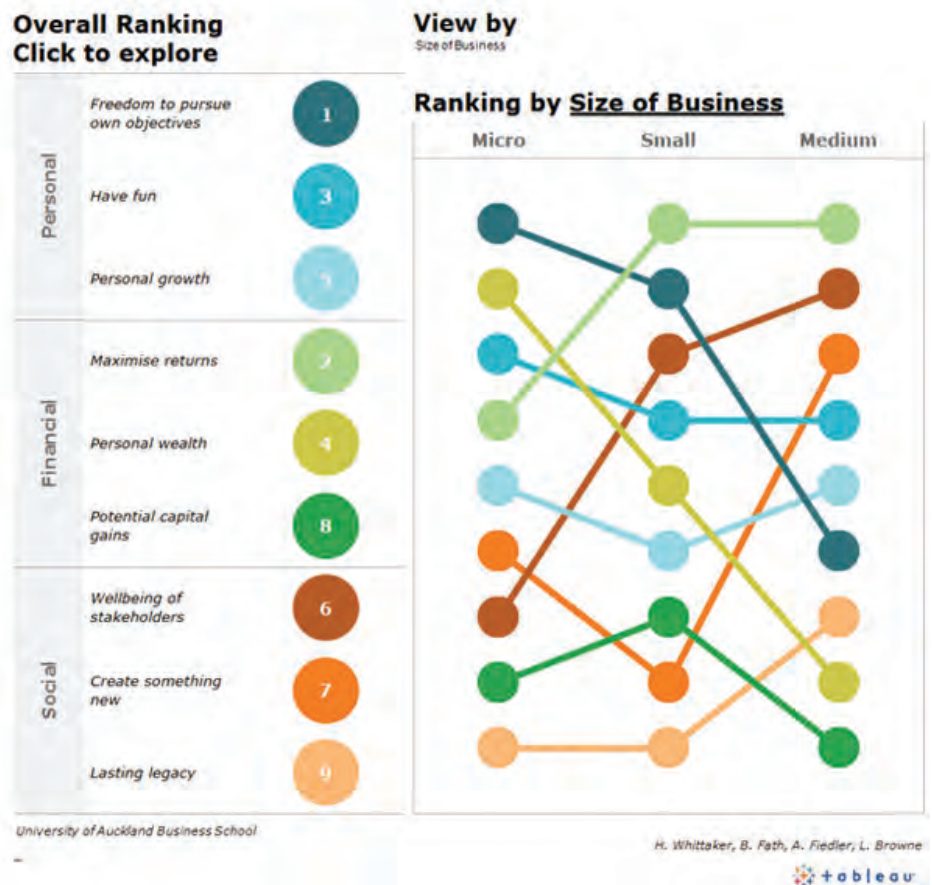
The GNZB team is also about to launch a new business benchmarking tool that uses data from the survey to allow business people to engage directly with the project by performing a quick “business health check”. Once launched, businesses can easily assess their performance across a number of key business indicators.

The tool will show how they compare with all businesses as well as with those of similar size and sector, across indicators such as profitability.

The top 25 percent of businesses form the benchmark group of high performers and the tool provides insights as to some attributes that differ among these businesses across

each sector. Examples include differences in perceptions of competitive advantages and limitations.

Laura Browne worked on this project as part of The University of Auckland Summer Research Scholarship.



Japanese responses to social crisis and disaster

- Mark R Mullins

The two-year anniversary of Japan's triple disaster – earthquake, tsunami and nuclear meltdown at the Fukushima Daiichi plant—was marked by memorial services across the country for the almost 19,000 people who died on 11 March, 2011.

The nation is still coming to terms with the scale of the disaster and struggling to find a way forward. Thousands remain in temporary housing with little hope of returning home in the foreseeable future, but still without clear alternative plans or adequate assistance to restart life largely from scratch in a safer part of Japan. The uncertainty regarding housing is compounded by worries about food safety and the possibility of even more contamination from the unstable nuclear facility.

Less than two decades ago Japan was similarly shaken by the double disaster of 1995. The Hanshin earthquake on 17 January caused major damage in the city of Kobe and surrounding areas and resulted in more than 5,000 deaths. The sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway system on 20 March was carried out by members of Aum Shinrikyō, a religious movement that had existed for only a decade. The sarin gas killed 12 people but injured more than 6,000 – many of them still suffering from permanent health problems as a result of exposure. People in Japan were understandably shaken after months of non-stop media coverage of the earthquake devastation and the arrests, trials and debates about the human suffering caused by Aum Shinrikyō's efforts to bring about its apocalyptic vision.

