



Visions and realities of New Zealand and Asia



NEW ZEALAND
ASIA INSTITUTE

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND





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The concept of Asia-Savvy: New Zealand Asia Conference 2012

This student-led conference developed further aspects of the 2011 Asia-Savvy Conference. Building upon the initial concept of Asia-savvy highlighted the importance of the role of the conference to establish a bridge for New Zealand to shape our future with Asia by developing the Asia-savvy generation.

The theme The Visions and Realities of New Zealand and Asia guided the conference to discuss the visions of prosperous opportunities between New Zealand and Asia and led participants to consider the realities preventing the strengthening of relations. This theme brought discussion on a diverse range of topics, including multicultural New Zealand, business and entrepreneurship and meaningful pursuits for the Asia-savvy.

Each panel consisted of academics, professionals and university students and was facilitated by an Asia-savvy student. Panel discussions provided students with the opportunity to listen to different perspectives of the panellists as well engage in discussions and put forward

their perspectives and questions. These were followed by student-led workshops, which encouraged participants to reflect on the panel discussion, address an issue and present back to their Asia-savvy peers.

The conference brought New Zealand's brightest Asia-savvy students, academics, professionals and experts together. This abundance of Asia-savvy minds allowed sensitive topics to be discussed openly. The term Asia-savvy was acknowledged to include all individuals with an understanding or interest in Asia. Students were inspired to engage in their Asia-savviness and left hoping Asia-Savvy could provide more than an annual event for the participation.

Asia-Savvy is an organisation that provides New Zealand with a pathway to grow its links with Asia by developing the Asia-savvy generation. Recognising the value of our young Asia-savvy leaders and developing their positions in New Zealand's multicultural society will place New Zealand in an excellent position to overcome barriers and strongly engage with Asia.



The 2012 organising committee, from left, Hugh Whittaker, Anthony Barton, Julia Boyle, Xingang Wang, Chris Park, Ivana Drinkovic and Kimberley Wu. Dinah Towle and Richard Phillips were absent.

Conference programme 7-8 September 2012

Visions and realities of New Zealand and Asia

Friday 7 September, 2012

Opening addresses

Professor Hugh Whittaker Director, New Zealand Asia Institute, The University of Auckland
Julia Boyle Project Manager, Asia-Savvy Conference Organising Committee

Keynote Speech

Neil Walter CNZM Chairman, National Commission for UNESCO

Panel discussion 1: Multicultural Aotearoa: Understanding ourselves, considering our future

Joris de Bres Race Relations Commissioner
Dr Edwina Pio AUT Business and Law School
Roseanne Liang Screenwriter and director
Angela Cruz The University of Auckland
Ivana Drinkovic Student moderator, Asia-Savvy Conference Organising Committee

Panel Discussion 2: Moving forward with Asia: Recognising the potential of Asia-savvy graduates and their value for New Zealand

Liu Feng COSCO (NZ) Ltd
Giles Brooker Giles Brooker, Ltd
Felix Lee ASB Banking Ltd
Sarah Tacken The University of Auckland
Chris Park Student moderator, Asia-Savvy Conference Organising Committee

Saturday 8 September 2012

Panel Discussion 3: Business not as usual: NZ-Asia entrepreneurship and innovative enterprise

Tony Browne	New Zealand Contemporary China Research Centre
Mitchell Pham	Augen Software Group
Greg James	WHK
Jason Yang	The University of Auckland
Anthony Barton	Student moderator, Asia-Savvy Conference Organising Committee

Panel Discussion 4: Meaningful pursuits for the Asia-Savvy: Social enterprise, community leadership and beyond

Lucy Morris	University of Otago
Balamohan Shingade	The University of Auckland
Mahoney Turnbull	University of Otago
Sian Coleman	The University of Auckland
Jennifer Donnelly	Student moderator, The University of Auckland

Summary of keynote speech

Neil Walter CNZM, Chairman, National Commission for UNESCO

Asia's economic importance to New Zealand

It is now received wisdom that New Zealand's future standard of living will depend heavily on how we manage our relationships with the countries of Asia.

Just 50 years ago New Zealand was the supplier of just two main commodities – butter and sheep meat – to just one market – the United Kingdom. Today we trade with more than 170 countries in a huge and diverse range of goods and services, working across a large and sprawling network of bilateral, regional, plurilateral and multilateral access arrangements and agreements.

Asia now accounts for more than forty percent of our merchandise exports and seven of our top ten markets are in Asia. Add in the growing importance of our links with Asia in such areas as trade in services, tourism, international education, investment and science and technology and you can see why our relations with Asia have never been more important to our economic future.

Globalisation and interdependence

But behind that development is what the media call a back story – the story of globalisation and the rapidly increasing interdependence of nations.

Globalisation is not a new phenomenon. Some time ago an astute observer wrote: "In place of the old local and national seclusion and self sufficiency we have exchanges in every direction, leading to the universal interdependence of nations." The year was 1848 and the writer was Karl Marx.

But although globalisation has been with us for a while, recent

advances in transportation and information technology – and here you have to add in free trade agreements, which increasingly aim to bring about the integration of economies rather than just reductions in tariff barriers – have massively accelerated the trend. People, ideas, goods, services and money – together unfortunately with terrorism, money laundering, crime, disease and biosecurity threats – are now sloshing around the world at a pace and to an extent that would have been unimaginable just a few years ago.

It's not just the economy, silly

The shrinking of the globe, the weakening of the authority of nation states and the increasing interdependence of countries have implications that go way beyond how we do business. They are driving far reaching changes in our cultures, societies and politics. New Zealand is now part of a large and expanding number of groupings, networks, treaties and agreements in Asia and beyond which are setting new political and social norms as well as trade rules, human rights obligations and environmental standards. At the same time, burgeoning people to people and institution to institution links are further blurring the boundaries that used to divide countries. There is a growing realisation in New Zealand that decisions and events offshore now impact more quickly, directly and heavily on us than ever before and that there are no longer any tidy fences between domestic and foreign issues.

The process of New Zealand's rapprochement with Asia has been running for several decades now. Since the early 1950s, our Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has been

steadily strengthening and expanding our formal diplomatic and trade links around Asia. We are now involved in a whole raft of regional groupings such as APEC, the ASEAN Plus group, the ASEAN Regional Forum, the East Asia Economic Summit and so on.

Looking back on it, the standout feature of my many years as a diplomat has been the growing closeness of our political, security and economic ties within the Asia Pacific region. Accompanying that has been a significant shift in our sense of identity. I believe that most New Zealanders now see themselves as part of the Asia Pacific region. This shift has been variously described as a triumph of geography over history and the pull of the future triumphing over the drag of the past.

Asia's presence in New Zealand is equally important

I'm told that Auckland's population is now more non-European than European. The rest of the country is following suit. Statistics New Zealand tells us that in 15 years or so there will be about 800,000 people of Asian descent living in New Zealand.

Many Kiwis think this is a great development and that we are all the better for the variety and richness which different cultures bring to New Zealand. Some New Zealanders still question this trend, but they are in a rapidly dwindling minority. Some tension and even friction is perhaps not surprising when significant demographic changes occur. Cultures are exclusive in nature and tend to be defined by their differences. It takes an effort to reach out and



Neil Walter CNZM, Chairman, National Commission for UNESCO
understand and respect other world views and ways of doing things. Becoming truly multicultural is something which New Zealand must both work harder and do better at.

Where UNESCO comes into it

UNESCO was born of the international community's determination to avoid a repeat of the devastation and destruction of World War II. It has an extremely wide mandate, but central to it is a vision of cultural diversity. This is seen as critical not just for the development of national identity but for its contribution to social harmony and international peace.

As the director general of UNESCO said recently: “Learning to live together will always be at the heart of UNESCO’s mandate.”

So it’s not surprising that New Zealand’s National Commission for UNESCO should place a lot of emphasis in its work programme on cultural diversity and inclusiveness.

Representation of Asian New Zealanders in the public sector

Many Asian New Zealanders are already involved, and proving their value, in strengthening our links with Asia in the commercial, banking, information technology and financial sectors. As a group however they are poorly represented in the head offices of our public service.

The Government says that among the changes it wants in the public service are greater ethnic diversity and better gender balance. The fact is that no public service can hope to serve the interests of the society it represents if it is not sufficiently representative of it.

