



## ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

Since the period of rapid development in the People's Republic of China after the reforms initiated by Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s, the world is experiencing a new wave of Chinese migration. Loosely defined as Chinese people who are outside of China to conduct business, work, or study, or join their family overseas, these new Chinese migrants — also known as *xinyimin* — have had a profound impact on their host countries that are encountering a rising China. Their influence on local societies, economies, and politics is further complicated by Beijing's dynamic policy towards the Chinese overseas in general and towards the *xinyimin* in particular.

This 4-part workshop seeks to explore China's current thinking on the Chinese overseas and the impact of *xinyimin* in maritime and mainland Southeast Asia where these new Chinese migrants constitute a significant presence. Some topics that will be discussed include: China's relationship with the *xinyimin*, *xinyimins'* relationships and interactions with the local Chinese and "indigenous" population; the impacts of *xinyimin* and China's soft power on local society, local culture and economy; and how the growing presence of *xinyimin* will affect the relationship between China and nation states, as well as the nation-building process in these countries. These topics throw light on the nature of new Chinese migration, and the implications of Southeast Asia's relations and local ethnic politics with a China that is undergoing deep social and economic changes.

**WEBINAR 1: 7 DECEMBER 2020 (MONDAY), 9.00 am – 10.30 am**

**UNDERSTANDING CHINA'S NEW MIGRANTS AND THE POLITICS OF CHINESE LANGUAGE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA**

Who are the *xinyimin*, and how are they different from their predecessors? How do their impacts differ from previous generations of Chinese migrants, especially against the backdrop of a rising China? What is Beijing's policy towards the Chinese overseas in general and towards *xinyimin* in particular? Starting this discussion on rising China and China's new migrants will be **Professor Leo Suryadinata** (ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute), who will be sharing his work on the rise of China and *xinyimin* in maritime Southeast Asia. **Dr Neo Peng Fu** (Confucius Institute, Nanyang Technological University) will speak about the Confucius Institutes and the teaching of Mandarin in Southeast Asia.

9.00 am – 9.05 am  
(Singapore time)

**Opening Remarks**

Mr Christian Echle  
Director, Regional Programme Political Dialogue Asia,  
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

9.05 am – 10.30 am

Moderator:



Dr Benjamin Loh  
Senior Fellow and Coordinator, Regional Social  
and Cultural Studies Programme, ISEAS - Yusof  
Ishak Institute

Panelists:



***The Rise of China and Xinyimin (new Chinese Migrants) in Maritime Southeast Asia: Challenges and Prospects***

Professor Leo Suryadinata  
Visiting Senior Fellow, Regional Social and  
Cultural Studies Programme, ISEAS - Yusof Ishak  
Institute



***Confucius Institutes and the Teaching of Mandarin in Maritime Southeast Asia***

Dr Neo Peng Fu  
Director, Confucius Institute, Nanyang  
Technological University

**WEBINAR 2: 7 DECEMBER 2020 (MONDAY), 3.00 pm – 4.30 pm**

**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF NEW CHINESE MIGRANTS AND INVESTMENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA**

Local's perceptions of *xinyimin* have been varied across Southeast Asian countries. While some view *xinyimin* as economic competition and a source for social and cultural friction, others see *xinyimin* and the related Chinese investment as an economic opportunity. Zooming in on such local perceptions of *xinyimin*, **Ms Teresita Ang-See** (Kaisa Para Sa Kunlaran) will expound on the issues and challenges of *xinyimin* in the Philippines, **Dr Johanes Herlijanto** (University of Pelita Harapan) will speak on the Pribumi elites' perceptions of new Chinese migrants in Indonesia, while **Dr Vannarith Chheang** (ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute) will explore the Cambodian view of Chinese language and China.

3.00 pm – 4.30 pm  
(Singapore time)

Moderator:

Dr Siwage Dharma Negara  
Senior Fellow and Co-coordinator, Indonesia  
Studies Programme, ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute



Panelists:

***Xinyimin in the Philippines: Issues and Challenges***



Ms Teresita Ang-See  
Founding President, Kaisa Para Sa Kunlaran,  
Philippines



***Pribumi Elites' Perception of the New Chinese Migrants***

Dr Johanes Herlijanto  
University of Pelita Harapan, Indonesia



***Chinese Language and Cambodian Perception Towards China***

Dr Vannarith Chheang  
Visiting Fellow, ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute

