

**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
PHD CANDIDATES**



Siriporn DABPHET (Ms)

I did my B.A. and M.A in history at Srinakharinwirot University, Bangkok. In December 2000, I started my career as a lecturer at the Department of History in my University. Don't be surprise if you know that I taught East Asian history, history of modern China and Japan, contemporary world affairs, early civilizations of Asia, and some topics in Thai history. I also researched in ancient Thai law, wrote history textbooks and cartoon plots. In 2006, I came to further my 2nd M.A. at NUS. Because PhD is my goal, in January 2009 I returned to NUS to pursue my degree. I love eating, especially Thai food and dessert, and traveling. I also love to stay home with my lovely dogs and reading my favorite books (surely, not history book).

Thesis Title: The Legal Foundation of state stability in the Early Bangkok period (1805-1851)

Supervisor: Assoc Prof Bruce Lockhart

This project studies the legal foundation for the stability of state in the early Bangkok period. It aims to understand the traditional Thai monarchy from the perspective of law, to study notions in the foundation of the state stability, to study results of the use of law on security and to examine the historical development of Thai rule through law text. This study is significance because previous historical studies of the Thai law are less numerous. My project is important in its provision of a body of knowledge and better understanding of this important text in English.



Benjamin FREUD (Mr)

I am originally from France but moved to the US in 1989. I completed my undergraduate degree in International Affairs from Lewis & Clark College in Oregon before receiving my Masters in the same field from the University of Denver, writing my thesis on the influence of Che Guevara as a myth and a historical figure. After a couple of years working in San Francisco during the Internet boom I pursued my MBA at Thunderbird School of Global Management in Arizona. I subsequently worked in London and Tokyo for four and three years respectively before moving to Singapore in 2007.

Thesis Title: The Dynamics of Policy-Making in Vichyite Indochina: Agenda Setting in a Changing War

Supervisor: Assoc Prof Bruce Lockhart, Dr Michael Kelly, Dr Anne Raffin

My dissertation research will explore how closely the French colonial authorities in Hanoi followed directives from Vichy, in particular those rooted in Pétainist doctrine, and when and why they evolved independently during the time between the armistice in France and the Japanese coup (May 1940 – March 1945).



Erik HOLMBERG (Mr)

I am from the USA, working on my PhD here at the Department of History of the National University of Singapore. I earned my BA at the University of Hawaii and my MA here at NUS. My main interest is the social and political history of colonial Singapore in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially involving the intermingling of different communities.

Thesis Title: A Community of Prestige: A Social History of the Cosmopolitan Elite Class in Colonial Singapore

Thesis Committee: Prof Tan Tai Yong, Assoc Prof Gregory Clancey, Assoc Prof Maurizio Peleggi

Elites of different races in colonial Singapore made social connections amongst themselves and developed a sense of fellow membership in a cosmopolitan community of prestige by taking part together in a system of status symbols. These elites created and sustained their system of status symbols; and, in the absence of a shared culture, these elites were socially integrated by their shared symbolic system, which gave cohesion to their class. This fact is especially socially significant, given that colonial Singapore was a multiracial and culturally diverse Settlement, where the population was divided by cultural boundaries. Since the leading members of different sections of this population were represented among the elites, the elite class could not base its sense of community upon shared cultural heritage or identity. Thus, colonial Singapore presents a case which highlights the importance of social and symbolic integration, rather than cultural or ethnic foundations of elite class cohesion.

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HU Wen (Ms)

My Bachelor's degree is from Nanjing University. After I received the degree of Master of Arts at NUS, I worked in a TV station for a while. I have to say, work is boring, not as interesting as studying. That's the reason I returned to NUS to work towards my PhD degree. I am busy, but happy at NUS. I practice traditional Chinese paintings and calligraphy, but my skills are a bit rusty nowadays. I love delicious food, enjoy traveling, watching movies, and reading fiction. I want to see the world with my own eyes, myopic eyes.

Thesis Title: A Social History of Silk Industry In Modern China
Thesis Committee: Assoc Prof Thomas DuBois, Assoc Prof Medha Kudaisya, Dr Lee Seung-joon

This project is a social history of the silk industry in Sichuan province, concentrating on the Leshan region during the first half of the 20th century. This study is significant as there has been little scholarly attention on the silk industry in the small cities of Interior China. I will focus on the individual social and economic motivations of three distinct social groups which had played important roles in the silk industry: the peasants, local elites, and bureaucratic capitalists of the Guomindang regime; and in turn examine the interactions between the three groups.