The scale of the 1995 disaster pales in comparison with the triple disaster of 2011. Nevertheless, these two years of major disasters generated a similar sense of social crisis and raised serious public concern about established institutions. The disaster in the Kobe area revealed the government's ineptitude in crisis management; the disturbing attack on the Tokyo subway system indicated that the police were unable to protect the public from deviant religious movements; and the more recent nuclear plant disaster raised concerns over the government's entire post-war energy policy and the close ties between politicians and the nuclear industry.

Given that the sense of stability and trust in the established social order have been undermined in this way, it is not surprising that political and religious leaders, as well as the general public, have been challenged to think more seriously about the nature of post-war Japanese society. These disasters and the sense of social crisis have generated a wide range of responses, including a surge in volunteer activity, a

growth in NPOs to respond to some of the human needs unaddressed by government facilities, a rediscovery of a public role by many religious institutions and a revitalisation of civic participation. It also created an environment in which the political interests and agendas of neo-nationalist leaders and groups have found a more receptive audience.

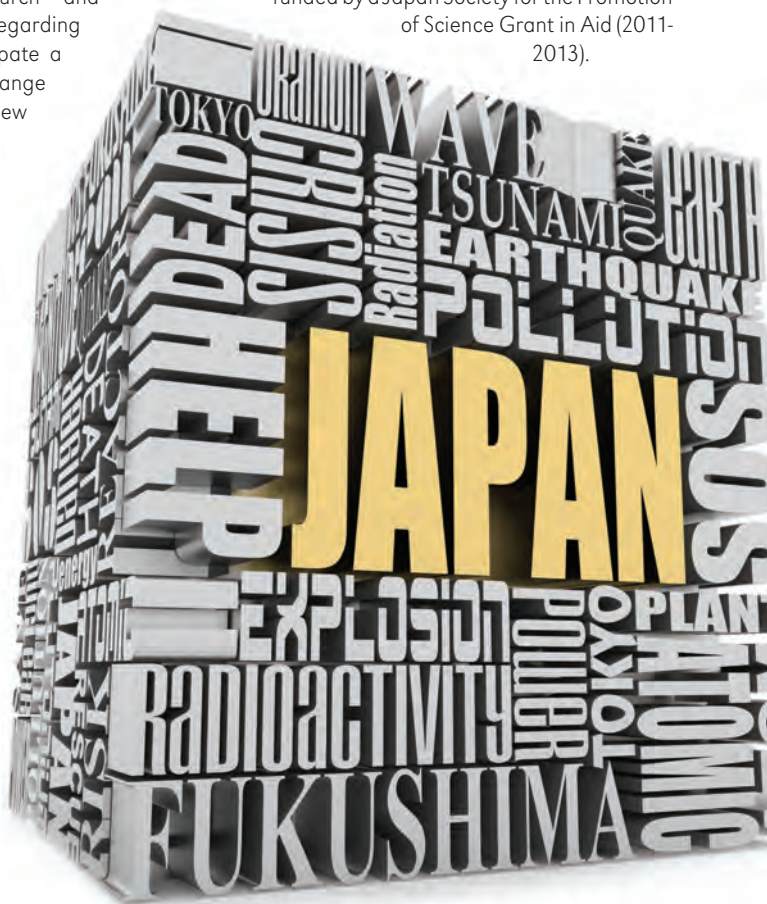
What can we learn about Japan through the diverse responses to these two critical moments in post-war history? In co-operation with Sophia University's Institute of Comparative Culture in Tokyo, NZAI's Japan Studies Centre will host a two-day international conference starting on 13 September on "Japanese Responses to Social Crisis and Disaster: 1995 and 2011". It will bring together a multidisciplinary team of scholars to engage this question and to explore the diverse responses by the national and local governments, political leaders, citizen activists, religious organisations, literary figures and public intellectuals. Given the recent earthquake in Christchurch and decades of public debate regarding nuclear energy, we anticipate a fruitful discussion and exchange of ideas relevant to the New Zealand context as well.

After 27 years of academic work in Japanese universities, Mark R Mullins joined The University of Auckland's School of Asian Studies as Professor of Japanese Studies in January 2013, a new position supported by a Japan Foundation grant for a three-year project entitled Re-discovering and Re-engaging Japan. He directs the Japan Studies Centre within the NZAI.