**WEBINAR 3: 8 DECEMBER 2020 (TUESDAY), 9.00 am – 10.30 am**

**NATIONALISM, NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY, AND THE PRESENCE OF *XINYIMIN* IN SOUTHEAST ASIA**

As new Chinese migrants enter and engage with host societies, there have been understandable concerns as to how their activities can affect the social fabric and economic landscape of host countries. There are also questions of how the growing presence of *xinyimin* will affect the relationship between China and nation states, as well as the nation-building process in these countries. Joining us on the second day to explore such impacts of the *xinyimin* will be **Professor Danny Wong Tze Ken** (University of Malaya), who will present on the topic: *The Xinyimin Presence in Malaysia: A New Transnational Experience*. **Dr Tan Teng Phee** (former curator, Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall) will share about the impacts of *xinyimin* in Singapore, while **Dr Andrew Ong** (ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute), will explore the entrepreneurial excursions of Chinese migrants in Myanmar.

9.00 am – 10.30 am  
(Singapore time)

Moderator:



Dr Hui Yew-Foong  
Visiting Senior Fellow and Coordinator, Indonesia  
Studies Programme, ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute

Panelists:



***The Xinyimin Presence in Malaysia: A New  
Transnational Experience***

Professor Danny Wong Tze Ken  
Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences,  
University of Malaya



***Old VS New? The Impacts of Xinyimin in  
Singapore***

Dr Tan Teng Phee  
Former Curator, Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial  
Hall, Singapore



***Entrepreneurial Excursions: Short-Hop  
Chinese Migration at the Peripheries of  
Myanmar***

Dr Andrew Ong  
Visiting Fellow, ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute

**WEBINAR 4: 8 DECEMBER 2020 (TUESDAY), 3.00 pm – 4.30 pm**

**CHINESE CULTURE AND CHINA'S SOFT POWER IN MARITIME SOUTHEAST ASIA**

Unlike previous migrants whose stay was more assimilative and permanent in nature, the current *xinyimin* are generally more educated and possess greater economic means, and therefore have greater geographical mobility to move out of Southeast Asia or even return to China. As a result, many *xinyimin* retain distinct identities, and form communities that maintain close links to China. New Chinese culture has also been introduced to Southeast Asia via these *xinyimin* and through cultural and educational institutions. Moving our attention to China's soft power in maritime Southeast Asia, **Professor Lourdes M. Tanhueco-Nepomuceno** (Confucius Institute, University of the Philippines) will expound on the Confucius Institutes in the Philippines as a form of China's Educational Diplomacy, while **Dr Peter Chang** (Institute of China Studies, University of Malaya) will examine *xinyimin* presence in Malaysia via the Confucius Institute and Xiamen University. **Dr Ho Yi Kai** (Confucius Institute, Nanyang Technological University), will round off the webinar with his comparison on China's cultural centre and Singapore's Chinese cultural centre.

3.00 pm – 4.30 pm  
(Singapore time)

Moderator:



Professor Leo Suryadinata  
Visiting Senior Fellow, Regional Social and Cultural Studies Programme, ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute

Panelists:



***Confucius Institutes in the Philippines: China's Educational Diplomacy Platforms***

Professor Lourdes M. Tanhueco-Nepomuceno  
Director, Confucius Institute, University of the Philippines



***China's Soft Power-Play in Malaysia: Confucius Institute (CI) and Xiamen University (XU)***

Dr Peter T C Chang  
Deputy Director, Institute of China Studies, University of Malaya



***China Cultural Centre and Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre: A Comparison***

Dr Ho Yi Kai  
Assistant Director, Confucius Institute, Nanyang Technological University



## ABSTRACTS

### WEBINAR 1:

### UNDERSTANDING CHINA'S NEW MIGRANTS AND THE POLITICS OF CHINESE LANGUAGE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

#### *The Rise of China and Xinyimin (new Chinese Migrants) in Maritime Southeast Asia: Challenges and Prospects*

Professor Leo Suryadinata

In the last few decades, there is an influx of xinyimin or Chinese new migrants in Southeast Asia. Many xinyimin are better educated and economically superior than the old migrants. New Chinese migrant workers are also present and pose a new problem for the country concerned. These xinyimin form new communities and have close links to China. China as a rising major power, has also attempted to expand its influence in Southeast Asia through its economic activities (such as BRI) and soft power (such as Confucius Society) and blurring the distinction between Huaqiao and Huaren. This paper will examine the xinyimin and their impact on local society and beyond; it will also look at the attempts made by rising China to exercise its influence in the region. Problems and prospects will be examined.

