

# HORIZON

*Sharing ideas, Bridging minds*

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Singapore's first double  
Emeritus Professor

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## Chair's Message



**“I am heartened that we have a great team of faculty and staff members to drive our educational and research endeavors.”**

Dear colleagues, students, alumni and friends,

You may recall that the previous issue of *Horizon* focuses on multidisciplinary research at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS). This issue of *Horizon* is centered on recognising excellence of our people – the faculty and staff members who are the key drivers of HSS’s growing international profile in education and research.

At the top of the list is eminent economist Professor Lim Chong Yah, who was recently conferred the title of Emeritus Professor by Nanyang Technological University. He is the third person in the university to receive this top honour in recognition of his lifelong contributions to the academe and society.

Not only is Professor Lim an admirable mentor to faculty members, he is also an inspiring educator to students and a compassionate hero to the less fortunate members of the society. His contributions are numerous and revolve around making a difference in the lives of people. Through education, he imparts students with knowledge that allows them to make valuable contributions to the society. Through research, he seeks new ways for nations to create wealth. Through public service, he offers well thought-out policies aiming at improving all Singaporeans’ livelihood. Through philanthropy, he helps many deserving student to receive quality education at NTU.

Perhaps not many people know that Professor Lim is the “Father of Economics” at NTU. Back in the early 1990s, he pushed for the teaching of Economics as a discipline. He eventually brought the Economics Division at Nanyang Business School over to HSS in 2003 to spearhead the formation of the new school. Without him and other pioneering faculty members laying the foundation, HSS wouldn’t be where it is today.

Other faculty members have also gone the extra mile in pursuing excellence in education, research and service.

Associate Professors Neil Murphy and Ringo Ho, both winners of the Nanyang Award for Excellence in Teaching, demonstrated their remarkable dedication to education. The former makes it a point to speak to each student individually, giving personalised and informative feedback on their assignment, while the latter constantly innovates his teaching methods to make abstract statistical concepts easier for students to understand. And Dr Chan Soon Keng, who won the Nanyang Award for Humanitarian Work, is a hands-on and selfless faculty advisor to the Red Cross NTU Chapter. For the past 18 years, she attended almost all club meetings with student leaders – meetings that sometimes lasted into the wee hours of morning.

The School also accords recognition to the important work carried out by our administrative staff. I want to congratulate the winners of the inaugural HSS Service Excellence Awards – Mr Chan Weng Hoo, Ms Joey Kek, Ms Magdalene Lim, Mr Troy Tan, Ms Sandy Ong, Mr Cai Cheng San, Mr Shawn Eu, Mr Josh Tan, and Mr Thornton Ng. They have done great work, and they keep challenging themselves to think better, do better, be better.

The most valuable asset of the school is our people. I am heartened that we have a great team of faculty and staff members to drive our educational and research endeavors. I am confident that in the new academic year, we will further fulfill our potential and achieve ever higher levels of excellence, both individually and collectively as a school.

Be world-class like Professor Lim. Inspire like Associate Professor Murphy. Innovate like Associate Professor Ringo. Serve like Dr Chan. Shine like our service excellence award winners.

Thank you, and have a great semester ahead.



**Liu Hong**

Chair

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

## Harvard's Prof Vogel hails Deng Xiaoping's impact on China

By Hilda Cheng



(From left) Mr Anthony Teo, former Advisor at NTU President's Office; Prof Ezra F. Vogel, Harvard University; Prof Bertil Andersson, President, NTU; Prof Alan Chan, Dean, College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences; and Prof Liu Hong, Chair, HSS.

As one of the leading political figures of the twentieth century, it is arguable that no one had a greater long-term impact on China's development than Deng Xiaoping.

In a public lecture on "*Deng, Science and Education*" held on 1st June, Prof Ezra F. Vogel – the Henry Ford II Professor of the Social Sciences Emeritus at Harvard University – hailed the late Chinese leader as the driving force behind China's reforms and rapid development over the last 30 years. He credited him with improvements in the living standards of hundreds of millions of Chinese citizens.

The lecture, attended by members of the NTU senior management including President Prof Bertil Andersson, as well as by over 400 faculty members, students, government officials, and members of the public, was part of the Harvard Ezra F. Vogel Malaysia/Singapore Initiative lecture series hosted by NTU.

Named after Prof Vogel, who served as Director of the Harvard Asia Center from 1997 to 1999, the initiative was launched in 2009 as a collaboration between Harvard University Asia Center, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman of Malaysia, and NTU, and is funded by Dr Lam Kin-chung, Founder and Chairman of Lam Kin-chung Morning Sun Charity Fund.

It aims to strengthen institutional partnership between Harvard University and NTU through a series of public lectures delivered by internationally acclaimed academics from Harvard.

The lecture was based on Prof Vogel's latest book, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, which he spent the last ten years researching and writing. The result is a 876-page biography of Deng that offers new insights into the life of the famed Chinese statesman. In his lecture, Prof Vogel described Deng as a leader who had an open mind. He also explained how Deng repositioned the Communist party to seek economic development, weakening in the process the grip of entrenched shibboleths and ideals.

While historians have largely focused on Mao Zedong, the leader of the Chinese Revolution, Prof Vogel concluded that it was Deng who was largely responsible for reshaping post-revolution China.

*Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, was published in September last year by Harvard University Press, and has since garnered numerous accolades including the Lionel Gelber Prize, 2012; *The Economist* Best Book of 2011; and *The Wall Street Journal* Book of the Year, 2011.

## HSS faculty member wins Fulbright grant

How is the experience of new Chinese migrants in the U.S. different from that of their counterparts in Singapore?

This is a question that Chinese Division faculty member Asst Prof Yow Cheun Hoe will pursue when he heads off to the U.S. in May next year.



Asst Prof Yow won the coveted 2012 Fulbright Singapore Researcher Grant after he submitted a proposal to conduct a comparative study of new Chinese migrants to the two countries.

Sponsored by the U.S. government, the prestigious international educational exchange programme aims to develop leaders who can help promote greater understanding between participant nations.

Under the programme, Asst Prof Yow will head to the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies at the University of California, San Diego in May, where he will begin an intensive three-month project.

His study aims to shed light on how new Chinese migrants act and feel when dealing with everyday issues and challenges.

Besides bibliography and archival surveys, Asst Prof Yow will conduct interviews with members of social and business organisations set up by these migrants. This will allow him to garner valuable first-hand information.

The findings will hopefully benefit policy makers in both countries, enhancing knowledge exchange in the managing of immigrant relations together with an appreciation of their pertinent socio-economic challenges.

Academically, the research will enrich the areas of immigration policy studies as well as ethnicity, citizenship, and diaspora studies.

## Adapt. Survive. Thrive.

By Koh Hui Fang



The conference attracted scholars of different periods, and different disciplinary and cross-disciplinary affiliations.

Fancy sipping a *Singapore Sling* while discussing art, culture, and cross-genre adaptation?

Participants of a literature conference organised by HSS did just that at the Long Bar in Raffles Hotel, which once hosted famous writers such as Rudyard Kipling and Somerset Maugham.

The experience gave attendees a sense of participating in a history that is still alive and evolving, or that is still being adapted for contemporary purposes, said conference organiser Asst Prof Samara Cahill of the Division of English.

