DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
School of Humanities · The University of Hong Kong

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PROGRAMME

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Time:	Event:	Panel:	Moderator:	Presenter / Title:
08:30 – 09:00	**Registration**			
09:00 – 09:15	**Opening remarks (Room 4.36)**		David SAUNDERS	Prof John CARROLL, Postgraduate Coordinator.
09:15 – 11:00	**Plenary Session 1 (Room 4.36)**	**Hong Kong History**	Chi Chi HUANG	Bobby TAM, The University of Hong Kong, 'Early colonial state intervention in Chinese death practices in Hong Kong (1856-1880).' Amelia ALLSOP, King's College London, 'Colonial Responses to Chinese and Jewish Refugees in Hong Kong, 1937 – 1941.' Maxime DECAUDIN, University Paris-Sorbonne, 'Hong Kong's nature: landscape transformations and their political, cultural and scientific implications during early colonization (1841-1941).' Wilson WONG, Baptist University, 'Foodiescape in Hong Kong: Birth and Aftermath from 1970-2015.'
11:00 – 11:15	**Coffee break**			
11:15 – 13:30	**Plenary Session 2 (Room 4.36)**	**Technology, Movement and Society**	Beatrice CHONG	Rustam KHAN, The University of Hong Kong, 'Rebuilding the Soviet Far East: the politics of industry and infrastructure after WOII.' Youjia LI, Northwestern University, 'The Flowing Chō: Defining Edo's Space through Urban Transportation.' Xi MA, The University of Melbourne, 'Notes from Underground: Interpreting Miners' Body, Workplace, and Social Boundaries in Modern China.'

				Reed CHERVIN, The University of Hong Kong, 'Himalayan Chess: India's Frontier Policies and the Sino-Indian Border Conflict.'
13:30 – 14:30	**Lunch (Room 10.66)**			
14:30 – 16:00	**Parallel Sessions**			
	Parallel Session A (Room 4.34)	**State Power**	Reed CHERVIN	Nelson SO, The University of Oxford, 'The making of a Regional Order: The Chinese Nationalists and the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis.' David SAUNDERS, The University of Hong Kong, 'Murder at Siang Moia; Amok at Lahad Dato: Colonial responses to violence and the laying down of authority in North Borneo.' Alvita AKIBOH, Northwestern University, 'Undoing Americanization: the Japanese Occupation of the U.S. Pacific.' Federico PACHETTI, The University of Hong Kong, 'The Origins of Interdependence: U.S.-China Economic Relations, 1979-80.'
	Parallel Session B (Room 4.36)	**Culture and Identity**	Bobby TAM	Chi Chi HUANG, The University of Hong Kong, 'Roughing it in the Far East: Portrayals of Life and Leisure in Colonial Hong Kong.' Anisha BHAT, Northwestern University, 'A Social History of Africans in Early Modern India: Race, Power and Love in the Making of an Afro-Deccani Social Identity, c. 1500-1700.'

				Raphael NGAI, The University of Hong Kong, 'A Struggle against Rubbish and Waste: Japanese Attempts to Clean Hong Kong, 1941-45.' Sonia RANDHAWA, The University of Melbourne, 'Male politics and female journalists: The impact of Umno's hegemony on the women's pages and their journalists of Berita Harian and Utusan Malaysia (1988-1998).'
16:00 – 16:15	**Afternoon Coffee**			
16:15 – 18:00	**Plenary Session 3 (Room 4.36)**	**Oceans and the Environment**	Rustam KHAN	Beatrice CHONG, The University of Hong Kong, 'American aid to Japan following the 3.11 Disaster.' Kevin BAKER, Northwestern University, 'Living with Limits: Asian Growth, the Club of Rome and the Birth of Sustainable Development.' Nathan KWAN, The University of Hong Kong / King's College London, 'Hong Kong Hydrarchy: the British and Qing Maritime State in the Seas around Hong Kong, 1841-1899.' Maurits MEERWIJK, The University of Hong Kong, 'A Pandemic of Local Concern: Dengue in Pamanukan.'
18:00 – 18:30	**Closing Remarks (Room 4.36)**			Prof Haydon CHERRY, Northwestern University

1. Bobby TAM, The University of Hong Kong

'Early colonial state intervention in Chinese death practices in Hong Kong (1856-1880).'