**Leo Suryadinata**, Ph.D., is currently Visiting Senior Fellow, ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute (Singapore). Formerly Professor in the Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore (NUS). He has published extensively on Southeast Asian Politics, ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia and China-ASEAN relations. His latest book: *The Rise of China and the Chinese Overseas* (2017).

#### *Confucius Institutes and the Teaching of Mandarin in Southeast Asia*

Dr Neo Peng Fu

Maritime Southeast Asia used to have a significant number of Chinese schools, which offered a curriculum of modern education and adopted the modern Chinese language (Mandarin) as their primary medium of instruction. However, these Chinese schools, which were closely related to the Chinese immigrants' community, were only in operation between the early and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Most of these schools ceased to be in existence by the 1980s, except in Malaysia, and to a certain extent in Singapore. As a result, it had been extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the people in SEA to have had the opportunity to learn Mandarin, in a formal and systematic way.

The situation began to change towards the later part of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. That is because a new and established institution for teaching Mandarin, called Confucius Institutes (CIs) started to be seen in the various countries of maritime SEA. There are now a total of 40 CIs in Southeast Asia, namely Indonesia (8), Philippines (5), Malaysia (5), Singapore (1), Cambodia (2), Laos (2), Vietnam (1) and Thailand (16). (There is yet to have a CI in Myanmar and Brunei). What are the fundamental differences between the old Chinese schools and the Confucius Institutes? Have the CIs created an impact on social and economic development on the local populace? And also some controversies along the way? How should one assess the role of these CIs against the greater historical context of maritime Southeast Asia? This paper attempts to answer these questions.

**Neo Peng Fu, Ph.D.**, is a Senior Lecturer at the National Institute of Education (Singapore) and Director of the Confucius Institute at Nanyang Technological University. He was an assistant professor at the National University of Singapore from 2000 to 2009. A historian by training, he publishes in two main areas: Chinese classics and language-in-education policy (with special reference to Chinese language teaching and learning in Singapore). His detailed publication list could be accessed at: <https://www.nie.edu.sg/profile/neo-peng-fu>

## **WEBINAR 2: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF NEW CHINESE MIGRANTS AND INVESTMENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA**

### *Xinyimin in the Philippines: Issues and Challenges*

Ms Teresita Ang See

The issue of the influx of new Chinese immigrants in the Philippines has been contentious for the last two decades but it has escalated during the incumbency of the new President, Rodrigo R. Duterte. Improvement of relations brought increase in investments and infrastructure development. But, the huge increase in the number of new Chinese immigrants in the offshore gambling business and its negative social impact is a big challenge.

In the midst of these challenges, more prominent Chinese businessmen and investors established different organizations as a new norm of social networking and connecting with government agencies. Many hometown associations likewise organized new Chambers of Commerce in response to China's directive to organize such to enable smooth implementation of the one belt one road initiative. This paper will focus on these new Immigrants with their new organizations and the challenges and new dynamics in their relations with the local Tsinoy community and Philippine society.

**Teresita Ang See** has done research on the Chinese in the Philippine Life, presented papers in international conferences and journals. She published five volumes of *The Chinese in the Philippines – Problems and Perspectives*. She was past President of the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas and served as its Secretary-Treasurer for a decade.

### *Pribumi Elites' Perception of the New Chinese Migrants*

Dr Johanes Herlijanto

The issue regarding new Chinese migrants (xinyimin) has attracted Indonesian public attention in recent years. While their presence is often associated with the arrival of Chinese companies, xinyimin who currently live in Indonesia are actually composed of diverse groups of people. In addition to those who work with Chinese companies, there are many other Chinese who have come to this country for other purposes, including the pursuit of studies and business. How is their existence in Indonesian society perceived by Indonesians, particularly by the 'Pribumi' (indigenous) Indonesians? This paper wishes to find a partial answer to the question by exploring how members of the 'Pribumi' Indonesian elite perceive this issue.

**Johanes Herlijanto** received a joint PhD in Anthropology from Macquarie University and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. He teaches at the Department of Communication, Pelita Harapan University, Jakarta. From 2016 to 2017, Johanes was Visiting Fellow at ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute, where he researched on the perception of China, and of Chinese Indonesians, among the 'Pribumi' Indonesian elites.