The programme was part of the “*Citizens of the World: Adapting (in) the Eighteenth Century*” conference held from 22nd to 24th June.

It was jointly organised by the Division of English, Centre for Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, and the South Central Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, a regional affiliate of the American Society of Eighteenth-Century Studies.

Adaptation, the main topic of the conference, aimed at recognising the value of “tradition” and of how it changes to fit new circumstances.

The event drew inspiration from *The Citizen of the World*, a series of satirical essays by the eighteenth-century Anglo-Irish writer Oliver Goldsmith. In the essays, Goldsmith used a fictional foreign traveller Lien Chi to expose the hypocrisies and foibles of his society.

The conference attracted scholars of not just eighteenth-century writing but also scholars of different periods, and different disciplinary and cross-disciplinary affiliations.

These included Prof David Reisman, an economist from HSS; Dr Jeremy Fernando, a specialist in philosophy and media from Tembusu College, NUS; and Prof Ronald Schleifer, a specialist in literature and medicine from the University of Oklahoma.

“We wanted scholars from a variety of disciplines and academic interest areas to come together in the recognition that we all have something to learn from and offer eighteenth-century studies,” Asst Prof Cahill said.

The conference explored the ways in which new experiences stimulate self-reflection and adaptation (as creative acts in themselves). For instance, eighteenth-century inventions such as the newspaper changed perceptions of the world – the print media engaged readers about world events, thus creating citizens of the world with recognisably cosmopolitan sensibilities.

Participants also examined issues that particularly exercised the eighteenth-century imagination. These included gambling, pornography, gypsies, and piracy. Other themes included the influence of classical music, and the significance of religions.

## HSS professor flies the flag in Canada



HSS linguist Professor Luke Kwong was invited to deliver a series of lectures titled “*New Approaches to the Study of Language and Interaction*” at

the University of Alberta, Canada, in February and March.

As a Distinguished Visiting Scholar, Prof Luke examined, among other things, some long-standing debates in Chinese linguistics. He proposed a new solution to these debates using a theory of language radically different from traditional theories – one that puts grammatical constructions rather than words at the centre of language use.

In a subsequent lecture titled, “*Red-Haire Devil-Worshipping Sect and Korea Fans: Ethnic Identities as Interactional Resource*,” Prof Luke discussed how

language users deploy identity categories to perform a range of tasks (e.g. to criticise others, to make insinuations, or to defend oneself from verbal attacks).

Prof Luke also conducted a series of technical seminars during his visit. These covered, among other things, the analysis of naturally-occurring speech-interaction data.

A recipient of the University of Hong Kong’s Outstanding Researcher Award in 2008, Prof Luke is known for his ground-breaking work in Chinese and English language interaction.

## HSS team wins Tier 2 grant to undertake language-preservation work

HSS will soon play a key role in preserving fast-disappearing indigenous languages and cultures of Asia. The Ministry of Education has awarded an Academic Research Fund (AcRF) Tier 2 grant of around S\$530,000 to a team of researchers from HSS and the School of Art, Design and Media (ADM) to fund a documentation project involving four endangered Asian languages.

The AcRF Tier 2 grant is a competitive award that funds research projects of great significance.

Led by principal investigator (PI) Asst Prof Alexander Coupe, Division of Linguistics and Multilingual Studies (LMS), the project will record the languages over the next three years in selected sites in north-east India; northern Thailand; southern peninsular Malaysia, and eastern Indonesia.

Spoken by minority communities, these languages face the threat of abandonment in favour of dominant neighbouring languages such as Thai and Malay. They may disappear, taking with them their unique history and culture.

“The threat to the loss of human linguistic diversity has never been more critical,” said Asst Prof Coupe. He stressed that an entire language is lost every two weeks due to a variety of reasons.

“Our project provides a service to humanity by documenting endangered languages and their speakers’ unique conceptualisations of the world.”

Apart from Asst Prof Coupe, the project will involve co-PIs Assoc Prof Ng Bee Chin, Assoc Prof Francesco Cavallaro, and Asst Prof František Kratochvíl of LMS. They will train PhD students to undertake documentation tasks. The students will



spend about 18 months in each community producing recordings, transcriptions, and grammars of the spoken languages.

The data will be stored in a digital repository called the Archive of Indigenous Languages and Cultures of Asia. Located in NTU, the repository will be the first of its kind in Asia, providing universal access to minority communities, academics, and members of the public.

The project also aims to educate the general public by mounting arresting exhibits of Southeast Asian culture, heritage, and languages. These will be spearheaded by co-PI Asst Prof Astrid Almkhlaaf, a visual communication specialist from ADM.

On the social science theoretical front, the linguists in the team will examine the data to gain a better understanding of how the grammars of languages influence each other in multilingual societies. Focusing on sociolinguistic factors, they aim to develop a theory to explain how and why minority communities abandon their native tongues in favour of regional languages.

Linguistics PhD students will spend up to 18 months in a minority community to document its language use. Undergraduate students on the Undergraduate Research Experience on CAmpus (URECA) programme can take part in some aspects of the project.

## Psychology faculty member spearheads computer simulation study on youth violence in Singapore

The Ministry of Education has also awarded an AcRF Tier 2 research grant of around S\$360,000 to fund a three-year study of youth violence and delinquency in Singapore.

The study will be conducted by PI Assoc Prof Rebecca Ang, Division of Psychology; with co-PIs Asst Prof Cheong Siew Ann, School of Physical and Mathematical Sciences; Asst Prof Michael Harold Lees, School of Computer Engineering; and collaborator Dr Khader Majeed, Director, Home Team Behavioural Sciences Centre.

They will develop computer simulation models to understand how the levels of “existing but hidden” youth violence fluctuate in response to changes in risk factors – at the demographic, socio-economic, individual, familial, and school or community levels.

They also hope to test intervention measures using these models. Doing so will help policymakers identify effective strategies for implementation purposes.

## A dialogue with former President

By Koh Hui Fang



Singapore's former President Mr S.R. Nathan (left) with Prof Alan Chan, Dean, College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences.

How can humanities students play a part in Singapore's development?

The Republic's former President, Mr S.R. Nathan, has this piece of advice for HSS undergraduates.

"Humanities scholars must put into practice what they have acquired from their training," Mr Nathan said.

"But that takes time. If you are impatient, you will never succeed."

Mr Nathan senses that many young Singaporeans want to "rise to the top too fast", that they prefer the fast track instead of the patient gaining of work experience and expertise.

Indeed, patience is, perhaps, Mr Nathan's strongest suit, as he had stood at the nation's helm for twelve long years, making him its longest-serving President.

He was speaking to students at a dialogue session titled "*Singapore: The Transformational Journey*"; the session was held at HSS on 29th May.

Mr Nathan discussed Singapore's transformation from a resource-scarce developing country into today's global city, a change that took some three to four decades.

What vision of the future does he have for the country?

"I hope for a more enriched and gracious people, who are more conscious of others," he said.

"Singaporeans are now a questioning generation with better education and access to knowledge. Had we had this generation (during the nation's developing phase in 1965), we would have collapsed."

But the session was not all grim solemnity.

Mr Nathan injected self-deprecating humour into his response when Prof Alan Chan, Dean of the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, and moderator of the session, asked him about the most challenging and difficult episode of his public service career.