New Zealand’s public service is widely recognised abroad as one of the most capable, strategic and well-coordinated around. Unfortunately it does not get the same level of recognition here in New Zealand. In my own experience the interest, challenge and satisfaction of working in the public service more than compensate for any shortcomings. And it does important work.

The diplomatic service

Our Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade is going through a tough time, but it has an important job to do and has scored some remarkable successes in securing and advancing New Zealand’s interests abroad.

New Zealand depends on the outside world for its livelihood more than most countries, and our diplomats play a critical role in ensuring that we both do good and do well out there – which after all is what foreign policy is all about. We have less than 0.1 percent of the world’s population and represent just over 0.2 percent of global economic output. That requires us to work with and through other countries to achieve our goals. We are normally more dependent on our bilateral partners than they are on us. We accordingly rely on influence rather than power – the influence that comes from being an active, reliable and respected member of the international community.

In my own experience, New Zealand is a great country to represent: small, isolated, comparatively young as a country, democratic, making some progress as a bicultural and multicultural country, with a strong internationalist tradition, belonging to the Western and developed worlds but capable of thinking for ourselves and a global trader which sees itself as squarely a part of the Asia Pacific region.

Not only will New Zealand continue to rely heavily on diplomats to make our way in an increasingly complex world, but our Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade will look more and more to Asian New Zealanders, with their linguistic and technical qualifications and their cross cultural understanding and skills, to build and strengthen our relationships around the Asian region.

Summary of presentations

Conference welcome

Julia Boyle, a BA/BCom student and the conference's project manager, and Professor Hugh Whittaker, Director of the NZAI, set the upbeat tone for the later proceedings. Julia confidently revealed the passion of the younger generation for links to Asia, while recognising the need to spread this passion further through enhancing knowledge about Asia. She noted how the theme of visions and realities was often couched in terms of positive visions and negative realities, but that this was to simplify a complex situation, with negative and positive possibilities on both sides. Hugh expressed the hope that this conference would be even better than that in 2011 and posed the challenge of how to explain to the wider community why New Zealand needs Asia-savvy people, particularly in the business arena. The reasons given are often utilitarian, basically in terms of export growth, but there is a need to look at the ways New Zealand engages with Asia more broadly and to question what are the characteristics of a successful business model for interaction with Asia. In addition with the limited size of the New Zealand capital market, the country can benefit from inward investment to help in export growth, but this requires that such investment adds local capacity and does not simply extract resources. Here is where the business-savvy and Asia-savvy have a key role, especially as future investment increasingly comes from Asia.

First panel session:

Multicultural Aotearoa: Understanding ourselves, considering our future



The First Session panel.

To set the scene, Joris de Bres, the Race Relations Commissioner, opened with the ethnicity statistics of the current school populations in New Zealand, revealing the northern region's pupils as 60 percent Maori, Pacific Island and Asian, the central northern regions as 40 percent Maori and the southern regions as 75 percent European. No longer can New Zealand, especially in the north, deny its ethnic diversity, but he pondered the question of why New Zealand has embraced the Pacific Islander as part of the recognised image of New Zealand, but still often seems to regard Asians as "other". He wanted New Zealand as a place of welcome and hoped that this would be as true for Asians as for non-Asians. He made a particularly strong plea for multilingualism.

Dr Edwina Pio of AUT noted the colonial impact on New

Zealand attitudes, which could lead to an insistence on European culture as the only model. While rejecting this, she addressed the need for the Kiwi-isation of the migrant, particularly as regards learning English, but this must be matched by mainstream bridging to ethnic communities, through a recognition that identity must never be reduced to one exclusive defining characteristic that overshadows our shared humanity. Individuals have the right to multiple belongings, but this should not undermine the quality of life achieved by New Zealand's commitments in ecology and business ethics.

The screenwriter **Roseanne Liang** urged the importance of the local creative arts to reveal more of the Asian experience in New Zealand, but noted that this must avoid reinforcing the limited stereotypes already present in New Zealand visual media. She argued firmly that being an Asian New Zealander gave a critical distance to examine both Asian and local culture more effectively.

The student on the panel, **Angela Cruz**, questioned how marketers have any sense of how consumers from different ethnic backgrounds think. She also raised the important question of whether ethnic insiders should joke about their own ethnic group when speaking outside their ethnic group, and how far such humour can be playfully taken up by those outside the ethnic group, before it becomes insulting.

Questions to the panel from the student moderator, **Ivana Drinkovic**, and from the audience lasted almost an hour, indicating the intense interest in this topic.

Second panel session:

Moving forward with Asia: Recognising the potential of Asia-savvy graduates and their value for NZ



The Second Session panel.

The panel was opened by Chris Park, the student moderator, who introduced the speakers and reviewed the need for a new competitive edge in hiring in an increasingly Asia-focussed economic environment.

Liu Feng of COSCO, in reviewing his own “success story”, pushed for a balance between achievable ambition in one's own cultural context, humility in the face of success and awareness of the perspective of others. All three were all possible characteristics for the Asia-savvy, who must have inquisitive minds and high competence in English. **Giles Brooker** of Giles Brooker Ltd urged an awakening to the excitement of Asian business, as both a short-term job and a lifelong career. The aim must be for mutual benefit from collaboration, with Asian and non-Asian New Zealanders going to Asia for education and experience. It must also be recognised that Asians will be able to offer worthwhile insights for resolving problems here in New Zealand.

Felix Lee of ASB spoke of the value of diversity, with a call for all to be willing to embrace change in themselves. He believed Asia-Savvy graduates were now well-placed to enter Asia-related jobs, but they must be able to describe and communicate about the particular skills which Asia knowledge can contribute.

Student panel member **Sarah Tacken** vigorously embraced the value of Asia to New Zealand's future and noted the opportunities available to students for Asia engagement, even while still in tertiary study. The ensuing discussion became sidetracked into the important issues around the employability of new migrants in New Zealand, rather than focussing more clearly on the opportunities for graduates.

Workshop on employability

Xingang Wang reported briefly on an Asia-savvy survey of international students at The University of Auckland, before offering the floor to **Therese Weir** of Immigration New Zealand, who was assisted by **Austin Kim** of Auckland Council and **Kaye Le Gros** of Education New Zealand. Therese spoke of the government's wish to increase New Zealand's international competitiveness and to see a doubling of income earned from international education. The latter goal would require foresight and better national coordination, with a particular commitment to pastoral care. For international students as for the Asia-savvy in general, care must be taken to ensure that there are realistic expectations on employability. Good English is necessary as is knowledge of the local labour market. Improving international competitiveness would require the fostering of a creative class with entrepreneurial skills, digitally competent to global standards, but also socialised to New Zealand ways. Reference was made to Blue Ocean Strategy, the idea of discovering new fields of economic activity without existing competitors, rather than attempting to enter

economically crowded fields.

To conclude the workshop, Therese challenged participants to write an Asia-savvy value proposition, which would describe what value would be delivered by an Asia-savvy job applicant. After 20 minutes small groups reported back, highlighting values such as flexibility, cultural awareness and breadth of experience.

Third panel discussion:

Business not as usual: NZ-Asia entrepreneurship and innovative enterprise



The Third Session panel.

Saturday morning's session began with **Anthony Barton**, the student moderator, reviewing the previous day, noting the need for New Zealand and Kiwis to be smarter in a fast changing world. The goal must be long-term economic wellbeing, while retaining due concern for the environment.

As the first speaker, **Tony Browne** of the New Zealand Contemporary China Research Centre argued strongly against the automatic rejection of all Kiwi business practices





while doing business in Asia, but stressed the importance of building interpersonal relationships over an extended period of time before expecting contract success.

Mitchell Pham of Augen Software spoke realistically about the risks and problems that have caused many projects in Asia to fail, but explained about the innovative in-sourcing model used by his company to develop collaborative business with Vietnam, which has allowed rapid growth in profits and placed a high premium on rapid innovation.

Greg James of WHK considered the dangers of the strict right-or-wrong approach adopted by many Westerners in Asia. He was particularly concerned about the need to adapt the way one speaks English in Asia, so that effective communication was being achieved. All those travelling to Asia to work must be prepared to work extremely hard, but the rewards are great. On the more general theme of entrepreneurship, student **Jason Yang** downplayed the need for a “genius idea”, urging instead for effective implementation on quite simple ideas. Moderated discussion among the panellists focussed on what is special about New Zealand and New Zealanders, but questions from the audience quickly reached the thorny problem of investment from China.