This paper discusses the colonial state's early interventions into death practices of the Chinese and the resulting paradoxes. These early interventions included regulations on burial practices and sites since 1856 and the introduction of a death registration system in 1872. However, while regulating Chinese burial practices and tracking mortality figures, the colonial state failed to provide official cemeteries to the Chinese until the 1870s and largely left the process of death management to unofficial Chinese institutions. These state regulations also created fear within the Chinese population and many of them remained uncooperative towards these regulations.

As the Chinese were separated from the colonial system of death management, a colonial 'Orientalist' discourse on Chinese death practices was developed and reinforced by the colonizers. This discourse became increasingly negative as the European colonists had growing anxiety towards the uncooperativeness of the Chinese. Chinese death practices were often placed against Western modernity. The practices were viewed as unsanitary, superstitious and lacking affections in contrast to Europeans' modern sanitation, Western medicine and emotional concerns for the dead.

2. Amelia ALLSOP, King's College London

'Colonial Responses to Chinese and Jewish Refugees in Hong Kong, 1937 – 1941'

According to the UNHCR, we are now witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record with an unprecedented 65.3 million people around the world forced from home. Today's refugee crises are not a modern phenomenon. As noted by historian Peter Gatrell, historical perspective on refugees can give a 'fresh and unsettling perspective on issues of contemporary concern'.

This paper looks to the plight of two refugee groups during Hong Kong's multifaceted refugee crisis of the 1930s. It will examine Hong Kong as a place of transit following large-scale population displacement caused by the Sino-Japanese War in China and the rise of Nazism in Europe, and consider colonial immigration control for German and Austrian Jewish refugees (aliens / refugees) and Chinese refugees from Mainland China (squatters / refugees). The paper will attempt to understand the impetus for changes to Hong Kong's immigration law in 1940 and compare the ways in which categories of race and class, as well as questions surrounding identity documents, loyalty and hygiene, informed immigration policy and practice for these two groups. In doing so it will attempt to draw conclusions on the universality of the refugee experience during an era of hardening immigration restriction around the globe.

3. Maxime DECAUDIN, University Paris-Sorbonne

'Hong Kong's nature: landscape transformations and their political, cultural and scientific implications during early colonization (1841-1941)'

Thought today as an ecological asset threatened by urban development, "nature" is in fact constructed and a consequence of colonization. Indeed, before its possession by the British, the landscapes of Hong Kong presented typical features of southern Chinese coastal settlements following the prescriptions of Feng Shui. This paper narrates three type of environmental transformations (quarrying and reclamation, water drainage and supply infrastructure and afforestation) before investigating their political, cultural and scientific implications. In terms of politics, nature was used to legitimize colonial power as it was misused by the Chinese. Landscapes were also a point of cultural encounter, where each side projected its own references onto the foreign territory. And unstable sciences prescribed various landscape manipulations according to their development but also helped objectified nature legitimizing colonization and the European civilizing mission. This paper aims at contributing to two debates. First, contrasting with most colonial settings, Hong Kong landscapes are a hybrid production rather than a mere imposition of the European model onto the colonized population. Second, differing from today's ecological understanding of nature and its apparent incompatibility with urban development, the improvement of nature in the second half of the nineteenth century was part of the development of the city where natural and urban landscapes were co-produced.

4. Wilson WONG, Baptist University

'Foodiescape in Hong Kong: Birth and Aftermath from 1970-2015'

This paper seeks to flesh out the entanglements with the rise of foodies in Hong Kong from a historical perspective. Considering the impact of foodies in affecting our consumption habits and mode of journalism, I seek to trace what and how foodies are being constructed as such with focuses on the changing mode of storytelling, including some primary media texts. This helps to unveil the missing link between what Hong Kong foodies are specifically referring and their constructions in Hong Kong foodscape in current literature. And accordingly, I shall divide my study into four parts: 1970-1990, 1991-2000, 2001-2009 and 2010-2015 to examine the research material, in which newspapers, magazines television broadcasting, websites and social media platforms will be examined in the above stages. At the end of my paper, I attempt to theorize foodies as a historical phenomenon that is fluid and rely much on the overlapping media- and cultural scapes to be remediated, followed by a critique to question whether foodies per se exist or not.