### ***Chinese Language and Cambodian Perception Towards China***

Dr Vannarith Chheang

Chinese language has become one of the most attractive foreign languages in Cambodia. The demand for Chinese language is on the rise due to the influx of Chinese tourists and investments especially after 2010, when Cambodia and China signed their comprehensive strategic partnership. From the learners' perspective, employment and business opportunities are the main motivations to learn Chinese. To meet the growing demand of Chinese language, the Confucius Institute was established in 2009, with the objective to promote Chinese language and cultural exchanges. Gradually, the Institute has expanded to 12 provinces with 24 branches ten years later. Like cultural diplomacy, language diplomacy is a two-way interaction between two sets of identities. Therefore, the views of Cambodian learners of Chinese language matter. The hypotheses of the paper are: (a) there is a relationship between the acquisition of Chinese language and the learners' perception of China; (b) the learners play important role in promoting bilateral ties especially under the pillar of social and cultural cooperation.

**Chheang Vannarith**, Ph.D., is a public policy analyst with over a decade of research and practical experience in geopolitical and political economic analysis focusing on Southeast Asia. He is currently a visiting fellow at ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute and President of the Asian Vision Institute (AVI)- an independent think tank based in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. He received his BA in International Relations from the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam, MA in International Relations from the International University of Japan, Leadership Certificate from the East West Center, and Doctor of Philosophy in Asia Pacific Studies from the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University in Japan.

### **WEBINAR 3: NATIONALISM, NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY, AND THE PRESENCE OF XINYIMIN IN SOUTHEAST ASIA**

#### ***The Xinyimin Presence in Malaysia: A New Transnational Experience***

Professor Danny Wong Tze Ken

Precipitated by the rise of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in recent decades, Chinese capitalism has transformed itself with new facades, attracting much interest from politicians, academics, economists and other professionals. The variegated forms of Chinese transnational entrepreneurship have made their ways to Southeast Asia where their presence is significant. Their receptions varied in different countries, but many accepted some of them as part of their permanent residents and citizens.



This paper will look into the experience of Malaysia in dealing with this new Chinese Migrant group or xinyimin phenomenon by offering perspectives from four dimensions of activities, namely, Chinese workers in Malaysia, the Malaysia as Second Home Project, Chinese students in Malaysia, and the Hui (Uighur) factor. The paper argues that while there may be similar experience as in other maritime Southeast Asian countries, the Malaysian case could offer some slightly different perspectives which may help in the further understanding of this transnational Chinese diaspora experience in Southeast Asia. This paper will also attempt to ascertain if the presence of these xinyimin had impacted Malaysia's nation-building process.

**Danny Wong Tze Ken, Ph.D.**, is currently Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Malaya. He is a Professor of History and former Director of the Institute of China Studies. His research focuses on the Chinese in Malaysia and history of Sabah.

### *Old VS New? The Impacts of Xinyimin in Singapore*

Dr Tan Teng Phee

This paper will look into the issue of new Chinese Migrants (xinyimin) in Singapore and their impacts in general. Since the 1980s, the number of xinyimin migrating to Singapore has been increased steadily. This paper will trace its historical context and mainly focus on the following questions: Did these xinyimin set up their own associations? What is the nature of these associations? What are the local perceptions on these xinyimin? More importantly, what are the impacts of these xinyimin on Singapore Chinese community as well as whole society over the last four decades?

**Tan Teng Phee** obtained his PhD from the Asia Research Centre, Murdoch University, Western Australia, in 2011. The dissertation, "Behind Barbed Wire: A Social history of Chinese New Villages in Malaya during the Emergency Period (1948–1960)", was awarded a second prize for the best thesis on Asia, by Asian Studies Association of Australia's President's Prize and DK Award in 2012 and published in 2020.

### *Entrepreneurial Excursions: Short-Hop Chinese Migration at the Peripheries of Myanmar*

Dr Andrew Ong

This paper examines contemporary irregular migration of Chinese entrepreneurs and workers from all over China into the semi-autonomous regions of Northern Myanmar. Myanmar's land border with Southwest China offers the possibility for semi-legal migration into territories only partially controlled by the Myanmar state, where armed groups govern towns and resources. I call this "short-hop migration", characterized by the low stakes involved in travelling and securing admission to these territories, the ease of return, opportunities for frontier extraction and illicit economies, and the possibility of circumventing national restrictions on the flow of persons and capital. Such migration is often illegible to the Myanmar state, and falls outside regulation and statistical enumeration. I explore what is qualitatively different between this short-hop migration and the more formalized migration of Chinese nationals into larger Burman urban areas like Yangon and Mandalay. This form of migration is often an exploratory basis for further official movement down into other regions of Myanmar. Paradoxically, while this short-hop migration offers much potential for livelihood and fortune making outside the

gaze of the Myanmar state, its illicit nature renders it equally vulnerable to the instability of border markets and insecurity of personhood and property.