Before this appointment, he taught for a decade at Sophia University, where he also served a three-year term as editor of *Monumenta*

Nipponica. He completed his postgraduate studies in the sociology of religion and East Asian traditions at McMaster University (PhD 1985). His teaching and research focus is on the role of Japanese religions in modern societies both within and outside of Japan.

He is the author and co-editor of a number of works, including *Religious Minorities in Canada: A Sociological Study of the Japanese Experience* (1989), *Religion and Society in Modern Japan* (1993), *Perspectives on Christianity in Korea and Japan* (1995), *Christianity Made in Japan: A Study of Indigenous Movements* (1998), and *Religion and Social Crisis in Japan: Understanding Japanese Society Through the Aum Affair* (2001). He is currently engaged in research on neo-nationalism and religion in contemporary Japanese society. This research is supported in part by the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, Nanzan University, Nagoya, Japan, through their project on the "Internationalisation of Research on Religion", funded by a Japan Society for the Promotion of Science Grant in Aid (2011-2013).



Resilience: Japan and New Zealand moving forward

The San Francisco Peace Treaty, signed 60 years ago on 28 April 1952, ushered in a new era of bilateral relations between New Zealand and Japan. Since then, Japan has grown into one of New Zealand's most important trading partners. Its economic miracle has also reportedly played a key enabling role in the development of New Zealand's links with the region of East Asia. In the wake of the Christchurch earthquakes and Tohoku triple disasters, the two countries are further bound by the resilience of their respective people in turning destruction into a fresh start.

To mark the 60th anniversary of NZJapan diplomatic and economic relations and celebrate their ever stronger bilateral ties, the New Zealand Asia Institute, the Waseda Institute for New Zealand Studies and the Japan

Society of New Zealand Studies hosted a joint conference in Auckland on 3-4 December 2012. Twenty-two speakers from 17 universities and institutions in New Zealand, Japan and the Netherlands were invited to reflect on highlights

and issues in the bilateral relations and share their research findings on how disaster-afflicted communities in the two countries were "turning disaster into opportunity" or "wazawai tenjite fuku to nasu" in Japanese.

The participants focused their attention specifically on how the national resilience demonstrated by the two peoples might be translated into reduced vulnerability of a more integrated Asia-Pacific region. Their enthusiastic discussions also made it clear that Japan and New Zealand, building on their mutually complementary trade relationship, could face together the daunting challenge of sustaining agricultural production and food security nationally and regionally. One highlight of the session on innovation and technology partnership between the two countries was the public lecture given by Japanese architect Shigeru Ban, well known in New Zealand for the iconic Cardboard Cathedral he designed for Christchurch.

There is little doubt that Japan will remain in the developmental frontier for the whole world. The University of Auckland, as Vice-Chancellor Professor Stuart McCutcheon stated in his opening address, will continue its effort since 1968, when it began the study of Japanese language and literature, to advance Japan-related education in New Zealand. By providing a platform for research-based discussions on major public issues concerning New Zealand and Japan, the NZAI has also helped add value to the relationship between the two countries.



Professor Andrew Barrie (left) from Auckland's School of Architecture, Shigeru Ban (centre) and Reverend Craig Dixon (right).

New Zealand's relations with the Republic of Korea

On 16-17 November 2012, the New Zealand Asia Institute at The University of Auckland hosted an international conference of scholars from North America, Korea, Australia and New Zealand to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between New Zealand and the Republic of Korea.

Titled *New Zealand, Korea and Asia-Pacific: From Distance to Closeness* and supported by the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Wellington, the Korea Foundation and NZAI, the conference was opened by the University Vice-Chancellor Professor Stuart McCutcheon, followed by welcoming remarks from NZAI Director Professor Hugh Whittaker and Mira Szászy Research Centre for Māori and Pacific Economic Development Director Associate Professor Manuka Henare. The purpose of the conference was to examine the diminishing distance and increasing mutual interests between the two nations since the end of World War II, a time when the Korean peninsula became divided into two ideologically opposed states in a changed international environment and New Zealand was beginning to reach out to non-European cultures and societies in its Pacific neighbourhood. In 1950 when the Cold War erupted on the Korean peninsula in a bitter war both civil and international, New Zealand was one of the 16 nations that joined the UN forces that fought alongside the South Korean army against the North and its allies.