"I would have liked to poke my nose here and there, but I could only poke it into my handkerchief," quipped Mr Nathan, referring to the existing constitutional restrictions on the President's role.

Mr Nathan's relationship with NTU dates back to 1996 when he was the founding director of the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, now S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS). In 2011, he rejoined RSIS as a Distinguished Fellow and was conferred an honorary doctorate by NTU.

## From grandfather to grandson

Modern Chinese literature's founding father, Lu Xun, may have passed on, but his legacy continues through the work of his eldest grandson, Mr Zhou Ling Fei.



(From left) Mr Han Sanyuan, Dr Nan Zhiguo, Dr Huang Mengwen, Assoc Prof Cheung Chiu-Yee, and Mr Zhou Ling Fei.

Faculty members and students of NTU's Chinese Division gleaned deep insights into the life of the leading Chinese literary figure when Mr Zhou delivered a keynote address at HSS on 5th May.

He was speaking at the "*Lu Xun's Influence on Malaysia-Singapore*" seminar jointly organised by the Singapore Association of Writers and NTU's Chinese Division.

Also present were Assoc Prof Cheung Chiu-Yee, and Dr Nan Zhiguo from NTU's Chinese Division; Mr Han Sanyuan, a veteran journalist; and Dr Huang Mengwen, Honorary President of the Singapore Association of Writers. The seminar was chaired by Prof Wong Yoon Wah from Taiwan's Yuan Ze University.

In his keynote address, Mr Zhou discussed Lu Xun's influence on China's social development.

Among other things, he shared that an economy influenced by his grandfather's works has sprung up in China. For instance, notable characters from Lu Xun's novels have been registered as businesses such as the "*Mrs Xiang Lin Laundry Shop*" and "*Kong Yiji fennel-flavored beans*". It is estimated that over 20,000 people in China work in such businesses.

Local experts focused on Lu Xun's influence in Singapore and Malaysia. Despite never having visited the region, Lu Xun exerted great influence on its writers in the 1950s and 60s. Mr Han explained that society then was stirring with anti-colonial sentiments, and Lu Xun's writing inspired many to fight for change.

Assoc Prof Cheung concurred with the observation. For him, Lu Xun continues to influence the present and transcends different historical epochs.

## Still in the hot seat for NTU's Econs head

Economics is about people, not just about finance, investment, and the stock market – that was the crux of Prof Euston Quah's address following his re-election as the 16th President of the Economic Society of Singapore (ESS).

The Head of the Division of Economics, who will be heading ESS for the third consecutive year, was speaking at the society's annual dinner on 8th June.

ESS is a non-profit organisation which brings together economists working in academia, government, and business sectors; it functions as a forum for debate on various issues affecting Singapore and the region.

An expert on environmental economics and cost-benefit analysis, Prof Quah also stressed the need to raise the general population's awareness about economic matters, together with related national and social policies.



Apart from his work with ESS, Prof Quah has published several pioneering environment-related studies. These include the first cost of air pollution study of Singapore, the first study in the world addressing the trans-boundary haze problem in Southeast Asia, and the first study on the social costs of smoking in Singapore.

He is also the editor of the *Singapore Economic Review*, a leading journal of economics in Asia, founded in 1956.

## Would you pay for 'useless' advice?



Economists from NTU and the London School of Economics (LSE) have discovered that people are prepared to pay through the nose for obviously useless investment advice – provided the advisor got things right in the past.

The findings were announced in a working paper titled “Why Do People Pay for Useless Advice?” by Assoc Prof Yohanes E. Riyanto from HSS's Economics Division, and Prof Nattavudh Powdthavee from LSE.

The paper has garnered worldwide attention, with its claims featured on global media organisations such as *The Economist*, *Financial Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Freakonomics*, and the *New Statesman*.

Participants in a series of experiments were told to bet on five consecutive coin flips. Prior to the betting, they were offered a chance to pay for a prediction on the outcome of each toss.

The experiment showed that participants were tempted to pay for the tips when the initial prediction was correct. The temptation grew stronger when the sequence of correct predictions grew longer.

In other words, a few lucky guesses convinced participants to pay for what the researchers called “transparently useless advice”.

The outcomes of these tosses were clearly random; no one can accurately predict them. A sequence of correct predictions happens only through sheer luck.

As a result, the researchers concluded that the experiment accurately describes how self-styled ‘experts’ typically operate in the information market, and how the average person easily forms baseless beliefs in the veracity of the opinions proffered by them.



Photo: Internet screenshot

The paper has garnered worldwide attention, with its claims featured on global media organisations such as *The Economist* (above).

# The human face of economics

By Jeremy Lim and Lew Zi Jian

As Singapore transformed itself from a third to first world country, Professor Lim Chong Yah never wavered in his concern for the man in the street. Through all the different portfolios that he handled – as civil servant, academic, and as chairman of the National Wages Council – he continued to champion education, jobs and fair and just wages for ordinary people. At 80 years old, he still ponders – and comments on – national economic issues.

This July, the economics guru was named Emeritus Professor, a fitting recognition for his 57 years of distinguished service in academia, education, public service, and philanthropy. The position is the highest accolade awarded to a professor at NTU. He is only the third NTU academic to receive the title, and the only one to be Emeritus Professor at both NTU and NUS.

*Horizon* spoke with the much-loved scholar on his work with HSS's Division of Economics, and on his passion for the underprivileged. For someone who claims to have no interest in money, Prof Lim has spent his life studying dollars and cents. How has he tried to level the playing field for needy students and low-wage workers? Turn the page and find out.



## MILESTONES

**1932**

Born in Malacca.

**1940**

His mother died; he worked on a farm and as a delivery boy to help the family.

**1951**

Won a Malacca Settlement Scholarship to study economics at the University of Malaya, Singapore.

**1955**

Joined the Singapore Administrative Service where he worked as Assistant Financial Secretary, and later as Second Assistant Economic Advisor.

## A double honour



In a first for Singapore, Prof Lim is the only professor to be awarded two Emeritus Professorships. He received his first upon retirement from NUS in 1992.

“I’ve been in academia for the last 57 years. I’ve not come across a professor who has been honoured with a double Emeritus Professorship, and from two very distinguished, world class universities on top of that,” he said.

The rare honour acknowledges his seminal contributions in academia as well as to the wider community.

In the conferment letter to Prof Lim, NTU President Prof Bertil Andersson wrote: “The honour is indeed deserving, as I note, with deep appreciation, your invaluable and multi-faceted contributions to scholarship, education, society and

international co-operation as an educator, economist, author, researcher, consultant, and philanthropist.”

Besides being the first double Emeritus Professor in Singapore, Prof Lim is also the first NTU faculty member to be conferred a chair professorship: he holds the Albert Winsemius Chair Professor of Economics position. This was in part recognition of his instrumental role in the development of Economics at NTU – first at the Division of Applied Economics at Nanyang Business School, and then at HSS’s Division of Economics. He is also the founding Director of the Economic Growth Centre.

Beyond NTU, Prof Lim also gave exemplary service to the nation. In 1972, he was appointed founding chair of the National Wages Council, a position he held for 29 years. During his nearly three decades of service, he guided Singapore through several major economic crises; he also helped to steer the country through a key economic restructuring phase as it sought to achieve higher value-added production.

Colleagues and compatriots lauded his unique, multi-faceted achievements.

