Call for Papers:
Conference on The Asian Melting Pot: Asian History through the Multicultural Perspective

Organizers: Chulalongkorn University and the Asian Universities Alliance (AUA)

Conference venue: Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, THAILAND
(Most activities will be online)

Conference date: 20 – 21 February 2021

Abstract Submission Deadline: 31 October 2020

Chulalongkorn University in cooperation with the Asian Universities Alliance (AUA) is seeking paper proposals from academics, researchers, and graduate students of member institutions of the AUA and other universities for the AUA Conference 2021, which is scheduled to take place at Chulalongkorn University, in Bangkok, Thailand on 21-22 February 2021 (considering the circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the conference is planned to be, at least, partially virtual). The title for this year's conference is "The Asian Melting Pot: Asian History through the Multicultural Perspective," which is designed to be relatively broad and inclusive of a wide range of fields in the humanities and social science and with the possibility to include works from every region across the Asian continent, as well as trans-regional and trans-continental works.

Description of "The Asian Melting Pot" and Related Themes

The conference is designed to encourage AUA member participants to bring forth the rich history of multicultural exchanges across the Asian continent from the early modern period to the present day. Asia has great diversity in terms of ethnicity, linguistics, religion, and various other cultural practices. Throughout the modern period and up to the present day, we have seen much more cooperation, collaboration, assimilation, exchange and learning among different Asian cultures, than violent conflicts. There is much that we can learn from history in this aspect of multicultural Asia. How did so much knowledge, faith, art, and the habits of everyday life travel from Japan to Anatolia and from Persia to Southeast Asia in eras long before the internet? How did great masses of different languages and religions coexisted peacefully within the Subcontinent for thousands of years and how did so many tribes and ethnic groups travel through the Silk Road in relative calm and bring about such amazing prosperity in a time long before the invention of modern technologies of communication and transportation? These are the major questions "The Asian Melting Pot" conference aims to investigate. Hopefully, it would allow a common line of academic inquiry that could bring most members of the AUA

network—from Tokyo to Yangon and all the way to the UAE—together and perhaps encourage future collaborations among participants with similar interests.

Within this very broad title of "The Asian Melting Pot," there are three major themes through which the conference would evolve around.

1. **Revisiting 'Sites of Modernity'** This theme refers to an international workshop organized at the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University in 2011, titled "Sites of Modernity: Asian Cities and their Evolution through Trade, Colonialism, and Nationalism." That workshop explored the shared experience of modernization of Asian cities across the continent from the late 18th century through the end of the Cold War. In that event, we proposed that there were three common themes of shared experience across Asia during the period in question; trade, colonialism and nationalism. Proceedings from that workshop have been published as the edited volume, *Sites of Modernity: Asian Cities in the Transitory Moments of Trade, Colonialism and Nationalism* (Springer 2016). A full decade has passed since the 'Sites of Modernity' workshop and we see many more interesting issues emerging in urban studies and related fields, especially across the Asian continent—problems with conservation, gentrification, urban migration, urban environmental issues, cities in the pandemic, etc. This should be the perfect opportunity to revisit our first investigation of 'Sites of Modernity' to see how we could better understand the 'Asian Melting Pot' through the various modes of interaction, development, politicization and globalization that has been occurring in cities across the continent from the early modern period to the present day. We welcome proposals along the same line of the first conference—that is the themes of trade, colonialism and nationalism—but would also be delighted to receive proposals with more novel themes of what might be new areas of shared experiences of cities across Asia in the 21st century.

2. **The Humanity of Migration** This theme is intended for the exploration of cultural exchanges across the Asian continent that occur as results of various forms of migration from the pre-colonial period to the present day. This could include the travels of religious preachers and practitioners, the transfer of technology through the travels of artists, artisans and technocrats within or between regions across Asia, significant demographic and cultural changes due to mass labor migrations such as the import of Chinese labor to Southeast Asia during the Colonial era, or the emergence of new shared cultural identity that comes with the promotion of modern international organizations, such as ASEAN or BIMST-EC. The humanity of migration could also expand into the realm of linguistics, translation and rituals and performances, so that shared narratives or cultural icons are often transformed through the translation of a text from one language to the other, or the different rituals involved in the practice of the same faith in different localities, or the different styles of performance of a shared epic within a region or across regions in Asia, would also be most welcomed for this theme.

3. **The Intra-Asian State Networks** While theme#2 The Humanity of Migration looks at the cultural exchanges made by people-to-people through various forms of migration,

theme#3 The Intra-Asian State Networks focuses the investigation to the interactions, cooperation, conflicts and resolutions among state agents across the Asian continent from the early modern period to the present day. Prime examples of some networks that could be included in this theme are the Chinese imperial tribute trade network, networks of state-sponsored religious proselytization, networks of colonial states, the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, networks of communist insurgents across state boundaries, and the numerous international organizations in Asia, including the latest highly influential network of states involved in the PRC-initiated Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The exchanges made through the intra-Asian state networks not only greatly enhanced the Asian melting pot, these networks also significantly influenced state formation and nation building across the continent from the pre-colonial period up to the post-Cold War.

Eligibility and Selection Criteria

This conference is organized by Chulalongkorn University in cooperation with the Asian Universities Alliance. First priority would be given to member institutions of the AUA, but proposals from other institutions that focus on Asia and clearly relate with one of the three above elaborated themes would also be welcome. As the organizers intend to support the publication of proceedings from the conference in academic journals in related fields, priority would be given to proposals that have not been published before.

To submit a proposal, please prepare the following, in the order listed below, all in a single Microsoft word file or pdf document, by 31 October 2020:
   a. **Applicant's Name, position, affiliation, and contact information** (e-mail and mobile phone number)
   b. **Paper abstract.** 250 words
   c. **Brief bio-sketch** of 200-300 words describing current and recent scholarly positions, a brief sentence or two about current research, and any significant publications.
   d. **Current curriculum vitae** (not more than 3 pages)
   e. Please save the file with the following filename convention:
      AUA2021_ApplicantsFamilyName1.doc for submissions to theme#1
      AUA2021_ApplicantsFamilyName2.doc for submissions to theme#2
      AUA2021_ApplicantsFamilyName3.doc for submissions to theme#3
   f. All proposals and further queries should be submitted via email to
      AUA.MeltingPot2021@gmail.com

Timeline for proposal selection and preparation for the conference*

Deadline for proposal submission   31 October 2020
Notification of selected proposals   6 December 2020
Submission of paper draft   1 February 2021
Presentation at conference   21-22 February 2021
*No registration fee