Since 1962, contacts between the two nations have grown into an important and healthy engagement. While Korea is now one of New Zealand's biggest trading partners, it also sends significant numbers of students to New Zealand schools and tertiary institutions along with more

than 30,000 permanent residents who have enriched the country culturally. By now, New Zealanders are far more conscious of belonging to the Asia-Pacific region of which Korea is an influential member. Korea in the northwest Pacific and New Zealand in the southwest Pacific are thus effective partners despite their geographic separation.

There were four keynote addresses delivered over the two days of the conference. On the first day, participants and attendees were treated to a frank, informative and lively presentation of the two countries' standpoints on and visions for the relationship by His Excellency Mr Yongkyu Park, The Republic of Korea's Ambassador to New Zealand, and Ambassador Andrea Smith, Deputy Secretary of the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Whereas there was virtual unity on political and security issues, in relation to commerce and trade there were areas of differing emphasis, particularly over terms of trade, which are balanced in New Zealand's favour.

On the second day, we were most grateful for the keynote address by David Hong, President of the Korean Society of Auckland, on Korean residents conducting business in New Zealand, and the inaugural presentation of a highly innovative joint New Zealand-Korean educational enterprise by Dame Wendy Pye, Managing Director of Wendy Pye Group, and

Kyongho (Patrick) Hwang, head of KT oic and E-Future Co. This proved to be an exciting presentation that elicited admiration from all in attendance.

Each of the five general sessions on politics, security, economics, immigration and culture traced the parallel developments from minimal contacts to substantial, friendly relations between the two countries. It became evident that as in trade, so in the areas of social and cultural engagement, Korea's contribution to New Zealand far outweighed the importance of New Zealand's contribution to Korea. Part of the reason for this is the far greater population and economic prowess of South Korea. But it also has to do with the impact of the "Korean wave" in popular culture and the tens of thousands of Korean residents in New Zealand, who not only form a definite cultural presence in the country but must also grapple with the challenges of fitting in with a different mainstream culture. So long as the Korean peninsula is divided into two enemy states, New Zealand's greatest practical importance to South Korea seems to lie in security. Although traditionally and currently a strong ally of the Republic of Korea, New Zealand is unthreatening enough to the DPRK to engage in some positive ventures in the north and to provide a neutral ground on which improved understanding can be sought, if only for the time being at unofficial levels.



In the front row Dr Richard Phillips (second from left), Professor Hugh Whittaker (third from left), HE Mr Yongkyu Park (third from right) and Professor Ken Wells (second from right) strike a "Gangnam Style" pose, along with invited speakers.

South Pacific agenda for survival and growth

A framework for coordinated participation of Asian donors

In early October 2011, the severe drought and water crisis in the South Pacific made headlines around the globe. The crude heading “South Pacific islands running out of water”, picked up and repeated by the international media, highlighted the increasing threats of natural disasters, climate change and rising seas to the region’s fresh water and food security. Widely aired television footage of the dire situation also offered a strong sense of urgency, exhorting the world to devote greater attention to the daunting challenges facing Pacific Islanders in sustaining even their basic livelihood.

It is common knowledge that developing economies in the South Pacific are highly reliant on external support for their economic wellbeing. Yet while aid volume fluctuates and flows are volatile, the issue with funding is arguably never a lack of it, but the absence of effective funding mechanisms. Much has been said and written about the South Pacific as a “diplomatic market” for donors and recipients. Critical comments focus primarily on bilateral development partners from Asia to the region. Little, however, has been said on how aid coordination and harmonisation are feasible in the region and how it may be achieved. Also missing from the debate is the voice from major Asian donor countries reflecting on their respective domestic discussions on the issue and possible improvement.

To help bridge the gap in the exiting literature on foreign donors and macroeconomic consequences in Pacific Island states, NZAI and the Pacific Institute of Public Policy in Vanuatu (PiPP) jointly initiated a research project on the potential for collaboration among Japan, China and Taiwan. The research was approached through examinations of domestic discussions

in the three key Asian donors and perceptions from the South Pacific, New Zealand, Australia and the United States. Empirical studies of the three key Asian donors were complemented by observations of development-related issues. Assisted with a grant from the Japan Foundation, NZAI and PiPP hosted a conference in Vanuatu on 11-13 December 2012 at which the 19 invited researchers from 13 universities and research institutions in New Zealand, Vanuatu, Australia, China, Japan, the Netherlands and the United States presented their research findings.