Prof Euston Quah, Head of the Division of Economics, said: “Prof Lim’s contribution goes beyond the work that he has done for research. He is a very insightful and analytical visionary of economics and public policy. And that sets him apart from the everyday economist.”

NTU President Emeritus Prof Su Guaning concurred with the observation.

He said: “Prof Lim may be the most accomplished economist from Singapore, having made unique contributions towards research particularly in Southeast Asia and educated generations of economists. I cannot think of anyone more deserving of the honour.”

### 1957

Married teacher See Nah Nah. They have four children.

### 1959

Became Assistant Lecturer at the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur.

### 1962

Won a British Commonwealth scholarship to do a D.Phil. in Economics at the University of Oxford, under the mentorship of Nobel Laureate Sir John Hicks.

### 1967

Published the book *Economic Development of Modern Malaya* which became a classic.

### 1969

Joined the University of Singapore.

### 1971

Elected Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Singapore.

## An approachable mentor and educator



Prof Lim with graduates from the Nanyang Fellow Class of 2011/12 at his house.

Among his myriad achievements, Prof Lim has groomed and mentored many distinguished scholars, nurturing thinkers who have, in turn, contributed greatly to society. His students include Mr Ravi Menon, Managing Director of the Monetary Authority of Singapore, and Tan Sri Dato Haji Muhyiddin Bin Mohd Yassin, the current Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education of Malaysia.

Today, Prof Lim remains an approachable mentor and colleague, according to his students and peers at NTU.

HSS Chair Prof Liu Hong said that when he was a junior faculty member ten years ago at NUS, Prof Lim treated him and his colleagues with “respect,” almost like an equal.

Other colleagues enthused about his sense of humour and approachable demeanour.

“Undoubtedly, he’s a very jovial person with a sense of humour, and likes to exchange views on current economic issues,” Assoc Prof Christos Sakellariou of the Division of Economics said.

“He’s very easy to talk with, and very open.”

Likewise, Prof Alan Chan, Dean, College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, also appreciates Prof Lim’s affability and forthright manner.

“He never ceases to amaze me with his energy and intellectual curiosity,” he said.

Students have also taken well to the obvious dedication shown by Prof Lim when it comes to matters involving their welfare. His 20 years as an educator at NTU have been marked by the conferment of numerous teaching awards.

“To me, he is more than a professor, much more like a grandpa with lots of great stories to share,” said final-year Aerospace and Economics student David Zhou, who took Prof Lim’s Political Economy of East Asia class.

“I am intrigued by his charismatic style of lecturing and elegant sense of humour.”

**1972**

Became founding Chairman of the National Wages Council.

**1973**

Became President of the Economic Society of Singapore.

**1976**

Founded the Federation of ASEAN Economic Associations.

**1977**

Appointed head of the Department of Economics and Statistics, NUS.

**1979**

Became founding chairman of the Skills Development Fund Advisory Council.

**1983**

Awarded rare promotion to Senior Professor in NUS.

## Feature

### A prolific scholar



(From left) Prof Cham Tao Soon, then-NTU President; Prof Tan Teck Meng, then-Dean, School of Accountancy and Business; Mr Lee Yock Suan, then-Minister of Education; Mr Tan Tat Chu, then-President of Asia Publishing Group Addison Wesley; and Prof Lim Chong Yah at the launch of Singapore Business Development Series in 1996.

From his twenty years of illustrious contribution and commitment to NTU, two memories stand out in particular – and they both have to do with books.

The first was a 2001 book exhibition which showcased 71 pieces of his works.

“That was a very memorable occasion because that’s not commonly done for a professor,” Prof Lim told *Horizon*.

“Only painters exhibit, but this is a professor exhibiting his own intellectual babies.”

A prolific author with over 160 refereed journal articles, monographs and books under his belt, Prof Lim is indeed one of few academics able to pull off such a feat.

The second highlight of his NTU career is a much-loved brainchild, namely the Singapore Business Development Series launched in 1996.

The series is a collaboration among almost 200 academics and industry partners. So far it has spawned fourteen books dealing with a host of issues pertaining to Singapore business, accountancy, and economics.

The project was particularly challenging as NTU then was not a research intensive place. A culture of research and writing had not yet taken root, making it difficult for Prof Lim to get faculty members to, as he puts it, “publish, publish, publish... [and] research, research, research.”

“It’s a kind of a miracle to get so many academics researching and writing all at one time, and publishing all the articles in fourteen volumes at one go,” he added.

#### 1986

Published *CPF Study Group Report*. Key recommendations were adopted by the government.

#### 1988

Published the book *Policy Options for the Singapore Economy*. Compulsory education and other recommendations were adopted.

#### 1991

Published the book *Development and Underdevelopment* which proposes a general theory for development.

Conferred Economic Society of Singapore Honorary Fellowship.

#### 1992

Left NUS and was awarded first Emeritus Professorship.

Joined NTU’s School of Accountancy and Business as Professor of Economics.

Appointed member of the Presidential Council for Minority Rights.

## A helping hand to those in need



Prof Su Guanng (left), then-NTU President, honours Prof Lim at the Campaign for Accessibility to Higher Education Appreciation Night in 2009.

Prof Lim's work with underprivileged students is so well known that when NTU wanted to raise funds for a new bursary scheme in 2007, the university called it the Lim Chong Yah Bursary Fund.

As a child, Prof Lim experienced many hard knocks. His mother passed away when he was eight years old, and by the time he was twelve he was working on a farm to supplement his family's income – all this came before he won a scholarship to study economics at the University of Malaya (now NUS).

His life experiences made him doubly determined to improve the lot of needy students, to ensure that they are not denied an education because of their background.

"He has a deep concern for these young people, and has often gone out of his way to make sure that students in difficult circumstances get the help they need," said the then-NTU President Prof Su Guanng.

In 2007, Prof Lim approached NTU to launch what became known as the Lim Chong Yah Bursary Fund. He also gave it a kick-start with a personal donation of \$100,000.

The university soon adopted this cause as its own, naming the bursary after him and also launching the Campaign for Accessibility to Higher Education – which raised over \$10.5 million for needy students.

Other notable efforts by Prof Lim include setting up the NTU Students Emergency Fund in 1995 to help students handle crisis situations.

Prof Lim charged organisations hefty sums for lecture-appearances (up to \$20,000 per appearance), which he then donated to the fund. He also donated the royalties from his books to the project.

Prof Lim recalls a beneficiary whose father, a taxi driver, died in an accident. The final-year undergraduate was about to drop out of school to support her mother and two sisters. With help from the fund, however, she managed to complete her education at NTU.

"Every good and hardworking student deserves to graduate," said Prof Lim.

**"The grant bought me the two additional months I needed to complete the exchange before I returned to Singapore to get a job to support my family. I am very grateful for the Student Emergency Fund initiated by Prof Lim Chong Yah."**

– Joel Lin, Nanyang Business School Class of 2009, who was on exchange in Canada when his father passed away.

**"Prof Lim once initiated a lunch session to get to know us better. He shared many words of wisdom, his kindness and passion for education. His warmth was simply overwhelming when he made the careful effort to converse with us, to understand each and every single of us beneficiaries better."**

– Lee Teng Ming, Lim Chong Yah Bursary Fund recipient, and 2nd-year Materials Science and Engineering student.

