



Australian  
National  
University

ANU College  
of Asia and  
the Pacific



KANAGAWA UNIVERSITY

# Rethinking community in Asia: Historical and contemporary perspectives

Joint Seminar between The Australian National University  
(College of Asia and the Pacific) and Kanagawa University  
(Center for Asian Studies)

## Program booklet

14 February 2025

*This joint seminar is supported by the Department of Political and Social Change, Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs, the Southeast Asia Institute, the Japan Institute, at the Australian National University (ANU), and a joint research project group of the Center for Asian Studies, Kanagawa University.*

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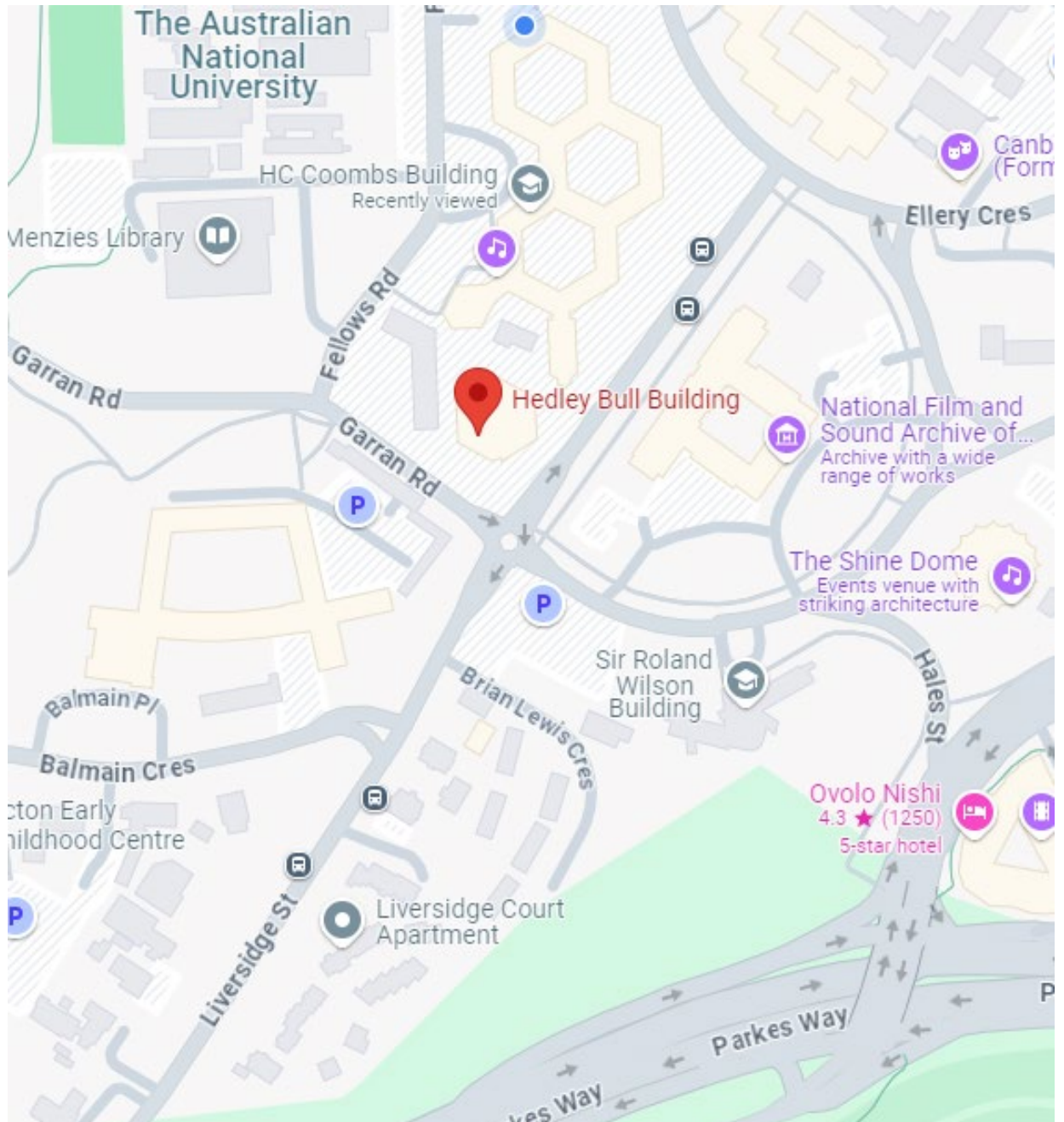
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# General information

## Location

IN-PERSON: Hedley Bull Building, 130 Garran Rd, Acton ACT 2601

ONLINE: Zoom



## Wifi

Username: ANUKUSeminar

Password: ANU0214

# Program

Friday 14 February 2025

All sessions: Seminar Room3 (HB3), 130 Garran Road

Chair: Nick Cheesman, Head of the Department of Social and Political Change, Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs, ANU