5. Rustam KHAN, The University of Hong Kong

'Rebuilding the Soviet Far East: the politics of industry and infrastructure after WWII'

Scholars who write about the Soviet Far East after WWII, often focus on high-end politics, such as Soviet-Japanese relations or the dawning the Cold War. Also, the immediate postwar period is usually squeezed between the Soviet victory over Japan and Stalin's death in 1953. Thus, both time and space in locations as the Maritime Region (*Primorskii Krai*) are frozen. This presentation enquires into various efforts carried out by the local government to develop the region after 1945. It will highlight the politics of creating industrial, mining and infrastructural projects, and how they had broader effects on regional and Soviet politics. This presentation also deals with a historic aspect of the region that has yet to receive a thorough academic inquiry: the role of Japanese prisoners of war (POWs) as an economic force in rebuilding the Soviet state.

A preliminary analysis of Russian published sources reveals that these POWs were not "mere afterthoughts of the war", and that the Soviet government dealt with a wide number issues, such as securing their survival and its dependence on these POWs as a powerful workforce. In a larger framework, this presentation will contribute to our understanding of Soviet central-local tensions and Soviet-Japanese relations from a local perspective.

6. Youjia LI, Northwestern University

'The Flowing Chō: Defining Edo's Space through Urban Transportation'

This paper traces the ox-masters in the "cow and cart" neighborhood of Takanawa in Edo period and how their experiences help to reinterpret the concept of the Edo "chō." Usually translated as "neighborhood" or "block," the chō was a gated space which contained a hierarchically arranged community, and was characterized by Japanese scholars as basic unit inside of which social relations transformed. But this paper argues that the chō was not a fixed spatial unit. Takanawa, a neighborhood that was originally situated on the sparsely populated periphery of Edo gradually moved across Edo – literally and metaphorically. As prints and maps placed the district closer and closer to the heart of the city, the chō's ox-masters were also moving their business (and affiliated craftsmen and laborers) into the heart of Edo, and establishing new spaces associated with their name. It undermined the Shogunal urban planning projects, and also actively shaped the rising commoner economy. At the end of the period, when the treaty port of Yokohama became a more vital economic center than the old shogun's capital, the ox-cart masters also turned the chō's orientation, and its business, back toward the southwest.

7. Xi MA, The University of Melbourne

'Notes from Underground: Interpreting Miners' Body, Workplace, and Social Boundaries in Modern China.'

Due to the spatial, social, and bodily boundaries between miners and other groups of people, in particular intellectuals, the miner's body and miners' underground workplace were neglected in textual and visual cultures of Qing China before the nineteenth century. Both, however, began to be realized in the late Qing dynasty when the technology of representation and the understanding of mining underwent a transition, one that gathered pace in the twentieth century. This paper, through an examination of the textual and visual representations of the miners' body and working space from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries, attempts to interpret this transition within the context of the ascending modern epistemology of technology and industry, and the identity crisis among Chinese intellectuals. I will argue that the discovery of the miners' body was inseparable from the underground space around, which was made visible and sensible by new mining technologies that presumably supported a modern nation; at the same time, the bodily experience that twentieth-century intellectuals gained from underground served to negotiate their identity and miners' social status in revolutionary and nationalist discourses as they strategically performed as miners, descended into mining pits, and wrote about their experience for the public.

8. Reed CHERVIN, The University of Hong Kong

'Himalayan Chess: India's Frontier Policies and the Sino-Indian Border Conflict'

Circa 1959, both the Indian military and Ministry of External Affairs grew increasingly concerned about the situation at the Tibetan border, including the "virtually undefended frontiers of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan." Chinese overtures toward the Himalayan Kingdoms in tandem with troop movements, spy activities, and road building in the region threatened India's sphere of influence and national security. The Indian government therefore implemented policies to bolster its control over the frontier by countering Chinese propaganda, restricting the movements of foreigners, providing inducements to the Himalayan Kingdoms, and increasing its military presence. After India's humiliating defeat in the 1962 Sino-Indian War revealed the shortcomings of these policies, the securitization of its peripheries became a national obsession.

9. Nelson SO, The University of Oxford

'The making of a Regional Order: The Chinese Nationalists and the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis'

This paper discusses the decision-making process of the statesmen of the Republic of China (ROC, or the Chinese Nationalists) during the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis.

Previous historiography focuses mainly on the great power politics of the Crisis, and the causes of its outbreak. Although certain studies touch upon the role of the Chinese Nationalists, very few examines the way in which they shaped the course of developments.

