

香港史研究中心

HONG KONG HISTORY CENTRE

2nd Workshop of Early Career Scholars on Hong Kong History
26 October 2023

Time: 12:00 – 16:30

Venue: Research Space (1.H020), Art and Humanities Complex,
7 Woodland Road, University of Bristol

Program

12:00-12:40	Arrival, Introduction and lunch
12:40-13:30	Presentation by Nathanael Lai
13:30-14:20	Presentation by Clara Cheung
14:20-14:40	Coffee Break
14:40-15:30	Presentation by Allan Pang
15:30-16:20	Presentation by Doris Y. S. Chan
16:20-16:30	Rounding Up

In Support of the Zhongzhen: Loans, Textbooks, and the Cold War in 1950s Southeast Asia and Hong Kong

Nathanael Lai, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

This paper historicises ties that stretched across Thailand and Hong Kong: a set of connections bearing as importantly on the long-standing struggle between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China as on other parts of Southeast Asia like Singapore. It examines the interaction of Chinese communities throughout these spaces during the early Cold War, when their links were as contested as broader conceptions of China and Chineseness. It highlights how such inter-Asian connections unfolded not only in terms of cultural production, as existing studies have demonstrated. But they also figured across other settings and via another array of commodities: from business agencies to schools, from economic assistance to educational materials. By way of illustration, this paper will centre on a loan programme of the Taipei-controlled Bangkok branch of the Bank of China (BOC) which, in its bid to strive for Thailand's 'overseas Chinese' loyalties, extended credits to zhongzhen (resolutely loyal) Chinese schools on the condition that they adopted textbooks published by a Hong Kong instead of Singapore bookstore.

The “cultural representations” of Hong Kong and Malaysia in the Commonwealth Institute in London in the 1960s-70s

Clara Cheung, University of York, United Kingdom

This is a comparative study of the “cultural representations” of Hong Kong and Malaysia in the Commonwealth Institute in London in the 1960s-70s. It traces the development of the Commonwealth Institute (opened in 1962) from its former Imperial Institute (founded in 1887), in order to understand how “fine arts” from the colonies slowly get recognised by the metropole as the “cultural representations” of the colonies or former colonies. Two art exhibitions of Hong Kong and Malaysia at the Institute’s art gallery in 1971 and 1978 will be analysed, and compared with the two states’ ethnographic representations at the Institute’s main gallery.

Transnational History Textbooks and Intra-colonial Control in Hong Kong, Malaya, and Singapore, c. 1950s

Allan Pang, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

This paper will examine the flow of historical knowledge and the colonial response in Hong Kong, Malaya, and Singapore. After the end of the Second World War, publishers in Hong Kong resumed their transnational textbook business. Chinese overseas in Southeast Asia again became their targets. Entering the 1950s, these networks became more problematic to British colonial officials. On the one hand, they worried that communist ideologies would infiltrate the texts. On the other hand, historical narratives centring on the ideas of the Chinese nation (be it the mainland or Taiwan version) did not fit into the political needs of Singapore and Malaya. Colonial officials across territories exchanged information to contain these textbook networks. This presentation will scrutinise the role of late colonial administrators and examine how they partly failed in monitoring school history education. A pro-China orientation persisted in the revised textbooks, and the 1950s only marked the beginning of the struggle to define Chineseness outside China.

The Flow of Chinese Educational Knowledge, Teachers and Students between Hong Kong and North Borneo, c. 1950s to early 1960s

Doris Y. S. Chan, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

The problem of Chinese education in post-WWII Southeast Asia was intertwined with the spread of communism, decolonisation and racial politics. This paper centres the discussion of Chinese education in North Borneo (today’s state of Sabah in East Malaysia), which faced the lack of qualified teachers, the lack of opportunity for higher education and the strong pressure from the

government to promote the use of English and Malay in the 1950s. These problems were not only shared by but also closely connected to other British colonies in the region, including Hong Kong. Drawing upon mainly Chinese newspaper articles circulated in North Borneo from mid-1960 to the end of 1963 and official materials from state archives in Sabah, this paper looks into the transfer of Chinese educational knowledge, teachers and students between Hong Kong and North Borneo and demonstrates a close colonial connection in education in the age of decolonisation.