Naoko IIOKA (Ms)

After I graduated from Osaka University in Japan, I took my first chance to study abroad. I moved to Bangkok. Studying in Thailand for three years eventually led me to Singapore. My research interests are Chinese junk trade and Siamese-Japanese relations in the 17th century. I love movies as my pastime. But when I have time, I usually go diving. I am looking forward to having good time both at school and at sea in Singapore.

Thesis Title: Literati Entrepreneur: Wei Zhiyan in the Tonkin-Nagasaki Silk Trade
Thesis Committee: Prof Anthony Reid, Assoc Prof Thomas Dubois, Assoc Prof Bruce Lockhart

This study attempts to discern the nature of the Chinese junk trade during the seventeenth century by examining social, religious and cultural ties among Chinese maritime traders and the influence of these ties on the organization of trade. Based on Dutch, English, Japanese, Chinese and Vietnamese sources, it will investigate the activities of the Wei brothers in the Tonkin-Nagasaki silk trade from the 1630s to the 1680s. In doing so, it will argue that Chinese maritime networks were developed on the basis of economic, kinship, religious and cultural affiliations embedded in the social and commercial development of the late-Ming gentry society in China, and therefore that the nature of the early modern Chinese junk trade was in essence private and informal. It will demonstrate the shifts that took place around the rim of the East and South China Seas in the seventeenth century and point to the Qing conquest of Taiwan as a watershed in the maritime history of East and Southeast Asia.



Hussain Ahmad KHAN (Mr)

I never thought of becoming an academic until I enrolled in the MA History Programme in the Government College University (GCU), Lahore, Pakistan. It was my initiation to colonial and postcolonial discourses. As part of my MA degree, I conducted research on Siraiki identity in South Punjab, which was later published as a book, *Re-Thinking Punjab: The Construction of Siraiki Identity*. Soon after completing my Masters in 2001, I joined the National College of Arts Archives (NCAA) and Research and Publication Centre in Lahore as a research assistant. My stay at the NCAA not only further developed my interest in theory, art history and archival research, but it also gave me opportunities to participate in many national and international conferences. Meanwhile, I also completed my MPhil in History from the University of Punjab, Lahore.

In September 2005, I returned to the GCU as Lecturer in History. There, I taught subjects like Pakistan Studies, Medieval India, Philosophy/Discourses of History, Social and Intellectual History of Modern Europe, and Political History of Modern Europe at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels. I also worked as an associate editor of *The Historian*, a biannual research journal (www.gcu.edu.pk/Historian.htm) published by the Department of History in GCU.

Thesis Title: Extracting Self from Other: Art Instruction and Re-presentation of Punjab in Colonial Exhibitions and Museums (1849-1900)
Thesis Committee: Assoc Prof Maurizio Peleggi, Prof Tan Tai Yong, Dr Tania Roy

Colonial exhibitions and museums may be read like a complicated and complex text/web in which every word/object was in constant tension with the other one. By identifying many centres of power, I intend to locate the existence of locals within

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the colonial text.



Didi KWARTANADA (Mr)

I received my bachelor's degree in history from Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia in 1997. From 1998 to 2001 I was a Research Associate with the Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan. I have published several chapters in edited books and articles in refereed journals. Grew up in a musical family, I love music and play the violin a bit. My favorite musicians range from Sarah Brightman, Joe Satriani to "Dream Theater". Hunting for used books and CDs are my favorite things in leisure times, but nothing's more fun than chatting with my naughty little nephews and nieces!