The project participants concluded that with increasing emphasis on poverty eradication in the South Pacific, Asian donors might find it feasible to team up their efforts in the following areas:

- food and water security
- natural disaster relief
- technology for environment and natural resource conservation
- oceanic and coastal fisheries management
- rural infrastructure and agriculture extension
- climate change mitigation and adaptation
- capacity building to support trade negotiations
- sustainable development of commodity/ value chains
- the South Pacific regional economic integration

The research findings presented at the conference indicated that while key Asian donors had varied, and at times competing, geostrategic and economic interests in the South Pacific, they also demonstrated the potential of focusing the purpose of their aid more sharply on local development, and being flexible with the political conditions attached to their aid. In that regard, New Zealand, with its independent thinking in international affairs and important position in and profound knowledge of the South Pacific regional community, possessed ample strategic critical mass to broker coordinated development schemes and activities among key Asian donors.

The research findings of the project will be published in an edited volume in 2013-2014.



The research team visit the Melanesian Spearhead Group Secretariat headquarters in Vanuatu.



Taking stock of the ongoing changes in Myanmar

On 15 February the NZAI was glad to welcome Professor Narayanan Ganesan of the Hiroshima Peace Institute, who broke his air journey to deliver a lecture titled Taking Stock of Recent Positive Developments in Myanmar.

It was well informed and reflected his excellent contacts in the country. He focussed on the changes following the 2010 elections and April 2012 by-elections that brought the National League for Democracy and its leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi into the parliament elected under the 2008 constitution.

Still dominated by the army, President Thein Sein's government has, however, undertaken many reforms. Those Professor Ganesan discussed at some length. They include not only working with the opposition, the release of political prisoners, the granting of amnesty to exiles and the lifting of censorship, but also

the negotiation of ceasefire agreements with almost all the ethnic insurgent armies and the inauguration of the Myanmar Peace Centre as a vehicle for the resolution of domestic conflict.

Other reforms have been in the economic field, including the documentation of land ownership and the lifting of laws prohibiting organised labour. Enough has been done to persuade foreign governments to reduce the sanctions on Burma imposed in reaction to the junta's denial of the results of the 1990 elections and its poor record on human rights.

As Professor Ganesan said, there is much still to be done. The ceasefire agreements have to

be turned into peace agreements, for example, and more immediately the government has to deal with the conflict in Kachin state and the question of the Rohingya refugees from Rakhine [Arakan] state.

A major task is the rehabilitation of the education system, debilitated by political intervention and under-funding. How things will shape up before the 2015 elections was, Professor Ganesan concluded, difficult to predict.

The lecture was well attended by members of the University and of the Burmese community in Auckland and the speaker dealt effectively with a wide range of questions.

Asia Savvy 2013

The New Zealand Asia Institute is delighted to announce the 2013 Asia Savvy Conference will be held on Saturday 31 August with the theme "Embracing Asia: Building New Zealand".

This student-led conference draws its inspiration from the successful format of the past two years. In the panel discussion sessions there will be formal presentations by invited speakers of public eminence and by students from The University of Auckland and elsewhere. Time is also set aside for break-out sessions at which all attendees can contribute their insights and experience.

The three topic areas have been designated for detailed consideration this year: the possible lessons that NZ businesses can learn from Asian businesses; the value of multiple ethnic identity; and variations in leadership style. Students seeking to register for the conference will write a short essay in answer to a specific question on one of the topic areas and will then be eligible to attend the conference for free. Excellent

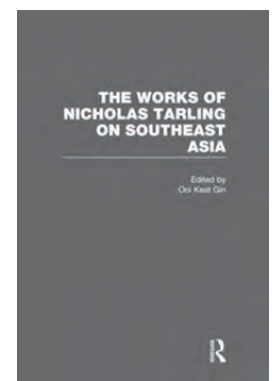
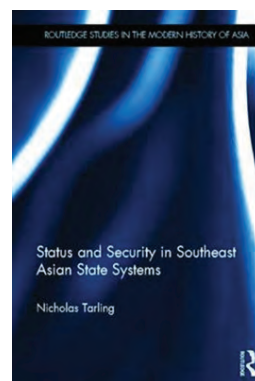
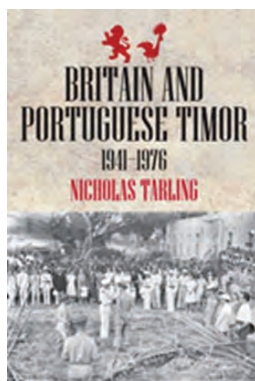
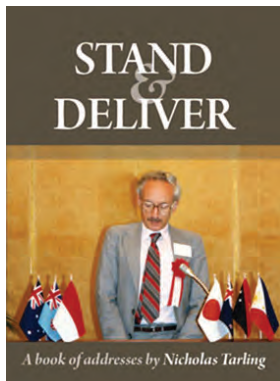
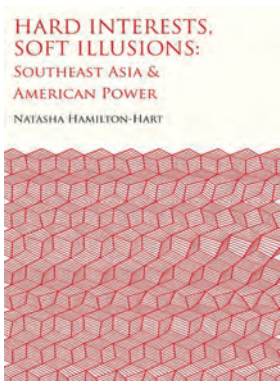
essays on each topic will be published after the conference, with prizes allocated to the best.

