

# 通 ASIA SAVVY

NEW ZEALAND ASIA CONFERENCE 2015

**Get Asia-ready  
- your pathway to success**

29 August 2015



NEW ZEALAND  
ASIA INSTITUTE

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND





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## Conference concept: New Zealand Asia Conference 2015

**For this year's event, our committee has chosen to focus on further developing a valuable toolkit to equip students for their future career path that will very likely be framed around Asia. It is our intent to create a globalized, culturally-aware generation of Asia Savvy students.**

As in previous years, we strive to further develop awareness of the importance of the relationships between Asia and New Zealand. We recognise and promote the idea that these countries' cultural, political and economic exchange will only increase in the future, as well as its significance for the tertiary students, the workforce of tomorrow.

The committee has channelled their energy into the creation of an event that recognizes New Zealand's global position and uses students existing, and fledgling skills to capitalise on this. It is a day of engaged discussion, learning from experts and meeting valuable new connections.

This year, we have made the move to becoming a sustainable event. We're proud to be a prototype and to lead the way for other university events to consider more carefully how to reduce their carbon footprint.

You will have noticed our logo, a character which represents the essence of what we at Asia Savvy strive to develop. The character 通 (tōng in Mandarin) means to connect, communicate, understand and be an expert

in something. It therefore strongly reinforces our goals of connecting people and helping them to build their knowledge and skills around the importance of Asia.

It is of note to mention that this is Asia Savvy's fifth year, where the experience of the years past have led to us being able to fully address the question of what Asia Savvy actually means, as well as its relevance to students. We look forward to celebrating this occasion with all our attendees, with many prizes and lots of fun activities!

Kind regards

Jennifer Tate  
Project Manager  
Asia Savvy 2015 Committee



**The 2015 organising committee with ambassadors from left to right:** Evangeleen Joseph, Cindy Yuan, Akshat Chugh, Kevin Huh, Jennifer Tate, Cecilia Fang, Annie Ren, Dinah Towle (absent: Richard Phillips).

# Greening Asia Savvy

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**This year, Asia Savvy partnered with the University of Auckland's Sustainable and Environment Department to pilot the Instep Sustainable Event Programme, an international recognised set of criteria to help may it more sustainable.**

The data collated will give us a greater understanding of how our event impacts on the environment and allow us to take action to minimise this impact and promote good practice.

We demonstrated our commitment by:

- Being mindful of our impact during our conference preparation e.g. minimise energy, travel, waste, water and paper use, etc.
- Using local, organic and sustainable food wherever possible.
- Monitoring the Asia Savvy Conference and reporting on the carbon footprint of the event.
- Using the 'pilot' programme results to examine the feasibility of building a comprehensive Sustainable Events Policy to help to reduce the impact of future events within the University of Auckland.
- Actively communicating our commitment through the Asia Savvy website with communications about the conference and seeking support from all stakeholders.

We believe Asia Savvy students have the potential to make a difference in protecting the environment for the future

During the event, students carried out a transport survey while we collected data relating to our plant and buildings for analysis. The students were invited to firstly be 'eco-savvy' about their own environmental impact during the day. They provided suggestions on how we could further improve our environmental impact as seen on our Asia Savvy Tree.



**Asia Savvy Sustainability Tree with suggestions from participants on how we can minimise waste for future events.**



## Conference programme

### Opening addresses

Natasha Hamilton-Hart	Southeast Asia Studies Director, New Zealand Asia Institute, University of Auckland
Jennifer Tate	Project Manager, Asia Savvy Committee

### Keynote Speech: Get Asia ready – your pathway to success

Siah Hwee Ang	The Bank of New Zealand Chair in Business in Asia, Victoria University of Wellington
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### Panel Discussion 1: The rise of economies in Asia and its impact on New Zealand

Jay Waters	Embassy of the Republic of Korea
Laura Browne	Researcher, New Zealand Asia Institute
Chris Henderson	Consultant, Cognition Education
Kevin Huh	Student Moderator, Asia Savvy Conference Organising Committee

### Panel Discussion 2: How to use your Asia-savvy skillset in an international career

Nova Mercier	MBIE
Todd Graydon	ECOYA
Jade Gray	Gung Ho! Pizza
Cindy Yuan	Student Moderator, Asia Savvy Conference Organising Committee