Thesis Title: The 'Enlightened' Chinese and the Making of Modernity in Java, c.1890-1911

Thesis Committee: Prof Anthony Reid, Dr Sai Siew Min, Assoc Prof Paul Kratoska

This thesis focuses on a group of Peranakan Chinese, who described themselves in Malay as *kaoem moeda bangsa tjina* (lit: young group of the Chinese nation), I have rendered this into English as 'Enlightened Chinese', because of their commitment to modern education and progress contributed to the making of modernity in Java at the turn of twentieth century. Chinese had been considered pariahs in colonial Java. They prospered economically, but faced discrimination in politics, law and education. The *kaoem moeda* consisted of western-educated, or otherwise progressive men and women, primarily peranakan (local-oriented) but also with a few *totok* (the China-oriented), who were not satisfied with their position as second-class citizens in the new world of the twentieth century. They believed that only by embracing modernity could they reach 'civilized' status in colonial Indonesia. The movement was embraced because it appeared to enable such 'enlightened Chinese' to match the European without joining them as Christian converts, equal in modernity but separate as Chinese. The *kaoem moeda* thereby created a double identity, adopting Western modernity yet inventing Chinese tradition. At the same time, the *kaoem moeda* inspired other Asians in the colony with their restless struggle for modernity, including education and wider opportunities for women.



NGUI Yew Kit Clarence (Mr)

In the pursuit of a corporate career, I chose to study economics at the National University of Malaysia (UKM). My bachelors landed me a job as a financial journalist in Kuala Lumpur. After working several years and winning the Malaysia's National Journalism Awards four years consecutively, I craved for more excitement. That's how I ended up studying for my masters in Southeast Asian History at the University of Malaya. I exchanged my passion for history for an academic degree. I guess, I'm doing the same at NUS. I love my new study atmosphere in Singapore; I get to learn fresh ideas with my Singapore and international friends. Yet, life is not all work and no play. My idea of relaxation is a sofa, a cup of cold Milo and an interesting book. I also enjoy my "me-only" time by running or jogging around Holland Village, Ulu Pandan and Clementi.

Thesis Title: Southern Siam's Socio-Economic Links with Northern British Malaya (1855-1925)

Supervisor: Assoc Prof Bruce Lockhart

Traditional historiography on Siam and British Malaya often portrayed both regions separately. For example, most analysis looked mainly from Bangkok's perspective and paid little attention to the integrative nature of Southern Siam with Northern British Malaya. My research plans to re-interpret traditional historiography of the region to reconsider the fluidness of national borders towards development. For instance, during much of the 19th and early 20th centuries, national borders made little impact for Chinese migrants. The Hokkien Chinese moved freely from Penang to various Southern Siamese provinces. For them, border controls made little or no sense. Thus, my main research question will investigate this new dimension of the region's historical development.

PANG Yang Huei (Mr)

I signed on as a teacher on 8 July 1996. Along the way, I obtained my B.A. Dip. Ed. (Hons) and M.A. from NIE, Nanyang Technological University. (Diss. Supervisor: Prof. Daniel K. R. Crosswell) I left the education service on 1 Jan 2006.

Thesis Title: Communist China, the United States and the 1958 Taiwan Crisis: From Nuclear Confrontations to Tacit Accommodation

Thesis Committee: Assoc Prof Teow See Heng, Assoc Prof Huang Jianli, and Dr Yang Bin

Presently, I am examining the impact of President Eisenhower's nuclear policies on



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Red China's foreign policy outlook. Underlying Washington's aggressive foreign policy was the belief that Communist China would dominate the power vacuum in the wake of decolonization in Asia. The principles of NSC 68, the rhetoric of massive retaliation and the Eisenhower Doctrine further reinforced United States' China policy. On the other hand, Mao Tse-tung's seemingly ideological disdain for United States' technological superiority via nuclear weapons did much to complicate and colour the relations between the two countries. This dynamic tension provides a window of opportunity to re-examine the interplay between Mao's strategic outlook and Eisenhower's nuclear policies.



Natasha SARKAR (Ms)

Painting, music and sports add life to my years. Such happiness is the state I choose to be in. My experience thus far, has been in teaching. The challenge of helping my pupils grow to become independent and discerning thinkers is something I look forward to every single day. More importantly, I have realized that recognition is not the only barometer of brilliance or human worth. I therefore hope to contribute to efforts that might help the greater cause of humanity, while assisting the lives of a few people directly.

