

# Seminar

Jointly organized by

Division of Humanities and Social Sciences, Office of the Deputy President (Research and Technology), Department of Chinese Studies and East Asian Institute, NUS

## **Revisiting a Dramatic Triangle: State, Villagers, and Social Activists In Chinese Rural Reconstruction Projects**

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Chair: Professor Prasenjit Duara

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**2.00 pm - 4.00 pm**

**AS7/01-02, Auditorium**

### **Abstract**

Under the slogan of "constructing a new socialist countryside" state officials and social activists are trying to transform social and economic relations in China's villages. They often draw on discourses dating back to the Rural Reconstruction Movement of the 1920s and 1930s when urban intellectuals made similar efforts to emancipate the peasants and modernize the countryside. This paper analyzes different types of relationships between state, villagers, and social activists in present-day rural reconstruction projects, particularly in Hubei province. The main argument is that while the state is still the major player, there is a growing awareness that traditional top-down procedures do not work when it comes to micro-level community building. This leads some state actors to look for allies among village elites and social activists.

### **Speaker**

Stig Thøgersen is professor of China Studies at the Department of History and Area Studies, Aarhus University, Denmark. He is the author of *A County of Culture: Twentieth Century China Seen From the Village Schools of Zouping, Shandong* (U. of Michigan Press, 2002) and *Doing Fieldwork in China* (ed. with M. Heimer) (U. of Hawaii Press 2006) as well as many journal articles on social cultural and political change in rural China.