### Panel Discussion 3: How to be Asia-savvy in New Zealand

Knight Hou	Air New Zealand
Lena Li	Manpower
Sachie Nomura	Sachie's Kitchen
Akshat Chugh	Student Moderator, Asia Savvy Conference Organising Committee

# Summary of presentations

## Get Asia-ready – your pathway to success

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**Another Asia Savvy conference, another successful gathering! That was the sentiment conveyed to the 100-strong audience by Project Manager Jennifer Tate when she opened the 5th annual student-led, NZAI-sponsored forum on 29 August 2015. Echoing the enthusiasm and confidence of the Organising Committee, Professor Natasha Hamilton-Hart, Director of NZAI's Southeast Asia Studies Centre, applauded in her welcome remarks the event's future-looking energy, learning-centred approach and interactive settings for participation and connecting. These features, she noted, enabled the forum to grow from strength to strength and become a significant component of NZAI's effort to help promote public understanding of Asia in New Zealand.**

**Professor Siah Hwee Ang** from the School of Marketing and International Business at Victoria University of Wellington delivered the keynote address. He taught and served as the Associate Dean Postgraduate and International in Auckland Business School for ten years before his current appointment in 2013 as the inaugural BNZ Chair in Business in Asia at Victoria.

Professor Ang began with a brief overview of his role responsibilities as the BNZ Chair, pointing out that the position, the result of a partnership between Victoria University, the Bank of New Zealand and three key government agencies, signified a nationwide, cross-sector keenness for more and informed engagement with Asia. Drawing on his extensive involvement in domestic and international executive programmes and consulting projects, he emphasised that for New Zealanders seeking business or other substantive interactions with Asia, knowing how to use chopsticks, whether to eat the last piece on a serving plate, or who should sit towards the door, would not suffice for being “savvy” about the region. They should have at least some grasp of the economy, politics, geography, development, history and socio-political issues of the countries they would want to do business with.

Professor Ang took note of recent research data showing that Kiwi businesses commonly expected Asia to be the most influential factor, positive or otherwise, in the New Zealand economy in the foreseeable future. Yet while seeing Asia as holding the key to growth, many local businesses felt ill-equipped in terms of resources to tackle the big market of four billion people, particularly countries like China and India. Professor Ang acknowledged that in coping with the challenge of asymmetrical size, some Kiwi companies fixed their gaze on smaller cities in the two Asian giants, and others joined the appeal for New Zealand to shift more attention to ASEAN as an alternative trade option to China. He cautioned, however, that ASEAN's own economic integration with China was already quite advanced. This meant that Southeast Asian countries would acutely feel the impact of and readily react to changes in China's economy. A case in point was that when China devalued its yuan after the “Black Monday”

crash of its stock market in August this year, all emerging markets, including those in ASEAN, followed suit and lowered their currencies to stay competitive. An important lesson here was that to do well in Asia, New Zealand businesses would need to be “savvy” in a broader sense rather than simply having a rudimentary cultural, protocol and demographic awareness of the region.



**Jay Waters, Senior Advisor, Embassy of the Republic of Korea**

The speakers in the following panels substantiated Professor Ang's argument through their personal work and life experiences in Asia and New Zealand. **Jay Waters**, Senior Advisor to the Korean Embassy in Wellington, recalled the importance and usefulness of maintaining a constant sense of appreciation of Korea's 5,000-year history in his daily decisions and social interactions when living in that country. Speaking on the long-standing and multifaceted relationship between New Zealand and Korea since the Korean War, he maintained that Kiwis should engage more with Korea as they might find it an easier country to do business with than other giant economies in Asia. Jay encouraged interested members in the audience to take advantage of many available opportunities presented through scholarships, English teaching jobs and commercial internships as pathways to Korea.

Keynote speaker Professor Siah Hwee Ang, The Bank of New Zealand Chair in Business and Asia, School of Marketing and International Business at Victoria University of Wellington





Laura Browne, Researcher, New Zealand Asia Institute

**Laura Browne** from NZAI, who once lived and studied in China for more than a decade, noted that the billion-people country was not merely stock market crashes, pollution, growing appetites for luxury brands, which hit headlines worldwide. It was, instead, a complex and segmented society featuring at one level wide generation gaps, even between those of the “post 80’s” and “post 90’s”, with the former commonly seen as being ambitious but naïve, and the latter worldly but pessimistic. Yet given the fact that seven million new tertiary graduates were added to the job market each year, observed Laura, both groups felt uncertain about their future and hence adopted an attitude of “living for the moment”. In other words, their looking for hobbies, indulging in consumerism, touring the world and studying overseas, including New Zealand, were by and large for “experiencing things today”. This mentality also saw young Chinese promoting and practising “togetherness” for fun through social networks, such as WeChat that had 450 million monthly active users.



