

## DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

### Relocating Intercultural Theatre

The project entails a multi-modal approach:

- i) work with Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) collaborators to develop tools for digital archiving, and with Japanese collaborators to source for primary performance materials to establish an online research archive or performance materials for intercultural theatre scholars;
- ii) organise multi-level events involving scholars, practitioners, and audiences, and roundtable of major Asian directors;
- iii) organise scholarly workshops/publications that develop new directions in theory and criticism; and
- iv) conduct performance experiments in practice-based research.

The project team is led by **Associate Professor Yong Li Lan** and comprises **Drs Robin Loon, Paul Rae** and **Edna Lim** from NUS; Mr Ong Keng Sen (TheatreWorks, Singapore); Peter Donaldson (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, United States of America); Alexander Huang (Pennsylvania State University, United States of America); Suematsu Michiko (Gunma University, Japan); Kobayashi Kaori (Doho University, Japan); Simon Jones (University of Bristol, United Kingdom); Peter Eckersall (University of Melbourne, Australia); Yoshihara Yukari (Tsukuba University, Japan); and Minami Ryuta (Aichi University of Education, Japan).

## DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

### Boutique Hotels

**Associate Professors TC Chang** and **Peggy Teo** recently completed a project titled *Boutique Hotels in Malaysia and Singapore: Heritage Tourism and the Celebration of Asian identity* in which they studied the emergence, operational characteristics and challenges of the boutique hotel industry in Malaysia (Cameron Highlands, Malacca, Penang) and

Singapore. Drawing on ideas of “vernacular (local) heritage”, the “creative industry” and “experiential economy”, the study explores the rise of small-scale, locally-owned enterprises as a hallmark of the contemporary tourism industry. It was found that many tourists are interested in “architourism” (tourism in which the main attraction is architecturally unique buildings) and are staying in heritage-themed hotels. This interest has led not only to the rise of boutique hotels but also modern business and low-cost budget hotels to jump onto the ‘heritage bandwagon’.



The New Majestic Hotel is an example of a small-scale, but historically-rich boutique hotel that has placed Singapore on the world map of trendy and creative tourist destinations.

## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

### Evaluating the Work Support Programme

The Department has been awarded a research project by the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports. The research will evaluate the processes and impact of the Work Support (WS) programme, which is targeted at helping low-income families cope with financial difficulties. The research will track the social and economic status of WS recipients over five years, with the aim to find out factors affecting programme completion and to understand the impact of WS on recipients. The project amount is approximately S\$2,500,000 and will take place over seven years. Staff involved in the project are **Associate Professor Ngiam Tee Liang, Drs Alex Lee** and **Ng Yue Hoong Irene**.

### DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

## Globalising Universities and International Student Mobilities in East Asia

East Asia is in the midst of extraordinary changes characterised by unprecedented levels of population mobility, the emergence of new modes of knowledge-based production, and new projects of identity-making. In the urban economies of Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore, migration and education have assumed a renewed importance for a range of social actors: students, families, governments, cities and universities. Collectively, these developments provide compelling reasons to investigate East Asia's universities as nodes of knowledge production and innovation and international students as agents for the production of a new international division of skilled labour. This research project, by **Associate Professor Ho Kong Chong**, commenced in 2009 and will document the transnational strategies of key universities in East Asia and examine their effects on the migratory aspirations of international students.

## History of Anthropology in Thailand

Through his affiliation with the Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre, **Dr Pattana Kitiarsa** carried out archival research pertinent to the birth and impact of anthropological knowledge and discipline in Bangkok, Thailand in September 2008. His research project entitled, *Ethnographies in the Services of a Nation: A History of Anthropology in Thailand* will cover the history of Thai anthropology from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to its present time. This is a pioneer research endeavour in tracing the arrival of cultural anthropology as a Western subject in the early Bangkok period, how it was perceived by Siamese elites and how it helped transform their conscious imagination about themselves and other ethnic people living within the newly-created geopolitical body of the nation-state. This research project is expected to be completed in December 2010.

## When The Sun Rises

**Associate Professor Roxana Waterson** has for some years been teaching courses in the Department on the use of digital video as a research tool in the social sciences. She recently used her sabbatical to complete shooting and editing work on her own first documentary film, *When the Sun Rises: A Toraja Priest of the Ancestral Way* (2008, 66 minutes). The film was selected for screening at two international ethnographic film festivals in 2008 (at Göttingen, Germany in April and Sardinia, Italy in September), and has been entered for the Royal Anthropological Institute's Film Festival 2009 in Leeds, United Kingdom. The film was shot in Tana Toraja, Sulawesi, where Associate Professor Waterson has done anthropological fieldwork since 1978, and concerns the now almost extinct indigenous religion of the Toraja people, called *Aluk To Dolo* or "Way of the Ancestors".



Way of the Ancestors