Fourth panel discussion:

Meaningful pursuits for the Asia-savvy: Social enterprise, community leadership and beyond



The Fourth Session panel.

Four students composed the final panel after lunch on Saturday. In inspirational presentations, each revealed a pathway to increased Asia-awareness, through music for **Lucy Morris** of the University of Otago, through art and film for **Balamohan Shingade** of The University of Auckland, and through environmental concerns for **Mahoney Turnbull** of the University of Otago and **Sian Coleman** of The University of Auckland. Very lively discussion followed around the education purpose of a university per se and the potential for engagement with universities in Asia.

It then seemed as though the conference would close with the usual flurry of thanks and the award of prizes to honour the best student essays which had earlier been submitted on themes relating to Asia-savviness, but unexpectedly the conference was treated to an unscheduled short address by **Sir Ray Avery** of Medicine Mondiale. Sir Ray in his inimitable style urged us to dream the big dream and to take advantage of the “freedom to do things” that New Zealand offers. He reminded everyone that on average we have almost 30,000 days to live, so the challenge is simple: What do you wished to be remembered for, after using all that time?

Student discussions and recommendations

‘Culture’ is an abstract concept. What advantages do Asia-savvy students have in understanding this and why?

Cultural differences can be a significant obstacle for greater social equality. In a multicultural nation, understanding and awareness of those cultures around us are vital for our communities’ development and wellbeing.

Culture can inform our thinking, judgement, perception and understanding of ourselves and the world. Asia-savvy students are often multilingual, have interacted with and experienced many Asian cultures, have international networks and are equipped with skills to adapt in multiple cultural contexts. Thus, they are more equipped to confidently resolve tension and differences between cultures.

Over the next 10 years, what benefits and struggles could come from our multicultural environment? How can Asia-savvy people enhance these benefits and lessen the struggles?

Benefits

A multicultural society will enrich New Zealand’s social and cultural wealth and also broaden the nation’s knowledge and understanding of the world. Widening our consciousness and understanding of others may lead to new perspectives in thinking and a greater willingness to engage at an international level. Forming stronger international bonds and friendships, New Zealand could achieve more meaningful connections and increase its influence on the world stage politically and economically. The success of New Zealand



becoming more multicultural should not only be judged by the level of equality or acculturation, but also by the extent to which it can leverage and benefit from its diverse cultural base for economic and social improvement.

Struggles

At times, New Zealand is not as open-minded as it is portrayed in the media. The reporting and framing of certain issues has resulted in the maintenance of harmful stereotypes and racism. While the media can be a positive advocate of multiculturalism, it can also be used to create and maintain certain ethnic stereotypes, however unintentionally. Also, a lack of understanding about migration and the ensuing growth of multiculturalism have led to minority groups being viewed in a threatening light at times, particularly concerning employment.

Actions

For the most part there is an awareness of multiculturalism and an acceptance of its existence, however more active

steps need to be taken. Beginning from an early age, education regarding multiculturalism is recommended so New Zealanders better understand the benefits of cultural diversity and learn skills enabling them to resolve difficulties that may arise when they encounter unfamiliar cultures. This education should be placed in our schools and incorporated through the teaching of languages, culture, politics and geography.

It has been argued that New Zealand has an idealised vision of its own multiculturalism. What do you think is the current state of multicultural New Zealand? What are the strengths and weaknesses?

Current state

New Zealand in the 21st Century is a vibrant multicultural country with more than ten percent of New Zealanders who identify with ethnic groups other than Maori, Pacific Island or Anglo Celtic. However, New Zealand's political form raises issues between what we actually are as a nation and how we are politically integrated as a nation.

Strengths

The multicultural nature of New Zealand contributes to and diversifies the economic sources and social structure of New Zealand. As a nation, New Zealand recognises the importance of addressing multiculturalism and there is a greater sense of openness about this form of discussion than in some other countries. Also, the actions of the New Zealand government suggest a trend towards there being more policies that address such issues as race, ethnicity and culture.

Weaknesses

A better definition of what is meant by "multiculturalism in New Zealand" is needed. At this point, it is ambiguous and

this can lead to misuse of the term and misunderstanding of the current context. As a nation, we are too dependent on time. It is assumed that cultural tensions and issues will resolve themselves through the generations and thus a more proactive approach is not taken. Consider Singapore as an example of taking a more proactive approach. There, the government has incorporated many languages as official languages in recognition of Singapore's multiculturalism. Although New Zealand can be considered more culturally accepting than some other nations, there are still tensions and issues regarding accepting those from another culture, especially when issues such as employment take the foreground. For example, there is evidence of screening cover letters based on the applicant's name.

Selected student essays

What is Asia in your future?

Aaron Kunaraja

Victoria University of Wellington

Asia is getting “bigger” in New Zealand. The economic rise of East Asia in particular has undoubtedly increased its prominence as a region to New Zealand. This makes sense as geographically New Zealand is in closer proximity to markets in East and Southeast Asia compared to those in Europe and North America. There is definitely a stronger trend of gravitation towards the economic engines of East Asia from New Zealand since the past decade.

The fairly recent China-New Zealand and Malaysia-New Zealand free trade agreements (FTAs) join the growing list of FTAs already implemented between New Zealand and other countries in the region, such as Thailand and Singapore. In addition, more agreements are expected to be reached with South Korea, Japan and Vietnam as well as a major ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand FTA which is still being negotiated. These have further solidified the growing economic interdependence between New Zealand and East/Southeast Asia.

In light of these developments I see East Asia, particularly Southeast Asia, as a region that will have a great deal of importance to me in the future. I am focussing on Southeast Asia as it is the region I have the closest affinity with. I am a first-generation migrant to New Zealand from Malaysia. With the strengthening of relations between New Zealand and ASEAN, I foresee stronger ties between their respective business communities. This will provide greater prospects for me and essentially the rest of the young, educated and dynamic populations of New Zealand and ASEAN to network,

create business opportunities and find more employment options.

With regards to this, the implementation of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015 will be a significant step towards closer integration in the region and will by extension generate more openings for New Zealanders to become more involved there. The AEC will encompass an ASEAN-wide economic zone with similar characteristics to that of the European Economic Area (EEA). The removal of trade and labour barriers between states within ASEAN will facilitate intra-regional movement of services and labour. The end goal of the AEC is to essentially transform Southeast Asia into a single market of 500 million individuals.

As greater travel occurs between individuals from both regions, the nature of New Zealand-ASEAN relations will also change. While the formal state level relations between ASEAN countries and New Zealand remain strong, I foresee a future of greater links forged between individuals from ASEAN member countries with those here in New Zealand and vice versa. With greater cultural, business and tourism exchanges, stronger bonds will be formed between businesses, civil society and individuals from both regions. This will also bode well for New Zealand.

Through ASEAN’s rise, New Zealanders will be able to access burgeoning opportunities in the region as a result of these closer ties. What will this mean for me? As an Asia-savvy New Zealand resident with first-hand experience of living in the region for the most part of my life, I will be able to use the skills I have learnt in New Zealand and put them into practice in Southeast Asia.

The countries in the region are relatively young, with most of them gaining independence during the wave of decolonisation from the 1950s onwards following the Second World War. With the exception of Singapore and to a certain extent Malaysia, the rest of Southeast Asia is still relatively underdeveloped compared to New Zealand. Most of these states are also growing democracies. This means there remain a great deal of issues related to development and governance that their respective governments need to address.

This is an area of great interest to me that I wish to be involved in fulltime. Through New Zealand's increased links with the region, I will be able to use my education gained here and put it to good use in addressing some of the development issues faced by the region, working with a local or New Zealand based NGO particularly in the poorer ASEAN member states. This is the future I envision myself in, this is what Asia means to me personally in my future and I believe my experience here in New Zealand has allowed me to go one step closer in achieving this. Stronger New Zealand-ASEAN relations will also enable many other talented and driven Asia-savvy New Zealanders to forge their own futures in the region.

What is Asia in your future?

Joe Guang-Hyun Gimm

The University of Auckland

I personally have a unique relationship with Asia. I was born and raised in South Korea until the age of 12. By that time, I had visited China, Japan and Singapore with my parents and I was reasonably knowledgeable about the history, geography, culture, languages and stereotypes that people have about East Asian countries. After travelling to New Zealand on a number of occasions, my parents decided to migrate to New Zealand, and I spent the rest of my teenage

years in Christchurch. Born a Korean, grew up a Kiwi bloke.

