IIAS hosts a large number of affiliated fellows (independent postdoctoral scholars), IIAS research fellows (PhD/postdoctoral scholars working on an IIAS research project), and fellows nominated and supported by partner institutions. Fellows are selected by an academic committee on the basis of merit, quality, and available resources. For extensive information on IIAS fellowships and current fellows please refer to the IIAS website.

IIAS Fellows

Eriko Aoki – Religious Life

In the last three decades I have conducted a number of anthropological studies on poetic knowledge, power, gender, children and education in a theoretical framework based on the interface of signification and materiality. As an anthropologist, I am interested in changing religious life for the people in a Lio-speaking village in eastern Flores in Indonesia, where I have been conducting anthropological fieldwork since 1979. The changes are due to the global economy, Catholicism, national-state, new media and the re-emergence of traditions.

The ritual control of the swidden agricultural cycle was believed to be necessary not only for a good harvest but also for fertility in the village. Although rituals have flourished, they are now less embedded in a substance production because cash crop cultivation and emigration for wage labour have spread since the 1990s.

Catholic practices have become part of the village life; but the localisation of Catholicism is done through participation by priests based on the ‘inculturation’ policy since the late 1990s.

Until the 1980s, villages as the realm of tradition were separated from town. Town dwellers were hardly ever interested in village religious life. Since the mid-1990s, however, several middle-aged men enjoying a high status in government offices have been eager to involve themselves in the traditional activities of their home villages.

Under the decentralization policy in the post-Suharto era and the influence of the global economy, the ritual-centres, political and economic issues at the same time. In order to determine the basis of knowledge I will pay careful attention to the personal experiences of many people in central Flores, whom I have known for a long time. I will explore documents and manuscripts concerning the ‘contact zones’ of peoples with diverse positonalities.

I greatly appreciate being in Leiden at the IIAS for this year, as I have access to these documents and manuscripts (in Dutch, Indonesian, and English), and have ample opportunity to discuss my research interests with other scholars.

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Nikky Lin – Back to Modernity

I am currently carrying out research at the IAS, “The Return of Modernism: A Comparative Study between Modernist Poetry in Taiwan and Mainland China in the post-1949 era”, in which I explore how modernist poetry in China and Taiwan effectively re-introduced modernism during the post-war period. I have been kindly provided in this project by the National Science Council in Taiwan.

Partaking in a global literary phenomenon, modernism was enthusiastically practised by Taiwanese and Chinese literary circles in the 1930s. Poets from the late Mountaineers Movement in Taiwan upheld surrealism as their identifying mark; whilst in China magazines such as Modern and Western Poetry emphasised literary modernity. Modernism had once served to broaden the aesthetic dimension for new poetry in Taiwan and China. However, such Western-inspired modernist poetry had lost its legitimacy after the Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937. Realism, which was believed to be able to meet the political and social demands of the time, had been sanctioned with ramp as the literary orthodoxy. Modernism, in sharp contrast, was deemed a decadent middle-class and cosmopolitan, Left, and individualistic and irrational by the Right.

Nevertheless, modernism returned to the realm of poetry when the government in both societies was still heavily intervening in literature. This re-emergence began in the mid-1950s when the KMT government’s interference in art and culture was at its peak; in China, it began in the late 1970s just after the Cultural Revolution had ended.

My research primarily compares the phenomenon of how the concept of modernism was separately re-introduced to Taiwan and China. The return of modernism to poetry in Taiwan and China occurred at different times. However, instead of focusing on the lack of simultaneous development across the strait, my research centres more on the differing trajectories of the modernist movements. My research of Taiwan begins in the mid-50s, when modernism was re-introduced at the forefront of the literary movement, and continues through the early 70s when the Modern Poetry Debate brought doubts on Western influence and re-directed poetry to a “roots/tradition searching.” As to China, my research starts in the late 70s with the emergence of Obscure Poetry, the beginning of avant-garde poetry, and continues through the Post-Obscure Poetry (Third Generation poets) in the late 80s.

Although the comparative research on Taiwanese and Chinese poetry started in the 80s, due to ideological limitations as well as misunderstandings generated from long-lasting separation across the strait, related research accomplishments have remained scarce. Therefore, I believe that a comparative study would make strides toward this understanding. I found IAS an ideal place to carry out the research of Chinese and Taiwanese modern poetry, due in part to its strong connection with Leiden University, which has an internationally unique collection of unofficial poetry journals from the People’s Republic of China by Professor Maghiel Van Creveld, who has made a long-term contribution to the study of Modern Chinese poetry. (nikky.lin@gmail.com)