### 1995

Awarded Doctor Honoris Causa by Soka University.

Set up the Students Emergency Fund at NTU. He donates royalties earned from sale of books and fees earned from lectures and talks to the fund.

### 1996

Fellow academics published Festschrift, *Essays in Honour of Professor Lim Chong Yah*.

Conferred Honorary Professorship by the Hainan University.

### 2000

Awarded the Distinguished Service Order (Darjah Utama Bakti Cemerlang) by the Singapore Government.

### 2001

Lim Chong Yah Professorship launched at NUS with donations from companies and members of the public.

Published the book *Southeast Asia: The Long Road Ahead*.

Exhibition of books and other works by Prof Lim at NTU.

## Feature

### A champion for workers

Despite his lengthy 29-year-stint as chair of the National Wages Council, Prof Lim has lost none of his passion when it comes to the issue of working-class wages.

He quickly perks up when the topic is raised.

“Human capital is as important as economic capital,” he said. “Family formation is as important, if not more important than capital formation.”

Clearly for him, Economics has never been just about earning money or promulgating abstract theories.

Many will remember Prof Lim’s controversial wage shock therapy proposal earlier this year when he proposed a substantial increase in the pay of low-wage workers, together with a wage freeze for top earners. The suggestion ignited a charged, nationwide debate and drew responses from members of the public, politicians, and business leaders.

Standing by this suggestion, he said pointedly: “Are we doing the right thing by having one fifth of our population living at subsistence, or near subsistence, level? With one of the highest concentrations of millionaires in the world?”

Part of his inspiration for the proposal comes from a poem by the 18th century Anglo-Irish writer Oliver Goldsmith, one of whose lines goes: “Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey, Where wealth accumulates, and men decay.”

He explained: “When you accumulate a lot of wealth, be careful you have not lost the duty to be good human beings.”

Despite his official retirement, Prof Lim is not quite ready to take things easy.

He mused that it has been 23 years since his five-bypass heart surgery, and that every day is a bonus to him.

“It is important to make full use of our time on earth for the betterment of society,” he said.

“For an academic, there is no retirement. The search for truth, for new knowledge will go on.”

“For an academic, there is no retirement. The search for truth, for new knowledge will go on.”



Prof Lim has lost none of his passion when it comes to the issue of working-class wages.

- ▶ **2004**  
Became Founding Director of NTU’s Economic Growth Centre.
- ▶ **2005**  
Promoted to the Albert Winsemius Chair Professor of Economics at NTU.

- ▶ **2007**  
Set up the Lim Chong Yah Bursary Fund for needy students, making a personal donation of \$100,000.

- ▶ **2012**  
Proposed ‘wage shock therapy’ to raise the salaries of low-wage workers, setting off a nationwide debate.  
Conferred Emeritus Professorship by NTU.

## Nanyang Awards Winners

### What makes great teachers great?

**They have been recognised by NTU with the Nanyang Awards for excellence in teaching and for mentoring students in humanitarian work. What makes these faculty members go the extra mile?**



### Statistically-gifted professor

Statistics is not the most popular course among mathematically challenged students in HSS.

Thankfully, the Division of Psychology has Assoc Prof Ringo Ho to teach its statistics courses.

Assoc Prof Ringo Ho, a winner of the 2012 Nanyang Award for Excellence in Teaching, focuses on teaching which emphasises both understanding and application. He makes it a point to show how statistics can be used in the daily work of a psychologist.

“Statistics is not about memorising mathematical formula and simply plugging numbers into them,” he said.

“It is a tool that helps you to make sense of data (from experiments and surveys).”

In psychology courses, students gather quantitative data from experiments and surveys, but such data is useless without proper statistical examination and reasoning.

“If a professor can make students fall in love with what they learn and even fall in love with the process of studying, then that professor would be Dr Ringo,” said Han Shuyu, a final-year Psychology student.

Of course, Assoc Prof Ringo understands that many students struggle with statistical concepts, so he takes a different approach in his pedagogy.

Departing from the traditional methods of teaching statistics in high school, Assoc Prof Ringo situates each statistical concept using applicable real-world examples.

“He spends a lot of time teaching us the concepts behind statistical procedure and this is what I appreciate,” said Bai Shuming, a third-year Psychology student.

Even students who are mathematically weak are put at ease in his classes.

To ensure that students are kept up to speed, Assoc Prof Ringo also guides them with extra exercises when necessary, while encouraging them to arrive at solutions independently.

Second-year Psychology student Chu Pei Yun said: “I have never been strong in Maths and was quite fearful for the stats module, but I managed to complete it with a decent grade.”

“It’s thanks to such a wonderful stats teacher like Prof Ringo.”

## Personal touch

Not many students are on first name terms with their professors, but Assoc Prof Neil Murphy, or Neil as many students call him, takes a personal effort to build relationships with them.

The much-loved Head of the Division of English won the Nanyang Award for Excellence in Teaching this year after a vote by the student body.

Assoc Prof Murphy's approach to teaching has always been to put students first. This approach comes from his own personal experience as a student.

**“With a little extra effort, it's possible to make an enormous difference to students' lives.”**

“I learned a lot from both attentive and negligent teachers when I was a student and I firmly believe that the best teachers are those who are genuinely interested in their students,” he said.

“With a little extra effort, it's possible to make an enormous difference to students' lives.”

That extra effort is evident in the personal touch shown in his dealings with students.

Despite his numerous duties, Assoc Prof Murphy makes it a point to talk to every student personally when he returns their term papers.



“He's the only professor I know who does this,” said Donald Tsang, a third-year English student.

“I think of him as a genuinely warm person who really makes an effort to know students.”

Dominic Neo, a third-year English student added: “He entertains all students regardless of how busy he is and how silly the queries are. A trait of a great teacher and a classy man.”

It comes as no surprise then that Assoc Prof Murphy's modules are always popular with students.

“Three-hour long seminars can get draggy, but he maintains a quiet, breezy sense of humour throughout and introduces dense concepts in an extremely palatable manner,” said Dominic.

Crispin Rodrigues, final-year English student, and President of Epiphany, the NTU English and Drama Society added: “His choice of texts is both provoking and enriching. It pushes students' limits of thinking in not just the texts but also the notion of what literature is.”

Prof Murphy's dedication has clearly rubbed off on his charges.

Crispin added: “Prof Murphy inspired me to take up academia as my ambition and I often look to someday be the teacher that he is.”

## Humanitarian heart



Dr Chan Soon Keng (centre, seated) with members of the Red Cross NTU Chapter.

As one of the most active student groups on campus, the NTU Red Cross NTU Chapter often holds meetings that stretch into the wee hours of the morning.

Nothing new here, except that student leaders are often joined by their faculty advisor, Dr Chan Soon Keng.

And she has been doing this since she founded the Chapter in 1994.

The lecturer at the Language and Communication Centre actively participates in the Chapter's activities, giving students much-needed guidance, all of which comes on top of her teaching and research commitments.

"We are very lucky to have her as our advisor," said Chapter President Kan Jia Min, a final-year student at the School of Physical and Mathematical Sciences.

"I've heard that other club advisors really don't have the time to provide supervision."

From the conceptualisation of new projects to planning and execution, Dr Chan stays by the side of Chapter members to offer her help and expertise, especially when they run into difficulties.