Despite being almost completely Westernised, I never really lost my connection with Korea as my parents never gave up on instilling Korean values in me, and that inevitably contributed to my somewhat Asian personality. I guess their way of life sometimes conflicted with my ideals but also inspired me through elusive values that I could not encounter as a teenager in Christchurch. When I was 17 in Year 13, my parents went back to South Korea for the "foreseeable future", and I briefly lost contact with Korean culture, as there was no Korean food or language in my daily life. After growing tired of university life at Canterbury, I decided to take a gap year and gain some overseas experience. South Korea was the first place I could think of due to convenience, and my obsession with metropolitan lifestyle made me feel compelled to return to Korea.

Living in Seoul for 15 months was a major turning point in my life. Going from a town of 360,000 people to a megacity of ten million people was a big transition as I was able to feel the economic power of what is one of the major business hubs in Asia. Seoul had not only changed significantly in appearance, but its atmosphere reflected South Korea's fast but stable economic growth.

During this time, I worked part-time as a private English tutor, and my hourly wage was approximately \$31, which was incomparable to what I could generally expect to earn in New Zealand. What I came to realise straight away was that English education is only a small market of this highly dynamic economy that provides virtually unlimited, lucrative business opportunities.

From having numerous discussions with various industry experts and mentors, most of whom I met through my parents, I learned that South Korea is comprised of extremely hard-working individuals who strive to move forward towards a much brighter and more vibrant future for what used to

be a third-world country four or five decades ago. According to OECD, South Korea supposedly has the second longest working hours in the world. What captured my interest during my gap year in Korea was that people were always so energetic and eager to be involved in some form of activity 24/7. For example, I remember one of my father's friends, a CEO of a visual design company, sleeping at his office during the week and going home on the weekend to recharge his batteries for the following week. I remember going to a restaurant at 9am on a weekday and seeing a couple of people still drinking and chatting from the night before. To me, people seemed crazy. Koreans are crazy about work, serious about their profession and passionate about sharing thoughts and concerns, whenever and wherever. To me, this was an indication that life is generally a lot more competitive and challenging for people in Korea regardless of their age. People love money and success, but they love their family and friends. They struggle through trials and tribulations, but triumph. Koreans love progress and they take extreme pride in being Korean.

What is Asia in my future? I regard Asia, especially East Asia, as my future workplace. East Asia, comprised of nations like China, Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea, is one of the biggest and most prosperous regional economies in the world. As illustrated by the success of Four Asian Tigers, East Asians have demonstrated highly positive work ethic and rapid learning capabilities utilising skills and expertise in science and technology. South Korea alone has a GDP of \$1.556 trillion (PPP) with major industries covering electronics, telecommunications and automobile production. Compared to corporations of G8 nations such as Ford, Coca-Cola, IBM, BMW, Toyota and Sony, Korean corporations emerged at a later historical stage at an economic disadvantage after the Korean War in the early 1950s. The global success of Korean conglomerates Samsung, Hyundai and LG is a testament to the aforementioned characteristics of individuals and groups within South Korea. Despite having an unstable

political climate, South Korea continues to move forward faster than ever before, and it is creating substantial amount of entrepreneurial and trade opportunities on a global scale. I hope to grow as a more experienced individual, rich in understanding of Asian and Western cultures and, at some stage, use my Korean and Kiwi values to make a positive contribution to people and society around me.

What is Asia in your future?

Sarah Tacken

The University of Auckland

As an International Trade, Economics and Politics student I understand the growing relevance of "Asia savviness" especially in students and business people. The Asia-Pacific region is projected to show the world's highest levels of economic growth in the future. The Economist's Intelligence Unit Global Outlook Summary 2012 predicted growth levels in China of 8.2 percent and 5.2 percent in ASEAN economies, and recent trade agreements like the AANZFTA further promote economic integration, business dialogue and growing trade and investment opportunities throughout the region.

As the world's largest and most populous continent, with more than four billion people and hosting sixty percent of the world's population, Asia is set to play an increasingly important role on the world stage in my future. In my future, Asia is anchored by economic giant and rising world power China and growth is driven by developing economies of ASEAN and India. With this greater presence on the international stage, Asian countries will play a greater role in the UN and other international organisations like the WTO and IMF, especially in the solution of global financial crises, such as the ones we are currently experiencing. Further international attention will be paid to human rights

and democracy issues in places like Myanmar, China and mostly North Korea.

Asia will also experience consequential demographic shifts, from an aging population in Japan to larger, wealthier middle classes in China and India. With greater wealth and development, Asian countries will be able to spend more on education and healthcare while combating poverty and inequality. Problems like these as well as energy, climate change and global financial transactions will all involve global governance and international solutions. For this to be successful, international organisations such as the UN, the WTO and the IMF, that have been predominantly established by western nations will need to become more 'Asia savvy' themselves and learn that the Asian way of business and politics is very different from Western ideals and stereotypes. Educating students and business people in how to interact in a multicultural environment and in the different social and business etiquette in Asian countries is crucial to gaining optimal future benefits.

For these reasons my future in global business or international politics is very likely to involve interaction within Asia and therefore I am incredibly interested in attending the 2012 Asia-Savvy New Zealand Asia Conference and especially in the discussions on business opportunities and operating in a multicultural society. Furthermore I am interested in becoming a graduate at ANZ bank which is currently undertaking a super regional strategy in an effort to expand into Asia and become one of the region's largest banks. I am also interested later in my career in joining an international development organisation like the Asian Development Bank, in order to provide assistance to a rapidly growing and dynamic region. I feel that the knowledge and insight I would gain from attending this conference would be invaluable to both my current studies and future job prospects. Additionally my academic study puts me in good stead to appreciate the speakers and workshops in the conference; I have previously

studied a paper in Asia-Pacific international relations and am currently taking a paper focussed on China's foreign and domestic politics and global interactions, and am also doing a presentation on ASEAN's first comprehensive free trade agreement, the AANZFTA with Australia and New Zealand, which establishes an excellent platform for trade and investment to be utilised by future business people like myself.

How can Asia-savviness promote intercultural understanding and harmony in New Zealand?

Simrin Ahmed

The University of Auckland

One would think that technological advances, such as iPads, notebooks and smartphones, would promote communication and consequently increase and encourage people to be Asia-savvy. However cultural understanding and harmony can only be ensured when there is intercultural dialogue between people of various ethnic backgrounds. And technological advancements - while promoting and increasing communication between people - do not necessarily promote intercultural understanding or harmony. An ethnically diverse and colourful country such as New Zealand still needs to ensure more intercultural dialogue and interaction to become Asia-savvy.

As mentioned before, thanks to technology, communication across the globe has become very easy and convenient. We can sit in New Zealand and have a conversation with friends all over the globe. Technological advances have also made it easy for complete strangers to connect on the basis of common interests. For example, Korean, Japanese and Chinese comic books, anime, music and dramas have become very conspicuous genres in the area of Asian popular culture. And this perceptibility is propagated by various fans, who all tirelessly devote their time to scanning, translating, editing

and subtitling sources from these popular mediums for internet-savvy fans to enjoy. Fans in remote parts of Europe, the Middle East and even South America are commenting on Japanese comic book forums, analysing their likes and dislikes and commenting on authors' art work, plots and themes. This ability to communicate using cultural artifacts as a subject with various parts of the world is a phenomenon in itself, which was probably very rare in the mid 1990s. There might have also been a time when Bollywood and East Asian films were watched in Western countries only by a highly educated, sophisticated bourgeoisie, who wished to boast of such "acquired tastes". But that is definitely not the case anymore. Technological advancements have made it almost impossible to stay detached from influences of Asian culture.

But this ease and convenience with which Asian popular culture traverses geographical boundaries does not guarantee that people are Asia-savvy. Nor does it guarantee a promotion of intercultural understanding and harmony. Being Asia-savvy would help - not just to promote one culture to another, but to promote understanding of why one culture reacts differently in comparison to other cultures. Culture is not only about food, clothing, popular culture, language and religion. Promoting cultural understanding and harmony also encourages understanding of cultural identities. And this is important for a multicultural country like New Zealand, where the groups of people with more than one cultural identity - such as Chinese New Zealanders - are ever-increasing. A lack of Asia-savviness would create lack of communication and misunderstandings within an ethnically diverse community such as New Zealand.

