

EARCAG after 25 Years: Retrospect and Prospect for East Asian Critical Geography - In Memory of Professor Tang Wing-Shing -

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Preface to the Special Section

This special section honours the memory of Professor TANG Wing-Shing, who passed away on 26 January 2024. The main editorial theme of *Space, Society and Geographical Thought* is to introduce and elucidate the relationship between the socio-spatial transformations of the world and the histories of theory, of scholarship, and of geographical thought. When we look back on Wing-Shing's life, it is not difficult to recognise that his academic career and spirit are intricately linked to the history of East Asian critical geography as one. The objective of this special section is to trace one trajectory of East Asian critical geography over the past 25 years and to capture the legacy of Wing-Shing along the way. In doing so, this community of East Asian critical geographers can explore avenues for future research and action.

Why are we considering a timeframe of 25 years? This is because the first East Asian Regional Conference in Alternative Geography (hereafter referred to as EAR-CAG) was held in South Korea from 23 to 26 January 1999, exactly 25 years. Since then, the EARCAG com-

munity has grown considerably, and 10 meetings have been held (see Table 1). It was at the inaugural meeting, exactly 25 years ago, that MIZUUCHI Toshio, one of this special section's editors, first met Wing-Shing (see Mizuuchi's article in this special section). By an incredible coincidence, another editor, YIP Maurice first met Wing-Shing exactly 11 years ago, on 25 January 2013, during a protest rally outside the Town Planning Board of Hong Kong regarding the rezoning of a land plot adjacent to the campus of Hong Kong Baptist University¹. For both editors, their first encounter with Wing-Shing influenced their subsequent academic development. Under the camaraderie with Wing shing, Mizuuchi and he developed an intimate relationship where they referred to each other as "Brother", while Yip became Wing-Shing's student. They were both impressed by Wing-Shing's commitment to the cause of socio-spatial justice and his concerns for the community, the city, the region, and the world, which formed the basis of his critical scholarship. Above all, both of them, just like many other East Asian critical geographers, cherished their friendship with Wing-Shing. In this special section, several East Asian

Table 1: List of EARCAG Venues and Themes

No.	Dates	Host	Theme
1	1999/01	Kyungju/Daegu, South Korea	Socio-Spatial Issues for East Asian Countries in the 21C
2	2001/12	Hong Kong	Alternative Geographies of Asia in the New Millennium
3	2003/07	Osaka/Tokyo, Japan	Searching for Alternative Globalism from Below
4	2006/08	Taipei, Taiwan	Theorizing and Practicing Critical Geography in East Asia: The Dynamic Regionalism in the Global World
5	2008/12	Seoul, South Korea	Post-Globalization and East Asia
6	2012/02	Selangor, Malaysia	Global Change and the Re-shaping of Society and Environment in East Asia
7	2014/07	Osaka/Tohoku, Japan	The Right to Inhabit: The Asian Challenges
8	2016/12	Hong Kong	Radicalism in Theory and Practice
9	2018/12	Daegu, South Korea	For Spatial Justice: Rethinking Socio-Spatial Issues from East Asian Perspectives
10	2022/12	Taipei, Taiwan	New Geo-Politics in East Asia

Notes: EARCAG Geopolitical Economies (EARCAG-GPE) workshops were held in Seoul (2013), Vancouver (2015), Taipei (2017), Osaka (2019), and Hong Kong (2023).

1 Lai, Y-K. 2013-01-25. HKBU teachers, students protest land decision. *South China Morning Post*. <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1136080/hkbu-teachers-students-protest-land-decision>

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critical geographers, with EARCAG as their common ground, document their past encounters with Wing-Shing, reflect on the development of EARCAG, and look ahead to the way forward in the future development of East Asian critical geography.

Contributions to the Special Section

This special section comprises eight articles (see Table 2). It begins with an obituary by **Hong Kong Critical Geography Group** (HKCGG), which Wing-Shing founded with his students and like-minded people in Hong Kong. The obituary provides a detailed biography of Wing-Shing and highlights the politics of his academic and community activities in Hong Kong, which, as HKCGG suggests, had a wider impact on the East Asian region and the world. **LEE Joanna** and **Solomon BENJAMIN**, Wing-Shing’s friends and research collaborators, co-authored it with the members of HKCGG.

The second contribution from the **EARCAG International Steering Committee** presents Wing-Shing’s contribution to EARCAG over the past 25 years. Wing-Shing had been an active member of this committee. One of the few participants who attended all the 10 EARCAG conferences, Wing-Shing presented his research papers and generously shared his critical insights with other

participants every time. The members of the International Steering Committee have shared their friendship and precious memories of Wing-Shing (yet the memories of 5 senior members who have been involved since the founding period are published separately in this special section, as described below).

