

65th HMC  
Open Research Seminar

# Mobilisations of nostalgia in Singapore and Tokyo



Speakers :

**Dr Imran bin Tajudeen**  
(National University of Singapore)

**‘Kampung nostalgia and heritageisation in Singapore’**

**Lee Kah Hui**

(University of Tokyo, Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology)

**‘Showa nostalgia and placemaking in Tokyo’**

Moderator :

**Akira Matsuda**

(University of Tokyo, Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology)

**Host: The University of Tokyo Humanities Center**



**May 20 [FRI]**  
**17:30-19:30**  
**Online (via Zoom)**

**Please register  
via QRcode**



Humanities Center

# Mobilisations of nostalgia

シンガポールと東京に見るノスタルジアの表出と文化遺産の創出

## in Singapore and Tokyo

Nostalgia, a bittersweet yearning for the past, has been awkwardly situated in the discourse of heritage management. Urging people to pause in the fast-changing modern world and dwell on bygone times, nostalgia can drive people to pay closer attention to the remnants of the past to which they feel attached and cherish them as heritage worthy of protection. Yet, heritage management has thus far been reluctant to embrace nostalgia, arguably because of its backward-looking nature which does not sit well with the promises of modernity, its tendency to transfigure the past into inauthentic (hi)stories, and its potential to create imperialist attitudes towards the heritage of other people.

Recent studies on nostalgia, however, point to its therapeutic quality. On the individual level, nostalgia has proven able to enhance one's psychological mood by boosting his/her self-esteem and feelings of belongingness. Likewise, collective nostalgia is increasingly understood to help communities adapt to the ever-changing social environment by fostering the perception of meaningful links to the past. This seems particularly the case with local communities seeking solace and soothing experiences in engaging with their gradually disappearing everyday heritage.

This Open Seminar examines how communities mobilise nostalgia in Singapore and Tokyo, both characterised by dynamic urban development, and by so doing seeks to re-situate nostalgia in the heritage discourse.



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