Chris Henderson, Project Leader, Cognition Education

Sharing his extensive consulting and project managing experience in Southeast Asia, **Chris Henderson** from Cognition Education Ltd called for Kiwis who planned to build their careers in ASEAN countries to invest in people and places there rather than only its markets. He believed that by doing so, they would actually also invest in their own abilities, including cultural competence, which in turn would help open doors and cultivate relationships. He opined that those who tried to connect to Southeast Asia should pay attention particularly to Indonesia as its demographic dividend projected to continue for the next 20 or so years indicated increasing numbers of young people, growing entrepreneurship, more cutting-edge activities, and rising purchasing power. Connecting with that social segment should provide massive opportunities for New Zealand. Yet Chris also alerted the audience about the fact that Kiwis might find it ever more challenging to work as consultants in Indonesia. For to lower costs, institutions and companies there increasingly sought to hire skilled young people from countries like the Philippines and Thailand rather than from Western nations. Indonesia’s intensifying competitive environment required New Zealand to keep looking for new ways to sustain its effective business engagement with that country.



Jade Gray, Co-Founder, Gung Ho! Pizza

Gong Ho! Pizza Beijing co-founder **Jade Gray** fascinated and intrigued the audience with his enterprising spirit, varied commercial involvements, resourcefulness and creativity in grabbing market opportunities and responding effectively to challenges in building and running businesses in China since the mid-1990s. He began his colourful journey first working as a ski instructor in China's Heilongjiang Province, then managing a cattle ranch in Liaoning Province, and later running a supermarket in Yunnan Province. From 2000 onwards, he went into setting up his own ventures in Beijing, which included a gym franchise and several food and beverage establishments. In 2010, Prime Minister John Key cut the ribbon of his Gong Ho! Pizza chain in Beijing. During his twenty odd years in China, he always incorporated public-good initiatives into his business activities, ranging from collecting rubbish on the Great Wall to starting an organisation to fund Dog Shelters in China's capital. Jade's rich and successful business development experiences in China attracted the attention of the New Zealand government, which appointed him to its Business Beachheads Advisory Board (China) in 2009. His "three P's" business motto, i.e., profits, people and planet, was covered by China Daily, which was also his advice to those in the audience who planned to engage in commercial activities in Asia.



Nova Mercier, Policy Adviser, MBIE

**Nova Mercier**, a Policy Advisor from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, told her story of how a chance opportunity of teaching English in South Korea in 2008 inspired her to learn the Korean language, get a scholarship to complete her MA in Sungkyunkwan University in Seoul, tutor North Korean refugees in English, and work for a digital site sharing their insights. She believed that her extensive exposure to Korea widened her horizons, polished her skills, provided a springboard for her career in New Zealand, and enabled her to envision connecting with the broader region beyond Korea. Nova invited interested members of the Asia Savvy community to check out the Kimchi Club, a network of young professionals having ties with Korea, which went global soon after its opening in New Zealand in 2009.





Todd Graydon, International Markets Manager, ECOYA

International Markets Manager, **Todd Graydon** from ECOYA generously shared the “secrets” behind his enviable long list of seeding and growing New Zealand brands and exporting them to Asia and other parts of the world. He explained in simple and straightforward language that since “trading” was in the DNA of Kiwis, the best revenue strategy growth was to keep finding new customers and increasing average sales; the best marketing strategy was not to focus on a product but promote its origin country, for example 100% clean and pure New Zealand; and the best export strategy was to get on the plane. His specific tips were (1) be a passionate believer of one’s own products; (2) press forward no matter how painful the “birth” process was; (3) have adequate cash flows; (4) pay attention to catalogues; (5) remain sales-led rather than market-, or product-, or engineering-led; (6) hunt for “big fish”; (7) hunt for even “bigger fish”; (8) make a lot of noise; (9) build and maintain a good company culture, as that would be the greatest asset to build brand on; and (10) think big and be brave.