For instance, the Paul Henry saga from 2010, where Paul Henry pronounced an Indian politician's name in an offensive manner, provides a good example of how an incident can be amplified due to a lack of Asia-savviness. Henry's conduct was arguably racist, but the reaction of many New

Zealanders at the time was quite definitely an example of a lack of cultural understanding. Despite the furor of people arguing for and against Henry's sacking on many social networking sites, many failed to understand the reasons why the incident became a big cultural issue. The Indian politician in question was an elderly woman and Indian culture has persistently encouraged respect and deference to one's elders. Even young Indian people, who didn't know who Sheila Dikshit was, found Henry's comments very offensive. This example not only shows how being Asia-savvy can promote intercultural understanding and harmony, but it also shows the need for more intercultural dialogue.

The need for Asia-savviness is also amplified by the fact that discrimination against Asians in New Zealand is still a major race relations issue.¹ The Human Rights Commission found discrimination against Asians and international students - especially in the job, education and health sectors respectively - in general is still a major problem that needs to be resolved. Being Asia-savvy would promote intercultural understanding which would definitely decrease issues in race relations. Promoting Asia-savviness in various forms can be a possible solution to the lack of cultural understanding and harmony that still exists in New Zealand. Examples of this intercultural dialogue already come in the form of the Lantern Festival and Diwali Festival in Auckland, both of which promote the chance to become Asia-savvy. Various institutes and language schools regularly hold language and cultural classes for those who wish to become Asia-savvy. And this definitely promotes intercultural understanding and harmony.

¹ *Discrimination against Asians remains a key issue*, Monday 22 February 2010, press release: Human Rights Commission.

(www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO1002/S00239.htm) Accessed online 3 July 2012.

But as stated before, cultural understanding and harmony do not only entail food, clothing and language. Intercultural understanding also brings about an awareness of the differences of cultural identities and the fluidity of culture as well (as stated before there are increasing groups of people in New Zealand who identify with more than one culture). However festivals are not the only forum for intercultural dialogue and understanding. Businesses, corporations, institutes and communities should create further opportunities to understand Asian culture and promote platforms for intercultural dialogue and discourse, which would further enhance their Asia-savviness and thereby promote intercultural understanding and harmony.

What is Asia in your future?

Asha Rhodes

The University of Auckland

When I began writing this essay, my immediate thoughts when I thought of Asia included overpopulation, colour and pad Thai chicken. When I asked two teens in the library, their thoughts were similar: a big population, Asian food, cultural diversity and origami. We, as students and the future of New Zealand, have shown a general lack of appreciation of how important Asia has been in the past and how it will affect our lives in the decades to come. Asia is an opportunity.

There is a stigma surrounding Asia as a third world, developing, poverty stricken region – which is of slight interest to us. What is commonly forgotten is that the continent of Asia incorporates large world economies and financial centres such as Tokyo, Hong Kong, Singapore and Shanghai. “Asia” is an ambiguous term. It describes a continent comprised of 48 countries which not only includes your typical China, Japan, Korea stereotypes, but according to the United Nations is inclusive of countries from Cyprus in the West, to New Guinea in the East. This incorporates

centres such as Iraq and Israel, usually segregated as the Middle East.

In Auckland, one in five people identify themselves as being Asian and this statistic is growing. This suggests that we can no longer afford to be discriminative of, and ignorant about, the importance of Asia now and the impact Asian relations will have on our future. Asia is and will continue to be a contemporary leader, a dominant market and a centre for employment. Based on this, Asia is a major opportunity for a future university graduate such as myself.

Contemporary leader

As the traditional global heavyweights America and Europe face turmoil, the point of focus has rightly shifted to Asia as a contemporary leader. Currently, in university classes and assignments, we are taught to compare New Zealand with the likes of Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom. These economies are still of substantial influence to us, but as Asia’s world dominance increases, we should also be closely examining how we are relating to Asia, and China in particular.

As Asia is already seen to be a major world player, we need to better understand the relations and cultures to establish connections to aid our future. This includes better emphasis on the importance of Asia-New Zealand relations.

For university students, knowledge of Asia as a dominant world player outlines the importance of exposure to Asian economics and Asian values. This conference, Asia Savvy, is a prime example of a step in the right direction. With the Asian crisis but a faint memory and impressive continued growth, seen by China and India in particular, Asia will continue to rise as a contemporary leader. This is an opportunity for New Zealand and future university graduates, such as myself to be coupled with the forecasted dominant economy.

Dominant market

As Asia continues to urbanise, industrialise and Westernise, there will be an increase in their demand as they assert themselves as a dominant market. Of the top 15 nations demanding our exports, ten are countries from Asia. In addition, economically they are also in a very strong position as Asian countries such as China and India are some of the only areas currently experiencing a large trade surplus. This means more demand will be generated in Asia for our goods than from our more well-publicised partners.

In the previous two decades, Asia has dominated growth statistics and it is believed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, that it will continue to do so. By 2027, Goldman Sachs believes China will overtake the United States to have the largest economy in the world. The Australian Treasury suggests in the next 20 years, 45 percent of global GDP will be attributable to Asia.

In this respect, it is clear Asia is emerging as a major economic power. This, combined with the aftermath of the global financial crisis and the economic and political uncertainty in Europe, suggests Asia will be the dominant market in the decades to come. The ability to communicate and maintain good relations with Asia will be crucial. This creates an opportunity for New Zealand and university graduates with a good background in Asian studies to capitalise on this dominant market.

Center for employment

As Asia continues to grow, so will the demand for Asia literate employees. Asia is already a significant economic center for multinational companies. A study conducted by CB Richard Ellis, Business Footprints' Global Office Locations 2011, listed four out of the top five office locations to be in Asia: Hong Kong, Singapore, Tokyo, London and Shanghai. Sixty-eight percent of international firms have an office in

Hong Kong. With Asia becoming more influential, more job opportunities will arise in these arenas as Asian employers will look for those who can best bridge the gap between Asian and Western cultures.

New Zealand is considered culturally diverse and there are already a few positive links to Asia in the form of the old security pacts and more recently free trade agreements. As the first generation leaders begin to retire and new modern leaders take their place, Asia will open up, meaning potential employment opportunities for university graduates with a knowledge of Asia - opportunities both in Asia and inherently all countries that deal with Asia.

When comparing the view I now hold of Asia with my previous thoughts, which included what I was having for dinner, I am suddenly aware of how I previously had such a minute knowledge on what effect Asia will have on me and the rest of the globe. What is Asia is my future? It is a major opportunity. An opportunity for me to be coupled with a contemporary leader, an opportunity for me to capitalise on a large market, and an opportunity for my future employment. Asia is not only my future but the future.

Caitlin Tatham

The University of Auckland

Today, Asia is perhaps more relevant than it has ever been.

A shift is occurring as Asian nations usurp Europe and North America as the dominant players on the world stage. New Zealand is not immune to this change and the rapid development of many Asian nations has changed the dynamics of our export markets. Seven of New Zealand's top ten export markets are now Asian countries with China and India expected to be the two biggest economies by 2050.

New Zealand is in a strong position to capitalise on this. We have been the pioneers in many trade agreements within the region and we enjoy a positive image among the Asian nations, where our products are held in high regard. We also hold a geographic advantage over our competitors in Europe and the Americas.

It is important now more than ever that New Zealand grows more Asia-savvy talent so that we do not waste the opportunity and get left behind. People around the globe are refocusing and making a firm effort to understand the dynamics of this high potential region. It is essential that New Zealand remains at the forefront of this movement, something that I contend we are not doing successfully at this moment.

What is it to be Asia-savvy?

Before I begin, let me take a moment to outline what the term “Asia-savvy” means to me. I believe that to be Asia-savvy is to be aware of how important the region is to the rest of the world both right now and in the future. It is an understanding of the history, the culture, and ideally some language. It is an understanding of the political interplay between the nations, and also the interactions on a more micro level, between people of different nations within the region.

This definition does not sound difficult to satisfy, but I feel that a disappointing number of New Zealanders live up to it. There is no excuse for this.

The problem

The lack of Asia-savvy talent in New Zealand simply comes down to a lack of information. The average New Zealander does not know very much about the region and as such is either uninterested or views it with suspicion. American and European culture still reign supreme, with Asian culture lacking the “cool” factor among the majority of young

people today. This is reinforced by the lack of information in the media and from a school curriculum that continues to focus on history and languages that are long past their use by date. History of Western civilization and languages such as French and German are not providing young New Zealanders with the tools they need to become Asia-savvy.