"To me, this work is a commitment, you cannot just be an advisor in name," said Dr Chan, recipient of the 2012 Nanyang Award for Humanitarian Work.

Under her mentorship, the Red Cross NTU Chapter initiated and organised humanitarian projects such as blood donation drives, home visits, and fund-raising events.

Operation Moving Hearts, the Chapter's first international fund-raising project, was organised to help the 2004 Tsunami

**Operation Moving Hearts,  
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victims, and has since grown into an iconic NTU fund-raising event directed at major international disasters.

The Chapter also won the Singapore Red Cross' Blood Mobile Organizer Gold Medal for 10 consecutive years since 2002. The award recognises organisations which collect over 500 units of blood each year.

Despite the Chapter's achievements over the years, Dr Chan maintains that seeing the spirit of volunteerism grow in students is the most satisfying part of the job.

"Red Cross is not as popular as other clubs and societies in NTU, but the students do a lot of work without reward, and they are just as committed."

"It has been satisfying to see them grow and realise that there is more to life than just enjoyment and study," she said.

## Administrative stalwart

**Deputy Director Mr Chan Weng Hoo, the backbone of HSS administration, clinched the top prize at the inaugural HSS Service Excellence Awards.**

*By Lai Junjie*

It is no exaggeration to say that HSS would fall into chaos without his presence.

Deputy Director of the undergraduate office, Mr Chan Weng Hoo, has been a constant figure around HSS for the past seven years, and has been instrumental in its development.

Originally from NTU's Office of Human Resources, Mr Chan joined HSS in 2005. Upon his arrival, Mr Chan wasted little time in building up the school's administrative infrastructure.

He developed the processes needed to run a school efficiently – in the areas of admission, curriculum planning, course registration, exchange programme, and examinations.

"It is impossible to overestimate his contribution," said Assoc Prof Neil Murphy, Head of the Division of English, and former director of the HSS undergraduate office.

"Weng Hoo has been a main stalwart of the school's administration, since he joined the school."

Besides building the school's 'hardware' aspects, Mr Chan was also one of the driving forces for its 'software' development or service ethos. His rapport with students comes as no surprise since he also serves as a hall fellow in Hall 5.

"In the early days, HSS had to develop new policies on a daily basis, and these had to be done with some sense of effectiveness," said Assoc Prof Kwok Kian Woon, Head of the Division of Sociology and Associate Provost (Student Life).

"Weng Hoo is the anchor administrator we need for HSS, which is a growing community."

Despite the accolades from professors and colleagues, Mr Chan remains modest and makes it a personal point to guide new colleagues.

"I believe in working hard and putting 100%, so that you can gain the respect of your colleagues," he said.

"HSS has transformed and grown tremendously. I will continue to put in the hard work to make HSS a bigger presence in NTU and beyond."



Mr Chan Weng Hoo (right) receives the Managerial Level Award (first prize) from Prof Liu Hong, Chair, HSS.

### RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE

**The HSS Service Excellence Awards recognise outstanding administrative staff. The winners were selected from a poll of faculty and administrative staff. They received the awards from Prof Liu Hong, Chair, HSS, on 26th March at Soiree 2012, the annual faculty and staff dinner.**

#### Managerial level

**1st** Mr Chan Weng Hoo, *Undergraduate Office*

**2nd** Ms Joey Kek, *Division of Economics*

Ms Magdalene Lim, *IT Office*

#### Merit Award

Mr Troy Tan, *Undergraduate Office*

#### Executive level

**1st** Ms Sandy Ong, *Research Office*

**2nd** Mr Chai Cheng San, *IT Office*

**3rd** Mr Shawn Eu, *IT Office*

#### Merit Award

Mr Josh Tan, *IT Office*

Mr Thornton Ng, *IT Office*

## Unsung heroes recognised

### The HSS IT team swept five out of nine HSS Service Excellence Awards up for grabs.

By Lai Junjie

They keep our computer labs operational. They ensure the safety of the invaluable data stored in our servers. They solve IT problems for faculty, staff, and students.

They offer the assurance that our IT infrastructure – the bedrock of all our work – is kept in good conditions.

Such behind-the-scene labour is sometimes slighted or ignored.

But not so for the HSS IT team, who won more than half of the prizes conferred at the inaugural HSS Service Excellence Awards.

“It was a big surprise for us,” said Ms Magdalene Lim, assistant manager of the IT team and second prize winner in the Managerial Level award category.

“We do support work, so we keep quite a low profile. This honour is a morale booster for the team and will encourage them to continue to give their best.”

What is it that makes unassuming men and women into multiple award-winners?

“As a team, we are very open with each other,” said Mr Shawn Eu, IT executive and recipient of the Executive Level Award (third prize).

“No one gets offended when we argue about work matters, because we know that we all have our strengths and weaknesses.”

More importantly, team members place great trust in each other.

“I have a competent team, so I give them a free hand to try out new solutions to problems without strictly following the hierarchy,” said Ms Lim.

Indeed, it is this flexible management style that allows the IT team to react decisively when problems arise.

“We don’t have a lot of red tape, and this lets us go more in-depth with our solutions,” said Mr Eu.

Besides their cordial working relation, IT team members also make it a point to bring a personal touch to their work.

“We may not give the best solutions to problems all the time, but we do our best all the time,” said Mr Chai Cheng San, IT executive and recipient of the Executive Level Award (second prize).

“What’s important is that we treat the people we serve the same way we want to be treated.”

His colleague Mr Josh Tan agreed.

The Merit Award winner added: “When you put your heart into your work, it shows in how you treat others.”



(From left): Mr Thornton Ng, Mr Josh Tan, Mr Shawn Eu, Ms Magdalene Lim, and Mr Chai Cheng San

“I have a competent team, so I give them a free hand to try out new solutions to problems without strictly following the hierarchy.”

Ms Magdalene Lim, assistant manager of the IT team.

# Getting inside Subcultural Theory



Photo: By NTU Corporate Communications Office

**Sociologist Asst Prof Patrick Williams has long-standing, personal and professional interests in youth cultures and subcultures. Having been active in punk, straightedge and death metal since the 1980s, he has been working on youth cultural research in HSS. His findings have culminated in a book he published last year with Polity Press titled *Subcultural Theory: Traditions and Concepts*. Come next January, he will release a new book with Routledge titled *Understanding Society through Popular Music*. Horizon caught up with him and posed the following questions:**

### **What are the different ways of understanding subcultures and their related phenomena?**

At the basic level there are two ways – from the outside and from the inside. Most people take a from-the-outside approach, seeing subcultural individuals as anything from humorously odd to attention-seeking to psychologically disturbed. In general, the outsider perspective sees subcultures as abnormal. I've always worked from-the-inside perspective. This is the more important perspective in my opinion because it provides insight into how subcultural individuals experience everyday life. Only when you stand in another's shoes, so to speak, can you understand how they see things and connect with them in a meaningful way.