Knight Hou, Community Relationship Manager, Government and Industry Affairs, Air New Zealand

Growing up in China, holding a BCom and postgraduate diploma from the University of Auckland, and working for Air New Zealand as its Community Relationship Manager, **Knight Hou** defined “savvy” as being not only well-informed and shrewd about a domain, but also understanding, communicative and thorough. He deemed that the rise of Asia furnished New Zealand with an opportunity to move itself from the “edge of the world” to a “linking” point between North America/West and Asia. In his opinion, those who wanted and were able to play a role in the change should have an open mind and be willing and ready to challenge their comfort zones. They should understand that culture emerged from history and land, and hence that learning about reasons behind different rituals and practices would constitute the first step towards building common grounds for doing business.



Lena Li, Recruitment Consultant, Manpower

Yet how could “Asia-savvy” university graduates get potential employers interested in them? **Lena Li**, a recruitment consultant from Manpower Group, suggested some strategic and hand-on tips. She first asked the audience to always remember that recruitment is about “you”, not the company. She then stressed that recruitment agents and potential employers would normally look for “key words” in applicants’ CVs and during interviews to help uncover “special” candidates. In this regard, contenders could borrow commonly recognised “key words”, or show their “difference” by coming up with their own that might demonstrate creativity, humour and sophistication. Lena assured the audience that recruitment agents were not there to make people fail, but to help them reach their goals. Yet to realise this intention, applicants would have to first find their goals, know their values, be able to articulate to “strangers” their uniqueness, and demonstrate their self-confidence in being “Asia savvy”. She reminded the audience not to overlook social media platforms, such as LinkedIn, or treat them carelessly, when constructing, communicating and managing their professional profiles. Recruitment agents and companies regularly checked there for top talents and references.



Sachie Nomura, Founder, Sachie's Kitchen

**Sachie Nomura's** success in building her award-winning Sachie's Kitchen Cooking School in New Zealand and her head-hunting practices for qualified, “Asia savvy” and “unique” employees exemplified many of the key points highlighted by the above guest speakers. She emphasised that as a Japanese-born “new Asian-New Zealander”, her cooking school, internationally syndicated Sachie's Kitchen TV show, popular cook book Sachie's Kitchen, 15,000 Facebook followers, and 30,000 plus customers did not come out of the blue. When embarking on her ventures, she would go through the process of writing down her dreams on a whiteboard, creating visions, setting goals, working out road maps, executing plans and taking time for reflections. Besides putting her heart, mind, spirit and soul into her endeavours, Sachie attributed her achievements also to the fact that she saw each of her projects as a “bridge” to help others reach their goals, be it the cooking school, a TV show, or a publication. She revealed that among the new ideas on her whiteboard was to do something together with the NZ Olympic Committee for the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo.

The engaging guest speakers and their stimulating talks inspired heated discussions among the 100 strong student participants during the three workshop breakout sessions. They eagerly exchanged opinions on where to work in Asia, how to use their Asia-savvy skillsets in international careers, and how to be Asia-savvy in New Zealand.

They also enthusiastically participated in the pilot green event initiative and activities jointly introduced into this year's Asia-savvy conference by the Organising Committee and the University's Sustainability and Environment office to reduce carbon footprint and waste of the forum. The results were encouraging: 55% of the conference waste was recyclable; and 58% of the attendees used public transport.

## Student discussions and recommendations

Each panel discussion was followed by a workshop for students moderated by committee members and others. During these workshops students put forward their ideas and recommendations relating to the various panel discussion. A summary of these recommendations follows.



## Workshop discussion 1: The rise of economies in Asia and its impact on New Zealand

### ***Discuss the reasons why you would like to work in Asia***

Participants were enthusiastic about wanting to incorporate working in Asia into their future careers. The students identified a range of reasons during the workshop which can be broadly grouped into the following summary.

Career advancement was cited as a strong motivator for some, to work in Asia. **Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan** were popular for their stable and progressive economy and openness. **China**, as a major world power, was chosen for the sheer breadth of opportunities across a range of sectors. Furthermore, some highlighted the strong strategic relationship between NZ and China as being a major factor.

Others were more driven by adventure. **Vietnam, India and Indonesia** were selected by those who wished to work and live in more developing and dynamic environments. Additionally the rapid development provides opportunities for innovation and technology to blossom. The opportunity to be immersed in cultures was an underlying theme in many responses. In particular, **Japan and South Korea** were cited for their rich heritage.