This flows on to the unpopularity of university courses focused on Asia and results in a society that is embarrassingly clueless about a region that we are becoming increasingly reliant on for income.

The solutions

In order to grow Asia-savvy talent in New Zealand, steps need to be taken to increase young New Zealanders awareness of the importance of Asia for us as a nation and create a more positive perception of all things Asian. I argue that the infrastructure to implement this change is there and that the main focus should be on educating them on the opportunities and resources available to them to help them on their journey to Asia-savviness.

This education must start young. The primary and secondary school curriculum in New Zealand needs to acknowledge the transition from West to East and focus more on Asia. Students need to be studying Mandarin and Japanese, Asian history and society. Getting young people interested early will ideally influence what they choose to study at a higher level and ensure that all New Zealanders gain at least a general knowledge of Asia. Asia-savviness should not be reserved only for those who go on to further education.

Ideally the increase in education surrounding Asia will change the common preconceptions, encouraging more young New Zealanders to take an active interest and forge stronger links with the Asia region. However, if the perception of an interest in Asia as “uncool” remains too strong, then perhaps financial incentives will persuade the youth of today to take

a greater interest. Creating more scholarships, exchanges and competitions that will give students a financial incentive to take notice could be a way of getting the more reluctant in the door.

There are currently opportunities for students with an Asia focus to travel and study in the region but I suggest that they need to be more widely promoted. The existence of these opportunities generally seems to fly under the radar. Scholarships for study in Asia are an excellent opportunity for New Zealand students to broaden their horizons and learn about Asian culture first-hand. As a recipient of one of these myself, I can say that my understanding of Asia deepened considerably only after living in their society and left me with a lifelong passion and connection that I would otherwise be without.

Conclusions

It is essential that New Zealand take action now to inspire our young people to take an interest in Asia and its pivotal role in the future of our country. Education must start at a young age and be compulsory for all. To reinforce this initiative, the opportunities to grow their knowledge must be well promoted and attractive. These schemes will help to develop a generation of young, Asia-savvy talents who will have the requisite skills to interact successfully with a region that will be the economic centre of the world. This is vital for the future of New Zealand.

How will entrepreneurs and innovators shape New Zealand and Asia's future?

Laura Browne The University of Auckland

The future success of New Zealand will be heavily intertwined with, and in many ways dependent on, Asia. The sheer scale and rapid economic development in the region means that

there should be wide ranging opportunities for New Zealand businesses. However to capitalise on these opportunities, the critical challenge is to make sure entrepreneurs and innovators are sufficiently "Asia-savvy" to be able to identify and then develop sustainable opportunities that will lead to long-term success for New Zealand.

Asia contains six of New Zealand's top ten trading partners, in part sustained by the pattern of preferential trade agreements between New Zealand and players in the region. The macro framework for developing trade links is in place, however focus is needed now on the micro level, to prepare entrepreneurs and innovators for the challenge of building business links into Asian markets. At this micro level, given New Zealand's relatively small production base, New Zealand businesses needs to identify and target niche opportunities in Asia. Other than Fonterra, New Zealand businesses can't compete on scale in the region.

Research conducted on NZ SME internationalisation by the Asia Institute through the Growing New Zealand Businesses (GNZB) project shows that highly export intensive businesses tend to focus more on Asia when they are selling non-innovative products. Perhaps this is due to the lack of cultural awareness that means that businesses find it easier to sell more commodity type products into Asia. So part of the challenge facing New Zealand business is a cultural one: knowing how to engage, both personally and commercially with Asian partners. Selling innovative products often requires the business to promote and explain their products to the customer.

One example of such a requirement was VnC cocktails in their move into China. Without a "cocktail culture", VnC Cocktails had to develop their own market segment by using a strategy to educate potential customers. Therefore if entrepreneurs and innovators are lacking in "Asia-savviness"

this will be seen a harder barrier to overcome to make the requisite investment to sell their product into Asia. Therefore, regions with lower psychic distances may be seen as easier to target, despite the market potential of Asia.

A mistake New Zealanders tend to make is in the over generalisation of “Asia”, when in fact it is a collection of socially, religiously and geographically diverse economies. Entrepreneurs and innovators should take a more fragmented approach to Asia. There is diversity within countries as well as regions, which means that there will be a diverse range of opportunities in the potential markets. It can lead to problems when businesses fail to recognise the cultural subtleties that exist.

Piako Gourmet Yoghurt has done this by targeting the high-end Japanese consumer segment rather than the entire region. By gaining local knowledge through the use of partners, they have been able to match their high-end product to the more discerning Japanese customer. By understanding the region, they have successfully matched their product characteristics to the niche high-end market that existed in Japan.

Entrepreneurs and innovators will shape the future of New Zealand’s involvement with Asia, however it is imperative that they have the awareness and skills to be able to engage successfully. Every effort helps, including the continued promotion of Asian languages in schools as well as the development of cultural skills. Flowing from this, entrepreneurs and innovators will benefit from education regarding the cultural aspects of doing business and selecting good partners to achieve this. With increased “Asia-savviness”, businesses will be more readily able to identify potential markets and have the skills to sell their products accordingly. This is incredibly important in building sustainable business links with Asia.

How will entrepreneurs and innovators shape New Zealand and Asia’s future?

Lauren Smith

The University of Auckland

Entrepreneurs discover, evaluate and exploit opportunities (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). They can recognise and pursue opportunities to shape New Zealand and Asia’s future by developing and enhancing a country’s economy. Resources are combined to pursue these opportunities and move the economy forward by increasing its competitiveness. They can also pursue opportunities to provide solutions to the challenges faced by a country and the world today. Innovators can also have a similar impact. Innovation is often part of the way entrepreneurs exploit opportunities, so entrepreneurs are often seen as innovators and vice versa.

Entrepreneurs and innovators have the ability to recognise opportunities for new products and services. Additionally, opportunities can be related to enhancing the efficiency of existing goods and services or related to increasing the efficiency of the way something is organised (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Entrepreneurial opportunities come in a range of other forms. Some of these opportunities include creating new information, for example, inventing new technology, or exploiting market inefficiencies that exist because of information asymmetry (Drucker, 1985 cited in Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Entrepreneurs can recognise other opportunities, such as reacting to shifts in the costs and benefits of the use of alternative resources, because of changes in the political, regulatory or geographic environment (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). This is particularly important as the global environment is always changing, with challenges to overcome, such as environmental concerns and the effects of the financial crisis in different parts of the world. Entrepreneurs can

possibly recognise opportunities to overcome challenges of globalisation, how to manage climate change, how we are going to feed the world's growing population, among many others.

Entrepreneurship can also be looked at from the perspective of Schumpeter. He sees entrepreneurship as a process, with innovation at its very core (Stevenson & Jarillo, 1990). From a Schumpeterian perspective, entrepreneurs carry out new combinations, these being:

- Introduction of a new good
- Introduction of a new method of production
- Opening of a new market
- New source of supply of material
- New organisation of any industry (Stevenson & Jarillo, 1990)

From this perspective, there is a range of opportunities for entrepreneurs to shape the future of New Zealand and Asia. Entrepreneurs can recognise opportunities to increase a country's competitiveness by introducing a new good. These goods or services can be introduced to the local market or could be sold overseas. A new method of production could increase the efficiency of production, so that goods could be made in a shorter time and possibly at a better quality. The knowledge of production could also be sold overseas. This can make a country more competitive globally. Entrepreneurs can recognise the opportunity to create a new market, either in their home country or possibly overseas. Entrepreneurs may recognise opportunities to source a material from somewhere different. Again, this could be from a different supplier within the host country or from further away. New organisation of any industry can also increase the competitiveness of a country, especially of multinationals operating in an international market.

Recognising opportunities for new products and opportunities

to increase efficiency, can also mean that entrepreneurs can recognise opportunities for value-added goods. This is an area where New Zealand needs to focus, as the majority of New Zealand's exports are primary products to other countries, with a need for more exports of value-added goods (Ang et al., 2011). One of New Zealand's main export partners is China, with other Asian countries' demand for New Zealand goods growing. Asian countries demand products from New Zealand, such as meat and milk, but there is also a high and increasing demand for value-added goods such as milk powder.

Entrepreneurs and innovators can shape New Zealand and Asia's future by recognising opportunities for a country to become more competitiveness. New Zealanders, with their innovative, Number 8 wire mentality and natural innovative nature, can be involved in complementary partnerships with Asian countries because of their expertise in manufacturing and other areas. The ability of entrepreneurs and innovators should not be overlooked and needs to be supported effectively.