### **What are the challenges faced in understanding subcultures?**

One challenge has to do with recognising the academic perspective we bring to our research. So a person trained as a critical theorist or neo-Marxist will see subcultures very differently from someone trained in social psychology or community studies. In addition, there are challenges surrounding how subcultures interact with nation,



class, geography, and so on. There are a lot of subcultures that emerged decades ago in North America and Europe that are quite popular around the world today, at least in terms of music and style, like punk, goth, and metal. But just because people follow the same stylistic trends does not mean their cultures are the same. Singaporeans or Indonesians who identify as punks, for example, experience that subculture quite differently in 2012 than people who called themselves punk in the UK in 1977. And yet we see that mainstream reaction toward subcultures continues to be significant.

### **How does 'ethnicity' and 'gender' link up with this topic area?**

Well actually, we don't need such a drastic comparison. Even Singaporeans will experience a particular subculture differently based on their ethnicity or gender, where they live and what school they attend, as well as their personal peer networks. The challenge is to not make too many assumptions, but to work to understand a particular "idioculture" (which is a local instantiation of the larger subculture) from the perspective of these people.

### **Why is 'style' an important concept in subcultural theory?**

Style is simultaneously a personal and social process. On the personal side, individuals often commit a lot of time and effort to presenting themselves to others. The act of developing and then committing to a style is something that many subculturalists do not take lightly. Style is also social because it is the most obvious form of expressing one's affiliation to a subculture. So style speaks for the individual and the group at the same time. But style is also superficial; style speaks, but there is often a disconnection between the intended and interpreted meanings.

### **Does 'resistance' fit into this?**

Yes it does, primarily because many subculturalists use style as a form of explicit resistance to mainstream or dominant cultural trends. Singaporean culture does not tend to take well to long hair on males or tattoos on anyone. Other countries have or had similar cultures. People who take up non-normative styles often do so as a way of establishing some kind of individuality in the face of what they see as a too-conservative or repressive system. The problem now is that subcultural

styles are well-known and easily purchased, so a lot of the power of resistance has leaked out. Seeing a teenager with blue hair or a nose ring is hardly shocking these days.



Photo: By Clipimage

### **Would you say that someone with bleached hair and a nose ring is 'inauthentic'?**

Authenticity has been a core concern of mine for a long time now. I originally came to recognise its importance when studying straightedge subculture a decade ago. At that time, I was looking at the impact of the internet on subcultural participation and found a lot of contention among straightedge youths based on whether their subcultural participation was primarily offline



or online. The more traditional, music-based straightedgers considered those who learned about the subculture online to be inauthentic, while the “netedgers” (as I called them) saw themselves as highly committed to subcultural norms and values. Authenticity was measured differently by different groups of participants. So to answer your question, bleached hair and nose rings are not authentic or inauthentic. We need to look at the meanings those things hold for the people involved and then relate those meanings to their subcultural lives.

### What else would you want to emphasise to *Horizon* readers?

Going back to the literature from the 1960s and 70s when writing *Subcultural Theory*, I found one particular statement that struck a chord with me because it summed up my vision for the book, which was to view society as a problem for the subculturalist rather than the other way around. The study of youth subcultures is important for many kids out there who find their voices ignored by adults and peers who think they know best. The book represents my attempt to share that perspective with as many mainstream people as who care to read it.



Photo: By Milesgehmn

## Journal Articles

### Explaining the Difference of Work Attitudes between Public and Nonprofit Managers: The Views of Rule Constraints and Motivation Styles

By Asst Prof Chen Chung-An, *Politics & Public Administration Group*

*American Review of Public Administration*, 2012, Vol 42, Issue 4, Pages 437 – 460

Work attitudes (e.g., job satisfaction, job involvement, organizational commitment, etc.) have long been important indicators for managers and researchers in evaluating whether one is motivated to work. Existing empirical studies tend to suggest that public managers are less likely to exhibit positive work attitudes as compared with their private sector peers. However, literature about the comparison of work attitudes between public and nonprofit managers is scant. The current study addresses this topic. By using the National Administrative Studies Project-III (NASP-III) survey data, the author found that nonprofit managers are more likely than public managers to show positive work attitudes. This attitudinal difference, based on the results of mediation tests, originates from two important reasons. First, higher levels of rule constraints (i.e., red tape and personnel flexibility) in the public sector undermine managers' work attitudes. Second, individuals attracted to work in the public sector have stronger extrinsic motivation, stronger amotivation, and weaker intrinsic motivation. These motivation styles compromise their work attitudes.

### An Analysis of Income Inequality, Social Security, and Competitiveness: An Essay on Dr Goh Keng Swee's Contributions to Singapore's Economic Strategy.

By Prof Chew Soon Beng, and Dr Rosalind Chew, *Division of Economics*

*Singapore Economic Review*, 2012, Vol 57, Issue 1

Dr Goh Keng Swee has been credited as being the social and economic architect of Singapore. In his 25 years of government service, he served in a wide range of ministerial appointments, including Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Minister of Defence and Minister of Education. This paper discusses a specific aspect of his contributions to Singapore's economic strategy, namely that of reducing income inequality without compromising competitiveness.

### Entrepreneurship, Professionalism, Leadership: A Framework and Measure for Understanding Boundaryless Careers

By Assoc Prof Ho Moon-Ho Ringo, and Asst Prof Olwen Bedford, *Division of Psychology*

*Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 2012, Vol 81, Issue 1, Pages 73 – 88

We propose a person-centered framework for conceptualizing subjective careers in an increasingly boundaryless work

context. Specifically, we argue that entrepreneurship, professionalism, and leadership (EPL) can serve as three key dimensions of subjective career space. We relate this framework to earlier macro-level national and organizational career models proposed by Kanter (1989) and Schein (1978). Our empirical study involving 10,326 Singaporean university students demonstrated that entrepreneurial, professional, and leadership career aspirations (including motivations, efficacies, and intentions) can be measured independently, that these career dimensions are independent of vocational interests, and that they are to some degree viewed as competing career alternatives. We also show that EPL motivation profiles can operationalize the boundaryless and protean career concepts. Individuals concurrently high in entrepreneurial, professional, and leadership career motivations, and those high in entrepreneurial and leadership motivations are highest in boundaryless and self-directed career attitudes, while those primarily motivated for professional careers hold the most traditional career attitudes. We conclude by discussing the potential of the framework for understanding human resource issues at organizational and national levels and for enhancing the study of entrepreneurship, professionalism, and leadership.

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### **Transnational Chinese Sphere in Singapore: Dynamics, Transformations and Characteristics**

*By Prof Liu Hong, History Programme*

*Journal of Current Chinese Affairs, July 2012,  
Vol 41, Issue 2, Pages 37 – 60*

Based upon an empirical analysis of Singaporean Chinese's intriguing and changing linkages with China over the past half century, this paper suggests that multi-layered interactions between the Chinese diaspora and the homeland have led to the formulation of an emerging transnational Chinese social sphere, which has three main characteristics: First, it is a space for communication by ethnic Chinese abroad with their hometown/ homeland through steady and extensive flows of people, ideas, goods and capital that transcend the nation-state borders, although states also play an important role in shaping the nature and characteristics of these flows. Second, this transnational social sphere constitutes a dynamic interface between economy, politics and culture, which has contributed to creating a collective diasporic identity as well as social and business networks. Third, the key institutional mechanism of the transnational social sphere is various types of Chinese organizations – ranging from hometown associations to professional organizations – which serve as integral components of Chinese social and business networks.