Details of the Asia Savvy conference will become progressively available at www.asia-savvy.com as the student-led committee, under its project manager Ahra Cho, finalises the details in the coming weeks. We look forward to seeing you at the conference, which promises to continue the high standards set in 2011 and 2012.



 **ASIA SAVVY**
New Zealand Asia Conference

NZAI staff publications



Hard Interests, Soft Illusions

by Natasha Hamilton-Hart

Hard Interests, Soft Illusions explores the belief held by foreign policy elites in much of Southeast Asia – Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore and Vietnam – that the United States is a relatively benign power. Dr Hamilton-Hart argues that this belief is an important factor underpinning US pre-eminence in the region, because beliefs inform specific foreign policy decisions and form the basis for broad orientations of alignment, opposition or nonalignment. Such foundational beliefs, however, do not simply reflect objective facts and reasoning processes. The author argues that they are driven by both interests – in this case the political and economic interests of ruling groups in Southeast Asia – and illusions.

Stand & Deliver

This book contains a selection of addresses by Nicholas Tarling, Professor of History, broadcaster, and sometime actor, now Fellow at the New Zealand Asia Institute at The University of Auckland. Many were given while Tarling was the University's Public Orator and honoured such figures as Dean Martin Sullivan, Kendrick Smithyman, Sir Lewis Ross, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, Maurice Paykel, Dame Dorothy Winstone, Prime Minister Dr Mahathir bin Mohamed, HE Mme Sadao Ogata, Paakariki Harrison, Sir Donald McIntyre, Sir Miles Warren and Sir Colin Maiden. Others were given on

less joyous occasions or less public occasions. None were without what the late Charles Nalden called "the public orator's grace, his wit and above all his decided penchant for apt quotation".

Britain and Portuguese Timor 1941-1976

by Nicholas Tarling

The prime purpose of this book is to examine the role of the British. Timor was not a part of their empire, nor important to their commerce. But it had a long relationship with Portugal. Britain's interest was thus largely indirect. It had two peaks, marked by the Second World War and the decolonisation of Southeast Asia. Those are recognised in the book. The book ends with an account of the Indonesian incorporation of the territory. The reporting of British diplomats was still copious and perceptive, but Britain – which had now finally withdrawn from Singapore – adopted only a very limited policy-making role. Though its interest was more indirect than ever, it was even so not without implications for the independence that the Timorese finally secured and that affirmed the rule that post-colonial states were successor states of empire.

Status and Security in Southeast Asian State Systems

by Nicholas Tarling

Southeast Asia serves as an excellent case study to discuss major transformations in the relationship between states. This book looks at

the changing nature of relationships between countries in Southeast Asia, as well as their relationships with other states in Asia and beyond. A diverse region in many areas, open to outside influence in many fields, but not without dynamics of its own, Southeast Asia has been through centuries the site of states with very differing levels of power and in a variety of forms. It has also been exposed to powerful neighbours, seawards empires and contending world powers. The book analyses state relations against the background of regional and geopolitical developments from within and without. It discusses how Southeast Asian states of the Twenty-First Century can best preserve their security in the context of the rise of China and goes on to look at the extent to which they can preserve their autonomy of action.

The works of Nicholas Tarling

by Ooi Keat Gin

The collection's editor writes: Southeast Asian history and historiography would be greatly handicapped if the writings of Nicholas Tarling were removed from the increasingly expanding literature. The reading list has increased several folds since the early 1950s when Southeast Asian history was beginning to emerge as a serious area of scholarly research and writing. Nonetheless the works of the pioneering batch of scholars have remained relevant more than half a century since their publications. These books and articles have attained "classic" status, never failing to be listed in students' required reading lists.

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