How can Asia-savviness promote intercultural understanding and harmony in New Zealand?

Lucy Morris

University of Otago

Music is an international language - you don't need years of training to appreciate a pleasant sound and anyone can pick up an instrument to give it a try. One of my most firm beliefs with regards to promoting Asia in the New Zealand community is that the more accessible and interactive the medium is, the easier it is to promote cultural understanding between our nations. Since it is a creative pursuit, music is an intensely personal creation. The sound you create is your own, even if it is by an instrument foreign to your own

country - and by doing this, you can form your own individual connections to a culture outside yours.

As a student of music myself, I have a never-ending fascination with foreign instruments and I want to share that curiosity with young New Zealanders - especially with regards to traditional Asian instruments and music forms. I had my first taste of formally learning a foreign instrument when I was 15 years old, on a three-month exchange to Hiroshima, Japan. As I attended a private all-girls school that was fairly strict, they believed in promoting traditional and cultural arts, and so we were to learn the koto for the time we attended the school. The koto is a 13-stringed zither that is descended from its Chinese ancestor, the guzheng, and it is ultimately the instrument that instilled my passion for promoting Asian music in Kiwi society with the purpose of promoting understanding between our cultures.

I have been teaching a koto class at the University of Otago for around a year now, greatly assisted by the tireless and helpful staff of their Music Department. The classes are free of charge to my students - not a single cent is required for an hour of tuition or the use of the koto we have in our classroom. I wished to teach the class this way because as I mentioned before, the more accessible the medium, the more students are encouraged to try something new, and I much prefer the enjoyment I see my students get out of playing the instruments than any sort of monetary reimbursement. The koto class has attracted students from many different countries - New Zealand, China, Japan and Korea - and has had a steady membership since classes began. We have also had the great privilege of doing workshops with professional koto and shakuhachi players who have flown over from Japan, which the students greatly enjoyed.

To play or listen to an instrument not normally played in your own culture is a surreal, exciting experience. I remember from an early age the African drumming workshops I took part in as a primary school student, singing Maori waiata

and dancing with poi. Due to this, I believe that starting Asia related education from a young age is crucial and providing unique, memorable experiences heightens one's intercultural understanding. The more you understand about cultures other than your own, the more rounded your perception of the world becomes - and what better time to start than when we are young? I believe in this principle so fervently that later this year, with the help of my students and the Asia New Zealand Foundation, I plan to take the koto around Dunedin and provide workshops for intermediate and high school students.

When we are growing is the perfect time to foster curiosity and understanding between cultures and considering Asia's growing relevance to New Zealand, I see this as an important task. By exchanging musical tradition between New Zealand and Asia, even for those who are not musicians, I believe intercultural understanding can be effectively promoted in our society.

How can Asia-savviness promote inter-cultural understanding and harmony in New Zealand?

Maria Tanyag
The University of Auckland

Discrimination against Asians is both structural and systemic. It is known to and accepted by many Asian immigrants that one must have to "settle" for a job below the level of skills, educational qualifications and work experience in order to survive in New Zealand. Asians, especially those with ethnic names, whether immigrant or not, are disadvantaged by employment recruitment behaviour which associates names with corresponding assumptions on level of familiarity with the "Kiwi way" and language proficiency. But even when we do secure employment, Asians tend to be overrepresented in elementary positions, finding it difficult to break the "bamboo ceiling" and into managerial and executive roles. Consequently, the income for Asian households is one of the

lowest among the total population, with Europeans earning the most on a weekly average. Compared to other ethnic groups, Asians more frequently experience harassment and abuse. While anti-Asian prejudice is subtle and pervasive, from hearing racial slurs along Queen Street to poking fun at Asian accents and stereotypes in the workplace, there continues to be isolated cases of racially motivated hate crimes against Asians. One example is the case of the woman in Christchurch who had her bull mastiff dog attack a Filipino man and a Japanese woman as a way of making a statement against immigrants who she claimed were stealing jobs from European or “white” New Zealanders.

The 2011 Race Relations Annual Review identified, among other issues, persistent racial discrimination and prejudice against Asians as a handicap to the full economic and socio-political growth of New Zealand. And yet, New Zealand’s foreign and economic policies have increasingly shifted its focus towards engaging Asia - taking advantage of the region’s booming markets and redefining national security in terms of regional stability. There is a dissonance, therefore, between what is projected at the international level and what is happening locally. How can understanding of Asia outside New Zealand eventuate, when there is little effort to understand and capitalise on Asians within New Zealand? We need not go beyond our borders to experience Asia and its peoples. Asians are among us, as well as the capacity to allow diversity to enrich not just our politics and economy but also everyday life in New Zealand. Asia-savviness, or the knowledge of and interest in engaging Asia, must be cultivated within New Zealand if the vision is for the country to be relevant economically and politically as an Asia-Pacific nation. But being Asia-savvy means not only being adept when it comes to talk of businesses, regional trade and security. More importantly, being Asia-savvy means having the commitment and responsibility to promote Asians, especially those in New Zealand, as equal partners and not as threats.

By 2026, the projected population of Asians in New Zealand is 790,000 or 15.8 percent of the total population. The biggest group will be highly skilled and educated youth from age 15 to 39 years old, who will be largely a product of migration. The reality is that New Zealand is and will continue to be a multicultural and multi-ethnic society, with Asians occupying an increasingly pivotal role within New Zealand society, both as drivers of economic growth and as the yardstick for social cohesion. What the demographic trends tell us is that Asians cannot be perennially perceived as “others” or “outsiders” because the country’s future will largely depend on various cultures working harmoniously to attain shared goals and aspirations. Ultimately, as the country becomes increasingly diverse, everyone must strive to make it a more just and equitable society. New Zealand must be able to create and sustain an Asian-friendly society where Asians - regardless of citizenship status - can thrive.

Asia-savviness is one step to breaking down the walls of prejudice and discrimination. It also has the potential to address socio-economic inequalities in the long haul. But in order to be effective, Asia-savviness must be manifested both at the governmental and individual levels. For example, policies must be created in consideration of their implications for all ethnic groups. The government must also be more responsive to the needs of all Asians by being knowledgeable of our differences, because despite having similar ethnic backgrounds, the experiences of a Korean international student are qualitatively different from that of a Thai immigrant family. Understanding the ways by which we differ draws attention to the nuances of how prejudice and discrimination operate to marginalise Asians differently. At the same time, mechanisms for greater political participation must be made available through community-level consultations and civic representation. An accessible report system must also be institutionalised at the national

level to assist individuals who have suffered race-related harassment and discrimination, especially for international students who are often most vulnerable in such situations. These strategies send the consistent message that Asians are valuable members of the society, as well as a clear statement on the unacceptability of anti-Asian sentiments.

As Asia-savvy individuals, our challenge is to start within our own networks. This means educating our own families, peers and acquaintances of acceptance and respect for diversity. It moves us not to ignore racist or bigoted ways of thinking, but rather to challenge them through our knowledge of Asian cultures and values. Collectively, we need to continuously create venues for interaction among Asians and between the Asian and non-Asian communities. People-to-people education can be very powerful in correcting misconceptions and biases. We must therefore carry our commitment to educate wherever we go and whenever necessary. Lastly, as Asia-savvy individuals, we must take the lead in facilitating Asian awareness and interest, without forgetting to enrich and update our own knowledge in the process. We, ourselves, must avoid the pitfalls of reifying stereotypes and inequalities by being perceptive of the evolving group dynamics and social issues within our society. Realising this vision of equal partnerships among various ethnic groups in New Zealand will be a long process, but beginning it with a forum where like-minded individuals can brainstorm on solutions and draw inspiration from each other is a step in the right direction.

How can Asia-savviness promote intercultural understanding and harmony in New Zealand?

Simon Johnson

Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge University

Why are we bothering? The cause of anti-racism hardly needs my voice; call someone a racist and, in the mainstream

of political life, you have shut down the argument. Well-meaning people will quickly assert that “racism is bad” and think they have won the argument. This culture of quickly squashing any mention of racism does nothing to tackle the underlying fact that racism still exists. Merely denying that the problem exists by “banning” it from public life is not a way to prevent real racism. More seriously, it creates a divorce between the discourse of popular opinion where racism, tacit and unacknowledged, still lingers and the public discourse of “political correctness” where any acknowledgement of racism is squashed. Self-evidently this division is not helpful. So, why should I add my voice to the cries that racism is bad and needs to be met with “understanding and harmony” when it runs the risk of increasing these divisions? What can I add that does not increase this already unhealthy division?

