

For Immediate Release

“When Aristotle Meets Confucius”

Yale-NUS College to offer unique liberal arts learning in partnership with Tan Chin Tuan Foundation

Singapore --- The first students and professors of Yale-NUS College will have a unique educational experience: American liberal arts college studies re-imagined with Asian perspectives and experiences.

To help make this possible, the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation will make a gift of five million dollars for a Professorship in China & Chinese Studies and a Program in Chinese Culture & Civilization for undergraduate students. Influential ideas and writings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius will be taught alongside Aristotle, for example, and their ideas brought into conversation. The model of liberal arts studies which traditionally emphasizes Western thinkers and philosophers will be enriched via opportunities for cross-cultural and comparative learning at Yale-NUS College. In this way, and others, the College will make key improvements to current liberal arts offerings, and will meet the need for liberal arts education in Asia.

“The role of the Foundation is to be a catalyst and driver in creating a multiplier effect when giving. Our philanthropic initiatives in education are an extension of that philosophy. We hope that our gift to the Yale-NUS College will instill a sense of history and tradition in our local and regional communities, making an education in Singapore and the region unique. Our Foundation will link Yale-NUS with other institutions supporting Chinese studies, and should enable Yale-NUS College to have a pivotal role in perpetuating knowledge and understanding of China, as well as the study in Singapore of Chinese history, culture and civilization,” said Ms. Chew Gek Khim, Deputy Chairman of the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation.

The inaugural visiting Tan Chin Tuan Professor is Professor Valerie Hansen, a recognized expert in Chinese History at Yale University. Professor Hansen will be delivering a public lecture next Tuesday, 3 April, at the National University of Singapore. Details are enclosed.

“Yale-NUS College will offer students a new model of undergraduate education in Asia and provide breadth of learning and depth of understanding – the “zoom-in and zoom-out” critical thinking needed for leadership in the 21st century. The Tan Chin Tuan Foundation is a long-standing leader in philanthropy that creates a broad societal impact. NUS is very grateful to be able to partner the Foundation to nurture leaders with the intellectual qualities and the multi-dimensional perspectives so crucial for Asia and the world,” said Yale-NUS College Governing Board Member and NUS President Professor Tan Chorh Chuan.

Yale-NUS College has so far received significant interest from applicants, and expects to enroll 150 students who will participate in summer programs next year in Yale University, before starting the inaugural academic year in Singapore in August 2013.

More info on www.yale-nus.edu.sg

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Public Lecture

Contending Superpowers: the Defeat of China...

Professor Valerie Hansen

Visiting Tan Chin Tuan Professor, Yale-NUS College

Professor of History, Yale University

Chairperson: Professor Prasenjit Duara

Raffles Professor of Humanities

Director, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore

Date: Tuesday, 3 April, 2012

Time: 6:00pm – 7:30pm

Venue: Auditorium, Lee Kong Chian Wing, University Hall, Level 2
Lower Kent Ridge Road, National University of Singapore

Abstract

... in the year 1004. In a corner of northeastern Asia the Kitan formed a powerful confederation of nomadic peoples that triumphed over the powerful Song dynasty. The Kitan offer a fascinating instance of a nomadic state that both defeated the Chinese and forged a lasting peace. Engaging in sophisticated cross-cultural collaboration, the Kitan drafted an ingenious treaty that realigned power relations without injuring Chinese pride. The exchange of lavish gifts was a key element of diplomacy, and the Kitan also made artworks displaying exquisite craftsmanship, which they sent to and received from powerful rivals in the Islamic world, northern Europe, and possibly even more distant places. This talk suggests how these changes produced a globalized world in 1004 that resembled our own to a surprising degree.

About the Speaker

Valerie Hansen teaches Chinese and world history at Yale, where she is professor of history. Her main research goal is to draw on nontraditional sources to capture the experience of ordinary people. In particular she is interested in how sources buried in the ground, whether intentionally or unintentionally, supplement the detailed official record of China's past. She has demonstrated, for example, that this approach can alter our understanding of ancient trade routes as well as contemporary misunderstandings about trade and cultural transmission along the Silk Road. Her books include "The Open Empire: A History of China to 1600", "Negotiating Daily Life in Traditional China", "Voyages in World History" (co-author), and, forthcoming from Oxford University Press in the summer of 2012, "The Silk Road: A New History". In the past decade, she has spent three years in China: 2005-06 in Shanghai on a Fulbright grant; and 2008-09 and 2011-12, teaching at Yale's joint undergraduate program with Peking University.