**Andrew Ong** is a political anthropologist whose work examines insurgent autonomy, political economy, and Chinese migrants in Myanmar. He received his PhD in Social Anthropology from Harvard University where his dissertation explored the stalemate between the Myanmar state and the country's largest armed group, the United Wa State Army (UWSA). He is currently working on a project amongst Chinese business communities in Myanmar.

#### **WEBINAR 4: CHINESE CULTURE AND CHINA'S SOFT POWER IN MARITIME SOUTHEAST ASIA**

##### ***Confucius Institutes in the Philippines: China's Educational Diplomacy Platforms***

Professor Lourdes M. Tanhueco-Nepomuceno

Relatively touted as vehicles of China's soft power, Confucius Institutes (CIs) are experiencing a sea of criticism from political and academic circles globally, thus rebranding Hanban to an NGO. Through a mixed-method study, the paper aims: (1) to provide a description of China's global network of CIs as educational diplomacy platforms; (2) to examine to what extent and how co-optation was evident among the CI university students, and (3) to provide readers and researchers a new perspective on China amid maritime disputes. Utilizing *Nye's Smart Power Theory*, this paper intends to fill in the gap in the literature by investigating how China's Soft Power influence the perceptions of the CI students on China-Philippines relations and the maritime dispute on the West Philippine Sea considering their exposure to the Chinese language, Chinese culture, and study immersion in China. The researcher concludes that perceptions were made because of two factors: (1). A lack of understanding towards the other side, and (2). The influence of the media over-playing the maritime dispute on the West Philippine Sea.

**Lourdes Tanhueco-Nepomuceno, Ph.D.**, is the Director of the Confucius Institute and Professor at the University of the Philippines-Diliman. She has been the President of the University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP) Philippines since 2016. She has held various inter-related capacities in the Philippines for 26 years and in the US for 17 years including Assistant to the Director of the Center for International Business and Public Policy, Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) Washington, DC., USA.

##### ***China's Soft Power-Play in Malaysia: Confucius Institute (CI) and Xiamen University (XU)***

Dr Peter T C Chang

With CI and XU, China's soft power is being projected onto the Malaysia education sector. Both (one a state-run global outfit, the other a standalone private university) serve to foster stronger people-to-people bond. The actual impact of these relatively new institutions in Malaysia remains to be seen. Nonetheless it will be argued that XU model marks a far more strategic and consequential development, namely, China's entry into one of few remaining Western-dominated arenas: international higher education. An entrance that would not merely

showcase China's soft power but potentially reshape the intellectual and scholastic landscape of the wider world, including Malaysia.

**Peter T. C. Chang, Ph.D.**, is the Deputy Director of the Institute of China Studies, University of Malaya. Trained in comparative philosophy and religion, he is currently researching China's rise from the perspective of the Chinese soft power's impact upon Malaysia and the wider world.

### ***China Cultural Centre and Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre: A Comparison***

Dr Ho Yi Kai

Singapore currently has two centres focused on promoting Chinese culture, i.e. the China Cultural Centre (Singapore) (CCC) established in 2015 and the Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre (SCCC) established in 2017. The former is one of the 30 such centres worldwide, which aims at creating a platform to promote Chinese culture through organizing events and activities, and to enhance the China-Singapore relationship. The latter also collaborates with local arts and cultural groups to promote and develop local Chinese culture through organizing events and activities, but its purpose is to nurture greater appreciation of Singapore's multi-cultural identity and a stronger sense of belonging among Singaporeans. This paper seeks to compare these two models in order to define their roles more clearly, and assess their effectiveness in achieving their respective goals.

**Ho Yi Kai**, Singaporean, obtained his BA in Chinese Language and Literature from Peking University as a Public Service Commission (PSC) Scholar, and his MA and PhD in the same field from Nanjing University. His research interest is in Chinese Classical Studies and in Overseas Chinese. He is currently Assistant Director of Confucius Institute, Nanyang Technological University.