Thesis Title: Political Contingencies and Popular Attitudes: Plague In India, 1890 To 1925

Thesis Committee: Assoc Prof Gregory Clancey, Dr John DiMoia, Assoc Prof Medha Kudaisya

The Indian episode of the third bubonic plague pandemic is the contemplated area of research. The study begins with the possible spread of plague from the Chinese ports to Bombay in the 1890s and concludes with the repercussions of the introduction of dyarchy at the provinces by the Government of India Act, 1919. Research will specifically address the significance of contingency in influencing social, medical, legal and policy perspectives while also unearthing popular attitudes and response to the plague.

Was India ultimately bound up in the larger project of an interventionist colonial regime to regulate the lives of its colonial subjects? Research will reveal whether Western medicine remained too closely identified with the requirements of the colonial state and its degree of remoteness or closeness to the needs of the people. Of course, the plague with its political, social, economic and demographic consequences deserves many different approaches and interpretations which further research will attempt.



WEI Bingbing (Mr)

After receiving my bachelor and master degrees from Nanjing University in China, I left my parents and came to Singapore, not only to pursue a Ph. D degree, but also to make new friends, encounter new cultures and enrich my life. I have a huge number of interests, from rock music to Chinese traditional operas, from Michael Jordan to Hollywood, from Confucianism to modern Chinese historySo, I am sure that we will find something in common.

Thesis Title: Shanghai Theaters: Urban Space, Operatic Entertainment, and Cultural Politics, 1850s-1930s

Thesis Committee: Assoc Prof Huang Jianli, Dr Lee Seung-Joon, Dr Yang Bin

Public life is the best demonstration of local culture, and public space constitutes an ideal site for us to observe social changes. By examining the transformation of theatres in modern Shanghai and the relations between theatres and various social groups, I wish to find out more aspects of the social changes in modern Shanghai so as to deepen our understanding of the urban history and the social history of modern China.



Fumihito YAMAMOTO (Mr)

Hi. I am Fumihito from Japan. I spent seven years taking BA and MA degrees at Dokkyo University, Saitama Japan. I am very happy to be in NUS studying history. I enjoy the International atmosphere of NUS, multicultural, multilingual and multinational - so many students from all over the world. Furthermore, NUS has a marvellous campus, a splendid mixture of modern buildings and tropical plants.

Thesis Title: The Japanese Road to Singapore: Japanese Perceptions of the Singapore Naval Base, 1921-41

Thesis Committee: Assoc Prof Brian Farrell, Assoc Prof Malcolm Murfett, Assoc Prof Teow See Heng

The British government decided to establish the Singapore Naval Base to defend its Eastern Empire from Japan in June 1921. Until 1939, however, Japan did not have

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any plan to attack British Malaya and Singapore. Throughout the period between the two world wars, the Japanese Navy did not examine seriously any plan to attack Singapore from the sea side. The origin of the plan to attack British Malaya and Singapore was an operational plan against Britain included in the "Annual Army's Operational Plan for 1939" designed by the Japanese Army. In this plan, the Japanese Army would land in Singora in southern Thailand, go down the Malay Peninsula, and attack Singapore from the land side. From the very beginning, the Japanese Army considered attacking Singapore from the land side.



ZHANG Jing (Ms)

I am Zhang Jing from China. I graduated from Fujian Normal University with a B.A in History Education and M.A in History. I like reading fiction, watching movies and listening music. My favorite popular song is "The Most Romantic Thing" by Zhao Yonghua, a female singer from Taiwan. I am happy to find that Singapore is a clean city with trees, flowers and birds. And, NUS is a large and beautiful university. I hope to know more about the country and the university in the future.

Thesis Title: Aspiration for a New City: Newsprint Discourse in Fuzhou, 1927-1937
Thesis Committee: Assoc Prof Huang Jianli, Assoc Prof Teow See Heng, Dr Yang Bin

My Ph.D dissertation will examine the history of Fuzhou city and its news prints in the Nanjing decade. Despite being the provincial capital during the Qing and other earlier dynasties, Fuzhou was no longer an official administrative seat during the Republican era. Nevertheless, the memory and ideal of being a centre of high importance remained embedded and preserved by its denizen with strong nostalgia. They continued to express their high municipal expectations through their local newspapers and journals. The medium of news prints in Fuzhou during the Nanjing decade became the schemer, supervisor and eyewitness for the development of a modern urban citizenry life in Fuzhou. How the local new prints aspired for a new city and how they made an effort to change the city is a worthwhile and fascinating story to tell.