TIME	PROGRAM
1.00pm	<b>Opening Remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Nick Cheesman, ANU</li></ul>
1.10pm	<b>Introduction and Purpose</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ryo Takagi, Visiting Fellow, ANU, and Kanagawa University</li></ul>
	<b>Session 1</b>
1.20pm	<b>Cultivating the Land as an Indigenizing Project in Okinawa</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Megumi Chibana, Kanagawa University</li></ul>
1.50pm	<b>'Hong Kong People Should Use Hong Kong Products': A Discursive History of 'Hong Kong People' and 'Hong Kong Products' in the 1950s–1960s</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Hiroshi Murai, Kanagawa University</li></ul>
2.20pm	<b>Comment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Tamara Jacka, Emeritus Professor, ANU</li></ul>
2.30pm	<b>Q&amp;A and Discussion</b>
2.50pm	Break
	<b>Session 2</b>
3.20pm	<b>Japanese Women's Experiences of Multi-ethnic Communities in Manchukuo</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Mayuko Itoh, ANU</li></ul>
3.50pm	<b>Exploring Shan State-Building and National Expectations, Comparing the Cold War and Today</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Jane Ferguson, ANU</li></ul>
4.20pm	<b>Comment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Hidekazu Sensui, Director of the Center for Asian Studies, Kanagawa University</li></ul>
4.30pm	<b>Q&amp;A and Discussion</b>
5.00pm	<b>Closing Remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Craig J. Reynolds, Honorary Professor, ANU</li></ul>
5.15pm	<b>End of Seminar</b>

# Abstracts and Presenters' Biographies

## Cultivating the Land as an Indigenizing Project in Okinawa

Megumi Chibana, Kanagawa University

In *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Linda Tuhiwai Smith identifies Indigenizing as one of the methodological approaches taken by Indigenous communities. According to Smith, Indigenizing entails 'being grounded in the alternative conceptions of world view and value systems' and 'centers a politics of Indigenous identity and Indigenous cultural action' (2021, p. 168). My research explores the intersection of farming practices and acts of Indigenous self-determination in Okinawa. In this talk, I examine the new small farmers and food movement that has emerged across Okinawa in the past decade. This talk explores how the island's politics had turned Okinawan individuals, especially young Okinawans, back to the land and joined land cultivation and stewardship. I carefully attend to the practices taken outside the formally organized movement of agricultural practitioners and differentiate from those who are 'Back-to-the Landers' and settlers engaging in the alternative food movement. Drawing from field observation and interviews, I delve into land-based practices in contemporary Okinawa and how and when Okinawans decide to articulate their Indigenous relations to the land and claim self-determination. Finally, I will discuss the possibility of the analysis through Indigenizing frameworks that might suggest alternative ways of relating to the land, to the food, to the community, and to the environment.

**Megumi Chibana** is an associate professor at Kanagawa University, where she teaches political science and cultural geography. Her research interests include the examination of Indigenous politics in Okinawa, the exploration of Indigenous theories and their implications for meaning and practice in Asia, and the analysis of Indigenous and decolonial critiques regarding settler colonialism, militarism, and colonial geographies.

## "Hong Kong People Should Use Hong Kong Products": A Discursive History of 'Hong Kong People' and 'Hong Kong Products' in the 1950s–1960s

Hiroshi Murai, Kanagawa University

In 2019, during the large-scale protests in Hong Kong against the government, the term 'yellow economy' gained popularity. This referred to the practice of actively using ('yellow') restaurants and shops that sympathized with the protests. The economic act of consumption can sometimes be linked to ideals/ideologies or emotions such as nationalism or demands for democratization. Historically, campaigns to promote the preferential purchase of domestic products have been closely linked to the rise of nationalism in colonies or states in subordinate positions. In such cases, rather than the subject of 'one's own country' existing as something self-evident beforehand, it could be said that the movement's appeal aimed to build a sense of community of 'us'.

In this seminar I will examine the changing context in which the slogan "Hong Kong people should use Hong Kong products", which was often used at industrial product exhibitions in Hong Kong from the 1950s to 1960s. On the one hand, this slogan arose from the interests of capitalists and the government, but on the other hand, if there were no 'Hong Kong people' who resonated with it, the appeal would be meaningless. Through a historical examination of the connotations of 'Hong Kong people'/'Hong Kong products', this report aims to reveal an aspect of the history of Hong Kong's identity formation that has not been well discussed.

**Hiroshi Murai** (村井寛志) teaches Modern Hong Kong history at Kanagawa University. His research focuses on immigration control and the discourse of the Hongkonger (香港人). His recent papers include "The Japanese 'Illegal Immigration' into Hong Kong After World War II" and 'Immigration Control and the Legal Identification of Cross-Border Migrants Between Hong Kong and Mainland China in the Early 1950s'.