Let me pose a possibility. How do you define “Kiwi”? A host of clichés spring to mind: number eight fixing wire, the beach, the rugby ball. As every nation does, we pull out a few worn ideas from our imagination and construct a national image – a white, Anglo-European idea of what New Zealand should look like (and a masculine one too, but that’s another story). Worse, we often define “Kiwi” against other national identities in New Zealand: “Oh no, I am not Asian, I can drive.” Ah yes. The enduring power of symbols. They are the powerful shorthand that lets us quickly label who we are.

Let us not walk into the trap of thinking that symbolic identity is fixed. As the work of David Cannadine in *The Invention of Tradition* has shown, a ruling power has the power to (re)shape its identity through the use of symbols which then become widely adopted as an expression of its power. What we lazily call the Kiwi identity - the number eight fixing wire legend which blurs with rugby to create an idealised form of New Zealand masculinity - is the product of a historically contingent time, when white masculine settlers really were the only New Zealanders with a sufficiently powerful voice to articulate their own identity. They are a set

of symbols which unified a white, heterogeneous nation. The symbolic language through which we articulate “Kiwiness” is fundamentally racist.

Now, of course, the critic could mention Te Tiriti o Waitangi and our collective embrace of Māoritanga. And no doubt that Māoridom has challenged the white masculine narratives of colonial New Zealand. But their adoption has only been partial. In public life, Māoritanga has become a ritualised necessity which is brought out at certain points where we are thought to lack some history or, such as in Parliament, where it is thought especially necessary to reinforce the multicultural nature of the nation. For the rest of the time, Māoritanga is swept away and divorced from the overwhelmingly Western mainstream life. This is the limit of integration into New Zealand culture: Māoridom is grudgingly let in as long as it doesn't disturb the mainstream. If this is the difficulty that Māori face in overcoming white isolationist identities, how much more difficult is it for Asian New Zealanders who cannot claim the (dubious) merits of being the “first people”? How to overcome a century of racism in national identity?

The answer comes from a process of continuing to challenge the validity of white-racial hierarchies but from the inside and not the out. Like all good revolutionaries, it is necessary to get inside the Tsar's palace before we can blow it up. As hard as it is, we should eschew easy labels like “Asian”, especially when defined against “New Zealand”. Instead, we must take every opportunity to articulate “Kiwī” as an inclusive idea, one which does not recognise boundaries of race. That all sounds really rather nice but a touch unrealistic - an academic way of saying that we should not be racist. As they say in my home country, let's look at the brass tacks; what does that mean we have to do?

We need to return to the work of David Cannadine and remind ourselves that symbolism creates national identity.

We should ask ourselves whether our current national symbols reflect multicultural New Zealand. As our colonial forefathers created settler-myths for a new country through their symbols, so must we today. We must be ready to reshape the symbols of national identity to reflect the change in our nation. We will look at some symbols and decide that they don't represent modern New Zealand. They will go. Others will be adopted, changed and taken on by a new Asia-savvy country. But they will be changed. The white settler-myths can be reshaped through the language of symbols to reflect our new multicultural New Zealand.

Through the use of these Asian-inclusive symbols, we will create a new idea of New Zealand. We can remake out-of-date symbols in our new Asia-savvy image. There is no future in a country where New Zealand and Asia are opposites. Through a process of redefining the symbols of nationhood, “Kiwī” and “Asian” can become the same thing.

How will entrepreneurs and innovators shape New Zealand and Asia's future?

Win Yee Phong

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As more Asian countries jump on the bandwagon to strengthen their economies, as reflected by their burgeoning businesses domestically and overseas, New Zealand should not be left out or feel complacent in terms of development. The truth is we are now slightly behind our neighbouring countries. Hence, it is high time for us to start looking towards the East, as Asian countries are now developing at a staggering speed, particularly China.

After the economic liberation in China, almost every country in the world trades with China. In today's market, we can see the majority of goods are imported by our entrepreneurs

from China. Due to lower labour costs, mass production and technology advancement, costs of manufacturing the goods are much cheaper in China compared to New Zealand. Our entrepreneurs have actually done a very good job in maintain strong trade with Asian countries like China, thanks to a few fledging Kiwi businesses that have set strong business footholds in mostly Asian countries. One of the best examples is Teknatool, a business that manufactures woodwork equipment, mainly based in New Zealand. It has recently established its operation in China and set up a manufacturing facility there. It was even awarded the supreme prize by the New Zealand China Trade Association. Stepping out of comfort zones and exploring untapped potential will always bring great rewards to a business, so we shouldn't overlook the possibilities of having a niche market in a foreign country.

To ensure robust growth of a business, outsourcing is a strategy often adopted by many entrepreneurs and innovators in New Zealand. It is the most effective way to address the problems of higher labour costs and higher taxes here. Those costs saved can be used to improve other business lines of operations. More often than not, entrepreneurs or innovators have to give materials, sales and distribution serious thought before commencing business in Asian countries. Employing locals who know their own culture, language and customs will ensure successful entry into Asian markets and subsequently tap into the wealth of a bigger population of consumers. Setting a strong value chain in China, for example, can enable Kiwi businesses to sustain their operations in the long run and the revenue generated will be remitted back to New Zealand, further driving more economic development in our country. Outsourcing has proven to create more employment opportunities in Asian countries, not just in New Zealand. Employing local talent there will not only provide a better lifestyle to the locals employed by our enterprise established there, but also help

to reduce the long-standing issue of poverty in most Asian countries.

As business is growing, more facilities like offices, buildings and factories have to be built to accommodate more employees and business transactions. More houses will be built due to better lifestyle of the people following employment. All the housing development will stimulate more economic growth. Hence, as New Zealand companies venture into an Asian country to do business, they will not just have a good impact on our country, but also on the Asian country. Business in this win-win situation will not make us worse, but helps us to drive more economic development for both countries.

Fostering a strong friendship with Asian business counterparts is extremely crucial for the survival of a business. Chinese businesses usually emphasise building a good relationship before entering into a contract. Failure to maintain strong bilateral relationship will hinder the fledging Kiwi business from re-entering the Asian market. Being the first country to secure a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with China, New Zealand's entrepreneurs have recently shown enthusiasm to trade with their Chinese business counterparts which subsequently drove the export to China to a new height, which was \$3.9 billion in 2009.

Besides, innovation is now deemed as the crucial factor in determining the survival and sustainability of a business. Innovators have the critical task in adapting their business to changes in business environment and for the past few years, we can see that there are drastic changes in how a business operates. Technology advancement is ubiquitous and it is important for every business to adapt to the worldwide technology changes. More and more Asian countries know the importance of technology and have been vigorously introducing more research into the technology to be included in their businesses. For example, Japan is now one of the largest technology research consumers in the world and

also one of the leading nations to have the largest market share, especially in the automobile and electronic industries. Also, Japanese businesses have been very successful due to the technology incorporated into the business. To keep on par with businesses in Asian countries, it is crucial for our local businesses to keep updating their technology so they are not left out. For instance, our entrepreneurs had once relied on email to trade with the entrepreneurs on the other side of the world when Skype has not ventured into the market. But now, as Skype is just a click away in today's world, our entrepreneurs trade more easily and quickly. It has shown that technology can streamline a business and our entrepreneurs have realised it is essential and have adapted to it.

In conclusion, entrepreneurs and innovators are required to help shape New Zealand and Asia's future. They have played an indirect role in creating more job opportunities not merely in New Zealand, but also in Asian countries where they set up their businesses. With a more comfortable lifestyle among the people, another chain reaction such as more economic growth among us and our trade partners is triggered. Closer interaction between our country and other Asian countries can also be attributed to our dynamic entrepreneurs and innovators who seek ongoing international trade and all these have been further galvanised by technology advancement.

通 ASIA SAVVY

New Zealand Asia Conference 2012

Volunteers: Simrin Ahmed,
Victoria Beck, Ahra Cho,
John Huang, Sahan Lalpe
Wickrama, Dan Liu, Olla
Shimbereva, Nalini Singh,
Sarah Tacken, Mahoney
Turnbull, Dasarsh Vadugu,
Bonnie Wang, Matthew
Woo, Ziqi Yuan and Qun
(Kris) Zhang.

Dinner performance:
Korean Culture Society



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