## Workshop discussion 2: How to use your Asia-savvy skillset in an international career

### ***Discuss what you think are the main skills to being Asia-savvy***

#### ***What would you find most challenging if you found out tomorrow you had secured a job for a company based in Asia?***

The main discussions around Asia-savvy skills centred on the need to develop certain personal values. Cultural awareness was seen as the key skill necessary for a career in Asia. This encompassed a number of values, the most commonly discussed being the importance of being open-minded, adaptable and resilient.

The anticipated challenges are grounded in these cultural differences. Working in Asia would require understanding how to adapt to local culture where things work differently. This includes anything from different food, different climate, and different languages to different regulations and different work expectations – culture shock!

## Workshop discussion 3: How to be Asia-savvy in New Zealand

### ***What skills can an Asia-savvy student bring to an employer?***

#### ***What are the key personal steps you can take to find the right career?***

The workshop identified important skills Asia-savvy employees can bring to a job including approaching issues from multiple perspectives; building empathy with a range of people from different backgrounds; and the ability to maintain integrity through their actions. Given the importance of these skills, the groups identified a number of ways to help them as they embark on their careers.

A few good practical ideas emerged from the discussions:

- Find people (either locally or globally) working in the sort of career you want and see what you can learn from their journeys. When meeting new people, you can learn a lot from their experiences and the wisdom they have gained. These are opportunities to reflect on your own strengths and weaknesses and to figure out how to integrate these lessons as you move forward.
- Be proactive in searching for opportunities to increase your exposure to a range of people with different experiences whether this is through attending conferences, networking, watching Ted Talks, applying for internships or joining relevant clubs.

# Selected student essays

## *What does 'Asia Savvy' mean to you?*

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### **Terina Choi**

Auckland University of Technology

In recent years a dramatic increase in interest in Asian countries has developed. Personally my own interest in Asia has been prevalent since a young age. With a constant and unwavering interest in countries full of rich culture and customs it has always drawn my attention. Over the years I have encountered a variety of people ranging in interest in Asia as a whole, specific countries, music, etc. For me personally through the encounters I have had, I have observed the difference between a relative interest in Asia and being Asian Savvy.

To be someone who is Asia Savvy can be broken up into three main components. They have an ever developing love and interest in Asia, they harbour an interest in international relations in relevance with Asian countries and New Zealand, or even extending into other countries around the globe, and finally they assist in the education and spread of the Asia Wave. A person who is Asia Savvy is essentially someone who proactively labours to extend not only their knowledge and experience with Asia, but also actively works towards connecting and engaging with Asia. Those that are Asia Savvy are also working towards breaking stereotypes of Asians that many in the community still hold about Asian communities. As many outdated stereotypes are still circulated in today's modern society.

Like myself, many of those that are Asia Savvy use the knowledge and interest in Asia and implement their ideas within their lives. Many take their love for Asia and experience it by working in the countries of highest interest. By working in Asia they are assisting in creating links between Asia and New Zealand and supporting their interest in the culture. In today's modern technological age Asia savvy ambassadors use social media as a means of pushing the Asian wave that has hit the globe further. It is done through sharing Facebook posts, blogs, and even through sites such as YouTube. Through sharing music, political posts, movies, experiences, and thoughts on social media those that are ignorant to aspects of Asia are able to be educated through a medium that is relevant to today's day and age.

I believe that to be Asia Savvy truly means that you appreciate, respect and engage with Asian culture. It means that you want everyone to understand and enjoy the many exciting and ever developing components that each Asian country has to offer. They also actively promote Asia/ New Zealand relations and find ways to be ambassadors and promote relations globally between Asia and New Zealand and bridge the cultural gap between the countries creating more acceptance, knowledge and friendships internationally. "In the sky there is no distinction between east and west; people create distinctions in their own minds and then believe them." Buddha

### **Yulia Khan**

Auckland University of Technology

As New Zealand is becoming more ethnically and culturally diverse (Royal Society of New Zealand, 2013), it is crucial to develop empathy, have willingness to learn about other cultures and other languages, be flexible and have an open mind. Increasing diversity and migration inevitably change our ways of interacting with people, how things are approached and done, what we can expect from others and what can be expected from us.

Based on the recent figures from Immigration New Zealand (Immigration New Zealand, 2015), the highest number of skilled migrants come from India, the Philippines and China. Migrants from other Asian countries, ASEAN and APEC members, continue to choose New Zealand as one of their preferred destinations.