This paper seeks to address the political and diplomatic importance of the ROC during the crisis by looking at the perception, intention, and actions of the Chinese Nationalists. It argues that the ROC was an active agent in defending against the assaults by Beijing and in protecting the status quo. Driven by the fear that a show of weakness or inaction might bring about demoralisation, if not a loss of legitimacy, the ROC insisted on holding firm its offshore islands (Quemoy and Matsu), and preserving its national mission of anti-Communism. Eventually they put forth their vision of the political regional order in the Joint Communique issued by Chiang Kai-shek of the ROC, and John F. Dulles of the United States, which recognised the territories of the ROC, together with its raison d'être.

10. David SAUNDERS, The University of Hong Kong

'Murder at Siang Moia; Amok at Lahad Dato: Colonial responses to violence and the laying down of authority in North Borneo.'

Colonial governance in late-colonial North Borneo was chiefly concerned with the laying down of authority and the consolidation of British rule. Legacies of anti-colonial violence and myriad armed rebellions, from the early days of colonial incursion in the late nineteenth century, had set a precedent of vulnerability and reinforced perceptions of colonial weaknesses. This was especially the case considering the administrative and geographic disconnect between the territory's urban zones and the rural hinterlands. Combined with this perceived necessity to sure-up colonial rule was a fixation with violence and colonial exotica, which characterised methods of governance well into the decolonisation era in the 1950s and 1960s.

In a world where violence was utilised as a technology of rule—even becoming associated with colonial leisure pursuits—the fears of all-out indigenous insurrection and seemingly random acts of violence served to characterise late-colonial North Borneo as a raw frontier of empire; functionally and infrastructurally lagging behind other colonies. This paper will explore two incidents of mass-violence in 1916 and 1917, and discuss how they shaped and reflected the colonial state and its society as it coursed towards greater assimilation and modernity. Drawing on a range of sources, this paper will shed light on hitherto unmentioned and forgotten events in Southeast Asian history.

11. Alvita AKIBOH, Northwestern University

'Undoing Americanization: the Japanese Occupation of the U.S. Pacific'

During the first half of the twentieth century, the United States launched an aggressive Americanization campaign in its new colonial empire. Throughout the Pacific, people began saluting the American flag and engaging with U.S. national symbols through material objects like stamps and currency. Through these items, U.S. colonial officials encouraged colonial subjects in Southeast Asia and the Pacific to imagine themselves as part of the American nation.

During World War II, the Japanese sought to undo decades of Americanization, instead proclaiming "Asia for the Asiatics!" As the Japanese and U.S. empires battled for the Pacific, the most banal items—flags, stamps, and currency—became a crucial part of the war effort on both sides. Under Japanese occupation, the Rising Sun replaced the Stars and Stripes. The use of U.S. currency and stamps became a crime punishable by death. Both countries engaged in a long campaign of overprinting stamps and money with propaganda aimed at winning colonial subjects' hearts and minds. This paper examines how these changes in material culture during and after the Japanese occupation of U.S. Pacific territories affected how people living the U.S. colonial empire imagined themselves in relation to the American nation.

12. Federico PACHETTI, The University of Hong Kong

'The Origins of Interdependence: U.S.-China Economic Relations, 1979-80'

The proposed paper examines the economic relationship of the United States and the People's Republic of China's (PRC) during the second half of the Carter Administration, 1979-80. The analysis deals with Washington's role in assisting China in its pursuit of domestic economic reforms as well as Beijing's efforts to integrate into the post-Bretton Woods economic system that was its ascendency in the late 1970s. The convergence and consequences of these two significant trends of the late 1970s – global economic changes and the onset of China's reform era – have received little scholarly attention to date.

In the wake of achieving full diplomatic relations in January 1979, the anti-Soviet component that had played a key role in drawing Washington and Beijing together began to decrease in importance. For the two nations, geopolitics took a back seat to the opportunities afforded by global economic developments. Hence, this paper examines in depth the full story of the role played by the US government to encourage Beijing to abandon socialism and central planning and embrace market-oriented "Capitalism with Chinese characteristics." Indeed, while the word *globalization* remained unfamiliar at the time (becoming commonplace only in the 1990s), it was during these years that the Chinese and American economies started a process of progressive economic interdependence that soon would become irreversible.

This paper draws on records held at US Presidential Libraries.