Wing-Shing had organised EARCAG conferences in Hong Kong twice, in 2001 and 2016. In the third article, **Kit Ping (Tammy) WONG**, **MIZUOKA Fujio** (one of the founders of EARCAG), **LEE Jacky**, and **Solomon BENJAMIN**, who worked closely with Wing-Shing in the preparation and organisation of the two conferences, reflect on their memories of those times. The objective is to show how Wing-Shing organised these conferences in response to the socio-spatial challenges facing the host city and East Asia at the time.

Four articles written by senior members of the EARCAG International Steering Committee follow. The fourth article is written by **CHOI Byung-Doo**, another founder of EARCAG. He gives an account of how EARCAG was established and recalls how he met Wing-Shing. The next three articles contributed by **MIZUUCHI Toshio**, **HSU Jinn-Yuh**, and **PARK Bae-Gyoon** document how their conversations and debates with Wing-Shing after their initial encounter at the EARCAG conferences influenced their own research agendas and theoretical perspectives. All these articles reflect import-

Table 2: The Contents of this Special Section

1	Hong Kong Critical Geography Group, LEE Joanna Wai Ying, Solomon BENJAMIN	In Memory of Professor Tang Wing-Shing: A Geographer Enlightening Urban Worlds (Note: The Traditional Chinese version is co-authored by Hong Kong Critical Geography Group and LEE Joanna Wai Ying, and differs from the content of the English version; the Japanese version is translated from the English version.)
2	International Steering Committee of East Asian Regional Conference in Alternative Geography	In Remembrance of Professor TANG Wing-Shing: 25 Years of Friendship and Collaboration
3	Kit Ping (Tammy) WONG, MIZUOKA Fujio, LEE Chi Lap Jacky, Solomon BENJAMIN	EARCAG in Hong Kong: A Collective Memoir
4	CHOI Byung-doo	A Thousand Winds: Carrying on the Mission of East Asian Critical Geographers with Wing-Shing's Wisdom
5	MIZUUCHI Toshio	What Happened between Wing Shing and Me at the Turn of the 21st Century: The Impactful Encounter at EARCAG 1999 and His Fascinating Academic Initiatives Thereafter
6	HSU Jinn-Yuh	Decolonization and East Asian Critical Geography: Reflections on International Division of Labor in Academia Based on Wing-Shing's Practices
7	PARK Bae-Gyoon	Seeing Off a Friend: Memories of Prof. Wing-Shing Tang's Commitment and Legacy in East Asian Critical Geography
8	YIP Maurice, MIZUUCHI Toshio	The Trajectory of TANG Wing-Shing's Contributions to Osaka City University and a Bibliography of His Related Works

ant and diverse aspects of East Asian critical geography over the past 25 years.

Lastly, to commemorate Wing-Shing's close and continued association with Osaka City University for nearly two decades, Wing Shing's significant contributions to the establishment of the Hong Kong office of the Urban Research Plaza (URP) at this university and the subsequent efforts of various academic programmes, and the lists of his publications in connection with this university has been compiled as the last article in this special section.

All articles appear in both Japanese and English, and a traditional Chinese version of the obituary by HKCCG is also published.

As the editors, we would like to thank MORI Masato (Mie University) for translating many manuscripts from English into Japanese in a short time. We are grateful to Kit Ping (Tammy) WONG (Osaka Metropolitan University and Hong Kong Critical Geography Group) and Geerhardt KORNATOWSKI (Kyushu University) for their support in preparing and editing this special section. Furthermore, on the Hong Kong side, we received various information and photos from CHAN Kim Ching, on the Japanese side, from TSUTSUMI Kenji (Osaka

University), NAKASHIMA Koji (Kanazawa University), OSHIRO Naoki (Meiji University), and FUKUDA Tamami (Osaka Metropolitan University). All of them are close old friends of Professor Tang. We are also grateful to YOTSUI Keisuke, IIDA Saori, and SAMUKAWA Marina (CR-ASSIST) for their editorial assistance.

Finally, and most importantly, we express our heartfelt gratitude and sincere respect to Professor TANG Wing-Shing. No matter what we do, we will never be able to reciprocate his favours sufficiently.

Japan will host the 11th meeting of EARCAG in 2025, welcoming critical geographers not only from East Asia but from all over the world². It will be a new chapter in East Asian critical geography, and the legacy of Wing-Shing will be with us, we believe.



Proceedings of the 1st EARCAG

January 24th to 26th, 1999
Gyeongju and Daegu, South Korea

2 The details will be announced on the website of EARCAG in due course. <https://sites.google.com/view/earcag/>