A strong presence of different Asian communities in major New Zealand cities, especially Auckland, suggests that organisations will need to cater for the needs and demands of their diverse clientele. This involves having multilingual staff and employees willing to learn and adapt to change fairly quickly: be ready to work in multinational teams, accept secondment opportunities or adjust business practices to the new standards with a careful consideration of cultural values. These examples apply not only to the employees who deal with customers on a daily basis, but to the very top-level management and across various management levels.

A fair question is how one can develop these skills and become 'Asia savvy'. In my view, the onus is not only on individuals who could gain knowledge and expertise as part of their secondary and tertiary education, but also on organisations. Both private and public sectors should encourage and provide opportunities for their staff to learn Asian languages, develop intercultural competence, and gain an understanding of overseas business practices. Businesses and organisations could embed these opportunities into staff's professional development, and make workplaces and business practices inclusive.

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## Annie Ren

The University of Auckland

Being Asia Savvy is an important concept for both Asians and Non-Asians in New Zealand's society today. First of all, 'Konnichiwa', 'Annyeonghaseyo' and 'Ni hao'. If you don't recognise any of these words, then it's definitely a worry. These are just a few examples of the most basic expressions in Asian countries, which all say "hello". Being able to greet someone in their native tongue can immediately shorten the distance between you two and contribute to a more meaningful relationship. The power of knowledge is immense and it is vital for us to be able to grasp opportunities by equipping ourselves with more Asian knowledge.

Today is no longer the time when we can afford to think narrowly as everything is happening on an international scale, whether it's our trading, cultural exchange or participation in sports events. Being Asia Savvy will enable all New Zealanders to broaden their perspectives while learn something new, relevant and gain a competitive edge in the job market.

As a 'Kiwi Asian', being Asia Savvy has two key meanings for me. Firstly, it represents an ability to connect all the dots. This means being able to draw similarities and differences between New Zealand and a particular Asian country and leveraging on this understanding.

Secondly, it signifies the degree to which an individual is educated on how to benefit the most from his or her Asian backgrounds. Currently, many of the next-generation Asians, especially those that were born and raised here, either struggle to identify themselves or lack an understanding of their ancestor's culture and traditions. Therefore, it is vital for these youngsters to learn and explore their own role in shaping the future of Asia and New Zealand relations in a wide range of aspects in order to achieve an integration of both cultures. Being Asian is definitely more than possessing that particular skin colour, it is about understanding and connecting with the Asian culture. This is when those 'Kiwi Asians' can truly realise the most benefits from being Asian and make a contribution to society.

Overall, empowering individuals to be Asia-Savvy would have long term benefits for both individuals and the society as a whole.

## Sonja Rose

The University of Auckland

Asia Savvy to me means recognising the influence and importance of Asia in today's globalised world and doing something about it. It is generally agreed upon by the public that Asia is important. Geographically it covers a huge amount of the globe, and although even though finding a specific definition of what actually is Asia can prove difficult, the population of 'Asian' people is mind-bogglingly so much larger than our home population in New Zealand.

The growing importance of Asia's economy is also widely recognised. Indeed, according to the IMF, Asia is the one leading the world out of the worst recession in over half a century. It is estimated that by 2030, Asia's economy will be larger than the US and the European Union combined. Because Asia has the highest number of people in poverty this is also important for world development targets, as the socio-economical upward mobility of Asia's poor will significantly affect the amount of people in poverty in the world.

I believe that an important part of being Asia Savvy is recognising the difference between New Zealand culture and Asian culture but while also acknowledging the many differences in Asia itself. This is important as it is a common occurrence for the public to generalise and lump Asia together, not taking note of vast differences in languages, cultures, development, geographical placement, religion, and history.

This is important to know because according to accounts from sources like the Asia New Zealand Foundation, while Western civilisation has dominated a lot of the past, the future lies with Asia. In order for people, especially New Zealanders, to succeed in a world driven by Asia they need to attempt to understand it. People agree that Asia is important and ties need to be created, but the general populace does not seem to be doing anything about it. They just recognise the importance and presence of Asia and then dismiss it.

Things that people can do are show interest in Asia, explore the differences in the culture, visit Asia, experiment with Asian Cuisine, learn an Asian language, learn more about the history of Asia and explore the impacts that Asia has on our own lives.