13. Chi Chi HUANG, The University of Hong Kong

'Roughing it in the Far East: Portrayals of Life and Leisure in Colonial Hong Kong'

This paper looks at portrayals of European life in Hong Kong during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The paper draws from a wide range of sources, (namely newspaper, magazines, novels, and travel journals), produced by Britons and circulated in British popular cultures. Histories of colonial Hong Kong have often focused on the mercantile interests, legal infrastructure, and racial politics. This paper argues that the colony was often perceived as a site of leisure and opportunity for Britons. While there were certain hardships, stemming predominantly from the tropical weather, colonial life here was one of ease. As Hong Kong became increasingly developed as a modern city, there was also an emphasis in British accounts on the growing social and physical infrastructure for sports, clubs, and other leisurely pursuits. These activities and arenas replicated British social and cultural middle class lifestyles, but at times were even imagined as being more extravagant than life at home. Furthermore, life in Hong Kong was imagined as one of opportunities, be it one of mercantile endeavours or exotic adventures. Significantly, leisure and opportunities in Hong Kong were open to both men and women, albeit there were more avenues for masculine leisure.

14. Anisha BHAT, Northwestern University

'A Social History of Africans in Early Modern India: Race, Power and Love in the Making of an Afro-Deccani Social Identity, c. 1500-1700'

Historical narratives of the Siddi (Africans in early modern India) focus almost exclusively on their meteoric rise from the status of military slaves to powerful military commanders and independent rulers. Though these narratives highlight the military valor of a marginalized group, they focus excessively on traditionally masculine themes. They ignore the complex networks of social relationships forged by Siddi men and women that enabled pathways to political power. Consequently, this paper will take as its central focus Siddi families and domestic lives in the Deccan from roughly 1500-1700. This paper will argue that the domain of love (familial, romantic, sexual, marital) functioned through ethnic and political referents for both Siddi men and women. Through loving bonds and sexual liaisons, the Siddi both strengthened a sense of East African ethnic solidarity in the region via political patronage, and integrated Siddi experience into a broader regional Deccani identity. The aim is not to reduce Siddi love to the status of political calculations, but to show how the affective experience of love and sexuality was itself a way of grappling with the social constraints and power dynamics of the Deccan in order to carve a niche for Africans in early modern India.

15. Raphael NGAI, The University of Hong Kong

'A Struggle against Rubbish and Waste: Japanese Attempts to Clean Hong Kong, 1941-45'

This paper surveys the sanitary problems in Hong Kong during the Japanese occupation (1941-45). It looks into how the Japanese occupation government responded to these challenges and the reactions of Hong Kong citizens.

Facing a terrible hygienic environment in Hong Kong, the Japanese authorities carried out several measures to clean the city and prevent the outbreak of epidemic diseases. These measures included organizing regular cleansing campaigns, extermination of flies and rats, collecting night-soil, clearing corpses, gathering rubbish in dump areas, forbidding hawkers' activities, reminding the public on matters related to personal hygiene, and imposing compulsory vaccination programmes. I will discuss the definition of 'rubbish' at the time of war; for example, quite a large number of books and papers were disposed on the streets or in markets. These issues will help evaluate the cleanliness and living conditions of Japanese-occupied Hong Kong, understand the hardship of ordinary citizens in surviving a war and the relationship between war and health.

16. Sonia **RANDHAWA,** The University of Melbourne

'Male politics and female journalists: The impact of Umno's hegemony on the women's pages and their journalists of Berita Harian and Utusan Malaysia (1988-1998)'

For most of the 1990s, Malaysian politics was dominated by not only the ruling coalition Barisan Nasional, and its lead member the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), but also by the vision of its charismatic Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad. This political vision was based on the ascendancy of the neoliberal Malay male, the Melayu Baru. Dissent during this time was rare, but the persistence of calls for change since the Reformasi movement of 1998 indicate that deep shifts undermining UMNO's hegemony were taking place. This paper analyses one aspect of those shifts and how they affected journalists who were simultaneously part of the power structure, working for media organisations affiliated with the UMNO, while being at the margins of that power structure. Combining the results from interviews and critical discourse analysis of relevant articles, the paper argues that the politics within the ruling coalition had a direct impact on the freedom of the women's page journalists to create spaces that challenged the hegemonic construction of the 'Malay women', with implications for the ways in which progressive social movements can work with semi-democratic institutions to create change.

17. Beatrice CHONG, The University of Hong Kong

'American aid to Japan following the 3.11 Disaster'

This paper analyses American humanitarian aid to Japan following the 3.11 Disaster, including what were the motivations for America to give, who were involved in giving and how they gave. It also looks at characteristics of the contribution made by different parties of the country.