## Japanese Women's Experiences of Multi-ethnic Communities in Manchukuo

Mayuko Itoh, ANU

This paper investigates the daily lives of Japanese women in Manchukuo with a particular focus on their relationships with people of other ethnicities. Manchukuo was established in 1932 by the Kwantung Army of Imperial Japan as a scaffold for the expansion of the Japanese empire against the background of power struggles with China and the Soviet Union. At that time, there were approximately 230,000 Japanese civilians in Manchukuo, which jumped to more than 1,550,000 by the end of the war, as a result of the state's military and national strategies of sending Japanese citizens there as colonisers.

In the existing studies, it is often discussed that these Japanese civilians formed ethnic communities and lived within ethnic boundaries. Such Japanese communities, however, co-existed and sometimes closely communicated with communities of other ethnic groups colonised by Imperial Japan. In rural areas, some agricultural communities had multi-ethnic members. This paper investigates interactions between these communities and community members of different ethnicities to observe the boundaries dividing colonising/colonised, and moments where such boundaries were emphasised or transgressed. My particular focus is on how Japanese women perceived and practiced their roles as colonisers along with changes in the historical context in which Manchukuo was constituted, developed, and collapsed.

**Mayuko Itoh** is Lecturer in Japanese Language and Studies, at the School of Culture, History and Language, College of Asia and the Pacific, ANU. She received her PhD in History at the University of Melbourne in 2014. Her most recent publication is 'Civil society and the state in making a wartime history: History of Japanese women repatriated from Manchuria', in *Varieties of Civil Society across Asia*, A. Ogawa and A. Spires (eds.), Routledge (2024). Her current research focuses on the experiences of Japanese women who emigrated to and repatriated from Manchuria.

## Exploring Shan State-Building and National Expectations, Comparing the Cold War and Today

Jane M Ferguson, ANU

The movement for a liberated Shanland emerged at the confluence of The Union of Burma's post-colonial and Cold War geopolitical positioning. Following the 2021 coup d'état, many observers did not expect Shan armies to be reticent to unite against the Myanmar military, further confounded by repeated skirmishes between the RCSS and SSPP, both ostensibly fighting for 'Shan' liberation. While ethno-nationalist ideologies, those of the Shan included, are often based on an immutable notion of identity, how they are experienced as part of state-building or in times of crisis can change. Based on long-term fieldwork with Shan former soldiers and contemporary Shan migrants, this paper will explore how concepts like Shan unity are mobilized under varied political situations.

**Jane M Ferguson** is Associate Professor of Anthropology and Southeast Asian History at the School for Culture, History, and Language at the ANU. Her publications include *Repossessing Shanland: Myanmar, Thailand, and a Nation-State Deferred*, and *Silver Screens and Golden Dreams: A Social History of Burmese Cinema*.

## Speakers' Biographies

Hidekazu Sensui, Kanagawa University

**Hidekazu Sensui** is the director of the Center for Asian Studies, Kanagawa University, and teaches cultural anthropology. His research centres on postwar Okinawa, with a particular focus on the development of field sciences in the region. He has edited the books: *Modern States and Coloniality: Their Historical Developments in the Asia-Pacific Region* and *Enlightening through TV: USCAR Public Diplomacy, 1950-1972*.

### Tamara Jacka, ANU

**Tamara Jacka** is a feminist social anthropologist and Emeritus Professor of China studies in the Department of Political and Social Change, College of Asia and the Pacific, ANU. Her most recent publication is *Ginkgo Village: Trauma and Transformation in Rural China* (ANU Press, 2024).

### Craig J. Reynolds, ANU

**Craig J. Reynolds** is a social, cultural and intellectual historian of Southeast Asia, particularly Thailand. Research interests have included political culture, historiography, Buddhism, Marxism, and biography. In 2009 he published an essay on community: 'Chumchon/Community in Thailand' in *Words in Motion: Toward a Global Lexicon* (Duke University Press). *Power, Religion and Magic in Thailand: The Cosmos of a Southern Policeman* appeared in 2019 (ANU Press online open access). <https://anu-au.academia.edu/CraigReynolds>.

### Nick Cheesman, ANU

**Nick Cheesman** is an associate professor and head of the Department of Political and Social Change, ANU College of Asia and the Pacific, where he also directs the ANU Myanmar Research Centre. He researches the politics of law and state violence in Myanmar and Thailand, and is interested in interpretive methodologies and methods for data generation and analysis. His recent work includes *Myanmar: A Political Lexicon* (Cambridge UP, 2023) and editorship of a special issue of the *Journal of Contemporary Asia* (54.5, 2024) on revolution and solidarity in Myanmar.

### Ryo Takagi, Visiting Fellow, ANU and Kanagawa University

**Ryo Takagi** is Visiting Fellow of ANU and Professor of Kanagawa University, specializing in cultural anthropology and Thai studies. His current research focuses on contemporary Thai political dynamics from the perspective of community movements. His recent published book chapter is 'Reassembling the Community of Voice: Community Radio in Northern Thailand' in Nishii, Ryoko and Shigeharu Tanabe (eds.), *Community Movements in Southeast Asia: An Anthropological Perspective of Assemblages* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2022).