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### **Old Philosophy, New Movement: The Rise of the Islamic Ecological Paradigm in the Discourse of Environmentalism.**

*By Asst Prof Saidul Islam, Division of Sociology*

*Nature and Culture, 2012,  
Vol 7, Issue 1, Pages 72 – 94*

Contesting the U.S.-centric bias of modern environmentalism, this essay uncovers an “old” paradigm of environmentalism found in the medieval Islamic tradition,

the Islamic Ecological Paradigm (IEP) – which, in many respects, is tantamount to many ideologies of modern environmentalism. According to IEP, human beings are a part of, and not above, nature, and have the responsibility to preserve nature. Many paradigms of modern environmentalism have largely embraced this ideology, though they do not necessarily trace their origin to IEP. This essay also analyzes Muslim environmental activism today by focusing on how its proponents are inspired by modern environmentalism while grounding their activism in IEP. Despite substantial variance and occasional tension, the author argues that both modern environmentalism and IEP can form an ontological alliance, an alliance that is of paramount importance to addressing environmental problems that transcend physical and cultural borders.

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### **Sticks and Stones Will Break My Bones but Failure Feedback May Not Hurt Me: Gender Differences in the Relationship Between Achievement Motive, Coping Strategies, and Environmental Mastery.**

*By Asst Prof Joyce Pang Shu Min, Division of Psychology*

*Educational Psychology, 2012,  
Vol 32, Issue 3, Pages 373 – 388*

This study investigates the processes through which achievement motivation guides the selection of coping strategies which in turn affects environmental mastery post-failure feedback. Seventy-six college students received failure feedback after completing a professional aptitude test. Findings showed that gender moderated the relationship between Hope of Success (HS) and planful problem-solving coping but not between HS and escape-avoidance coping. No moderated mediation was found when HS was used to predict environmental mastery with gender as the moderator and either planful problem-solving or escape-avoidance coping as the mediator. Simple mediation analyses showed that planful problem-solving did not mediate the relationship between HS and environmental mastery. Instead, higher scores on HS predicted lower use of escape-avoidance coping which in turn predicted higher environmental mastery. Implications for the role of feedback in educational settings are discussed.

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### **Alternative Technical Efficiency Measures: Skew, Bias and Scale**

*By Asst Prof Qu Feng, Division of Economics*

*Journal of Applied Econometrics, 2012,  
Vol 27, Issue 2, Pages 253 – 268*

In the fixed-effects stochastic frontier model an efficiency measure relative to the best firm in the sample is universally employed. This paper considers a new measure relative to the worst firm in the sample. We find that estimates of this measure have smaller bias than those of the traditional measure when the sample consists of many firms near the efficient frontier. Moreover, a two-sided measure relative to both the best and the worst firms is proposed. Simulations suggest that the new measures may be preferred depending on the skewness of the inefficiency distribution and the scale of efficiency differences.

## Selected Recent Publications

### **Focused But Fixed: The Impact of Expectation of External Rewards on Inhibitory Control and Flexibility in Preschoolers**

*Asst Prof Qu Li, Division of Psychology*  
Emotion, forthcoming 2012

Promise of rewards has been widely used in controlling preschoolers' behaviors. The current study investigated how the expectation of receiving an external reward may influence preschoolers' executive function. Four- to five-year-old Singaporean children were randomly assigned to reward-informed and reward-uninformed conditions. Results showed that compared with those in the reward-uninformed condition, although performing the same on the control tasks and reporting similar motivation and mood states before being told about the reward, the children in the reward-informed condition performed better on the Day/Night Stroop (Experiment 1, N = 41) but worse on the Flexible Item Selection Test (Experiment 2, N = 43). These findings suggest that the expectation of receiving an external reward can influence preschoolers' behavioral control.

### **Social Reproduction and the Limits of a Neoliberal Approach: The Case of Singapore**

*By Asst Prof Sun Hsiao-Li Shirley, Division of Sociology*  
Citizenship Studies, 2012,  
Vol 16, Issue 2, Pages 223 – 240

Should citizenship status confer social rights independent of an individual's economic contribution? This study approaches this question through looking at social settings in which answers are contested. Specifically, it documents and analyzes qualitative semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews with 221 Singaporean citizens. As such, it complements existing critical policy studies on shifting conceptualizations of social citizenship and the rise of neoliberal governance. Data analysis illustrates interviewees' perceptions and lived experience of neoliberal, or 'market citizenship', bias in state population policy. Interviewees, moreover, find existing pronatalist incentives helpful but insufficient, largely because they see a decision to have more children as a long-term commitment requiring continual investment. They call for more generous, sustained, and universal state provisions for education and health, as well as homemaker allowances, which would be closer to feminist and classical formulations of citizenship-as-social rights.

### **Ritual in the Xunzi: A Change of the Heart/Mind**

*By Dr Sung Hiu Chuk Winnie, Philosophy Group*  
Sophia: International Journal for Philosophy of Religion,  
Metaphysical Theology and Ethics, 2012,  
Vol 51, Issue 2, Pages 211 – 226

This article seeks to advance discussion of Xunzi's view of ritual by examining the problem ritual treats and the way in which it targets the problem. I argue that the root of the

problem is the natural inclination of the heart/mind to be concerned only with self-interest. The reason ritual works is that, on the one hand, it requires one to disregard concern for self-interest and observe ethical standards and, on the other, it allows one to express feelings in an ethically appropriate way. The ideal character shaped by ritual is one of respect in dealing with affairs and people; the ideal effect of ritual on the person is a sense of ease and security. Based on these conclusions, I will flesh out an implicit assumption Xunzi might have adopted about a pattern in human psychological constitution so as to further our understanding of Xunzi's moral psychology.

### **Partnering with Universities: A Good Choice for New Nanotechnology-based Firms?**

*By Asst Prof Wang Jue, Politics & Public Administration Group*  
Small Business Economics, 2012,  
Vol 38, Issue 2, Pages 197 – 215

The role of universities in supporting economic development has been explored in studies emphasizing the mechanisms of technology transfer and knowledge spillover. However, in addition to these forms of intellectual capital, university scientists bring other resources into research collaboration and contribute to firm partnerships in both direct and indirect ways. This paper develops the concept of resource spillover, which captures the various ways in which firms can benefit from collaborations with university scientists. The study categorizes the resources possessed by university scientists into intellectual capital, social capital, and positional capital, and tests the impact of each on the performance of firms. Using a sample of new nanotechnology-based firms in the USA, the study finds that the benefits to firms from university scientist research collaboration include enhancements to perceived research capacity and technology potential, which in turn may increase chances of securing external funding.

### **Regulatory Models and Entrepreneurial Growth: Evidence from China's Transition Economy**

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This study examines which model of regulatory policy – the developmental state model or the liberal state model – is more conducive to entrepreneurial growth, particularly under severe market failure and other institutional deficiencies. China's transition economy provides an appropriate and unique setting to examine the effects of the two models because it has experimented with both. Analyzing both province-level and firm-level data from China, I find that, in spite of unfavorable national regulatory policies, private entrepreneurship has grown rapidly in the early stages of the reform. This entrepreneurial growth cannot be attributed to the adoption of the local developmental state model among some regions. Instead, such growth may be partially explained by the development of a local liberal regulatory environment induced by Chinese-style market-preserving federalism. The results inform both the theoretical debate between the two models and entrepreneurial growth in transition and developing economies.