The magnitude 9.0 earthquake occurred on 11 March 2011 is the largest earthquake ever to hit Japan as well as the fourth most powerful earthquake in the world since modern record-keeping began. The United States gave the largest amount of overseas disaster aid to Japan. It is also the largest source of private donations to Japan after the disaster. Givers included various agencies of the government to members of the general public, businesses to non-governmental organizations.

This paper explores the factors behind why the United States gave so much humanitarian aid to Japan, the world's third largest economy, after the 3.11 Disaster. Although individuals often have their personal reasons to give, there is an important reason for the United States to give so much to Japan as a country - Japan matters for America. Even though Japan is a highly developed country that may not need foreign assistance, the Americans believed that they should contribute to the relief effort to show their presence. Although the giving of the American citizens was more like an emotional behaviour, the American government's giving was calculating.

18. Kevin BAKER, Northwestern University

'Living with Limits: Asian Growth, the Club of Rome and the Birth of Sustainable Development'

At a press conference held at the Smithsonian Institution in 1972, an interdisciplinary team of researchers from one of the world's most prestigious scientific institutions predicted the end of industrial civilization. If current trends in population and economic growth continued, they argued, pollution and the depletion of natural resources would cause billions to die of starvation and environmentally induced illnesses by the middle of the 21st century. The MIT team behind the study, led by Donella and Dennis Meadows, published their results as *The Limits to Growth,* a book which sold over 12 million copies worldwide and was translated into nearly 40 languages. The book's harrowing predictions about the consequences of economic and population growth sparked a global debate. This controversy was especially acute in Asia, where population growth and resource scarcity were already on the political agenda. This paper will focus on the tension between the no-growth message of *Limits* and the development aspirations of countries in Asia. Because of these debates, I argue, intellectuals developed a notion of "sustainable development," providing a way to reconcile development with ecological concerns.

19. Nathan KWAN, The University of Hong Kong / King's College London

<u>'Hong Kong Hydrarchy: the British and Qing Maritime State in the Seas around Hong Kong, 1841-1899'</u>

The British colonisation of Hong Kong represented an intrusion into seas hitherto principally under Chinese control. The British were quick to attempt to establish their sovereignty over the island and inhabitants of Hong Kong and to project that power seawards through what Linebaugh and Rediker deem 'imperial hydrarchy' or the maritime state. Having built a maritime empire in both the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, the British had much experience to draw from when they attempted to establish an imperial hydrarchy off the China coast. However, this region was part of a distinctive world order defined and dominated by the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). In dealing with the piratical challenges to Qing authority in the China Seas, particularly in the late-seventeenth early-nineteenth centuries, the Qing developed their own methods for suppressing piracy and enforcing their own imperial hydrarchy. Such tactics however proved ineffective against the gravest maritime threat ever faced by the Qing: that of the British Empire. Despite their maritime experience and naval superiority, the British proved incapable of establishing and maintaining order in the China Seas. The problem of piracy posed problems for the regimes on both sides of Victoria Harbour. This common scourge catalysed the development of *modus vivendi* between the British and Qing Empires for the suppression of piracy. This *modus vivendi* in turn helped create a collaborative imperial hydrarchy whereby British and Qing officials cooperated in maintaining order in the China Seas.

20. Maurits MEERWIJK, The University of Hong Kong

'A Pandemic of Local Concern: Dengue in Pamanukan'

There is a persistent image of a hygienically superior West perennially at risk of infection from an exotic East or Global South. In 1869, the opening of the Suez Canal was seen to place Europe within striking distance of endemic haunts of cholera and plague in Asia. In the present, coverage of the Ebola and Zika outbreaks in West Africa and South America betray similar anxieties. Historians or disease in Asia, similarly, have conventionally studied outbreaks either *in situ* or in the context of their 'inexorable westward march'. Studying dengue fever through the lens of migration disrupts such narratives. In this paper, I examine a pandemic of dengue that began in 1870 and rapidly moved east along realigned 'highways of empire' – reversing the flow of disease scholarship. Honing in on a local manifestation of this pandemic in rural Java, this paper demonstrates the intertwining of different modalities of migration that both supported disease transmission and changes in assumptions about the nature and transmission of disease. The paper elucidates different scales and speeds of migration, and foregrounds the local, everyday forms of mobility implicated – or seen to be implicated – in the spread of epidemics. By highlighting the intra-Asian circulations of a background but prevalent disease, I provide a counterpoint to classic tales of imperial contagions.