

Strong Showing by NUS Law Professors at the Asian Constitutional Law Forum 2017

The 7th Asian Constitutional Law Forum – Asia’s premier biennial constitutional law conference – took place from 8 to 9 December 2017, organized by Thammasat University’s Faculty of Law. Representing NUS Law and presenting papers in three separate panels were Professors Andrew Harding, Thio Li-ann, Kevin Tan and Assistant Professors Chen Weitseng and Jaclyn Neo.



Professor Harding spoke on subnational constitutionalism in Asia. This refers territorial governance involving a degree of autonomy for one or more subnational units. Assistant Professor Chen gave a paper examining authoritarian constitutionalism in Asia, interrogating its essential characteristics, factors for its development, as well as its endurance.



Professor Thio, Professor Tan, and Assistant Professor Jaclyn Neo convened a panel on Alternative Constitutionalisms that sought to pluralise accounts of constitutionalism and to challenge dominant accounts of constitutionalism as indispensably liberal. Professor Thio provided an overview account of the range of constitutionalist ideas beyond liberalism. Assistant Professor Neo proposed a theory of secularism beyond liberal constitutionalism. Lastly, Professor Tan argues that an expansion of our understanding of constitutionalism, particularly the paradigmatic doctrine of the separation of powers, may be necessary to bring within constitutional control the diverse range of legitimate power.



Besides faculty members, Wilson Tay, one of our PhD candidates at NUS Law, also presented a paper on judicial power in Malaysia, drawing from his dissertation work.

Last but not least, the Association for Asian Constitutional Studies was formally established at the Forum in Bangkok. Professor Andrew Harding was appointed the first Chair of the Association.