*What do you think are the most valuable skills to be successful in order to ride the Asia Wave?*

**Richard Watts**

The University of Auckland

The rise of Asia represents an opportunity as much as it represents a challenge. Over 4 billion potential customers live relatively close to New Zealand, and far closer than our traditional European markets. However these people also possess alien cultures that are not well understood within a business context, so knowledge is needed to turn these challenges into opportunities.

The most valuable skill within an Asian business context is understanding the culture and background of potential business partners. Each different Asian culture has different expectations around how business is conducted, and for business to go smoothly each culture needs its own consideration. Cultural misunderstandings can ruin business relationships, and cause opportunities to be lost.

Many Asian businesses have taken time and effort to learn western cultures and customs, so that when they came to our countries they could engage with us appropriately in order to make us their customers. If we want to make them customers then we need to reciprocate the same level of understanding of their cultures in order to sell to them.

Each Asian culture is different, and within each country there can be many subcultures. For instance in India the different states have different cultures, and they can have different languages as well. A resident in Punjabi may conduct business differently than someone from Hyderabad or Mumbai. The richness and diversity of Asian cultures needs to be respected in order to do business with them, and this is more than just at a topical or overview level. Learning to understand the subtleties of doing business in Asia is a major competitive advantage when competing to establish partnerships or customers in the region.

*What are the global implications of the rise of Asia?*

**Daniel Yee**

The University of Auckland

The 20th century was dominated by Western empires and nations based in Europe and North America and projecting their military, economic and cultural power across the globe. This consequently shaped the world we live in today. This century is destined to see the rise of Asia, particularly China which is an emerging giant in the region and undoubtedly a future superpower.

A range of global implications may follow. As China becomes a major economic player in the global economy with companies all over the world rushing to do business with the Chinese, Mandarin as a global language will grow in importance. The seeds of this development are already in place through the networks of Confucius Institutes around the world spreading the Chinese language culture and the Chinese government providing scholarships to thousands of foreign students to study in China.

A greater burden will be placed on the Earth's resources. With a significant proportion of the planet's population living in Asia, as these countries' economies and living standards grow, their thirst for natural resources will increase. The issue of pollution will also become a greater problem facing this region of the world. The growth of China as a superpower will contribute to a more even balance of power in the world rather than being unilaterally dominated by the United States. Whether this may contribute to a new Cold War is unknown but is unlikely given the dependence of their economies on each other.

It would be beneficial to us as New Zealanders to ensure we are ready and possess the skills to ride the Asia wave, as the rise of Asia will unquestionably shape the world in more ways than one.

# *What are the global implications of the rise of Asia?*

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## **Lan Yin**

The University of Auckland

The global implications for the rise of Asia will be felt in not just Asia itself, but also surrounding countries and the rest of the world. The rise of the dual powerhouses, China and India has served to draw global attention to the potential that lies in Asia. On an economic level, the rise of Asia has obvious implications in shifting economic hubs from a more Europe/America focus to Asia. The resurgence of the Silk Road and establishment of multiple bilateral treaties combined with India and China's powerhouse GDPs is a sure combination to attract investment as well as produce more growth in the region. This economic growth will accompany a wave of Asian wealth and a consequential elevation in the standards of life in Asia.

With this economic rise, the political ramification is that India and China will begin to emerge in prominence on the global stage. An example of such can be seen through the Diaoyudao/Senkaku Islands dispute earlier this year where China was seen to flex her military wings. Conflict between these rising superpowers and the rest of the world seems inevitable. Lastly, the increase in economic and political strength will also be reflected in more global cultural awareness of Asia.

The perceived rise of China has sparked a multiplicity of mandarin classes for children as well as the culturally sensitive businessman. In the next few decades, exportation of goods from Asia will also be accompanied with the exportation of Asian business practices. In light of such rising economic and political influence, Asian countries will be seen to shrug off the last remnants of the "oriental cloak" that colonialism has laid down and establish themselves as able and productive global participants.



# Acknowledgements

The Asia Savvy committee would like to thank Ben Fath, Antje Fiedler and Laura Browne for their valued contribution towards developing the conference. We would also like to thank our newly appointed Ambassadors who volunteered their energy and time towards making the conference a success.

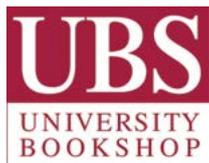
The Asia Savvy committee acknowledges the generous support for this year's conference from:

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