

Obituary

(Joseph) Vin D'Cruz

21 May 1933–24 November 2008

Vin was appointed an Adjunct Professor of the Monash Asia Institute in 2001 and was one of our most delightful and productive members. He had an enormous passion for research as demonstrated by his large book *Australia's Ambivalence Towards Asia: Politics, Neo/Post-colonialism, and Fact/Fiction* (co-authored with William Steele) published by the Monash Asia Institute Press. In that book he grappled with his love for Australia and its people and the disappointing performance of the Australian government and press in their failure to engage with Asia in a more positive and creative manner. His critique was something that we could all agree with especially during the shameful events surrounding the Tampa and related incidents.

Ambivalence was not only a big book but also one which was a long time in production owing to Vin's attention to detail and his insistence on updating it as often as possible even while it was in production. It was difficult to reject his pleadings, but in the end the book was stronger because Vin insisted on doing everything possible to make his judgments fair and balanced. He confided in me two years ago that in the 2nd edition, he wanted to write a new chapter commenting on the improvement in Australia-Malaysia relations since the end of the Keating era. I am very sorry that the project for bringing out that second edition cannot now be realized.

Vin also had a special relationship with postgraduate students both in Australian and abroad, especially in Malaysia. Thanks to Vin's searching eye, the Monash Asia Institute was lucky enough to attract a number of doctoral students from Malaysia who came to Melbourne and worked with us. This reflected not only Vin's determination to expose all students to challenging intellectual environments but also his commitment to Malaysian development—he saw international travel and education as important mechanisms for generating cultural tolerance and a better world.

Like many of us, Vin was a migrant. He arrived in Australia in 1954. He married Joan, an Australian. Together they brought out Vin's parents and siblings. Vin is survived by his son John; the youngest member of his family today is a great-grand-daughter, Emily, aged three.

He will be greatly missed by us all and as a mark of our respect we will observe a minute's silence at our postgraduate seminar on Friday 28th November.

Marika Vicziany
Director, Monash Asia Institute

Biographical details

In 2001, Professor J.V. D'Cruz returned from a four-year research and teaching assignment at the National University of Malaysia. He began his university career in 1971, part-time and simultaneously, at Monash University in the Faculty of Education and at the University of Melbourne in the Department of Political Science. He was to become the foundation head of Philosophy at the then State College of Victoria, Mercy Campus, from 1972–1976. From 1976 to 1996 he taught at the Graduate School of Education, LaTrobe University, where he was at different times Chair of the Centre for International and Comparative Education and the Centre for Innovation in Education. He has been a senior advisor to the Victorian Ministry of Education on a number of issues over the years, with two Government reports named after him (The D'Cruz Report 1989 on Adult Basic Education and The D'Cruz Report 1990 on Technology in Education); and he has been a Victorian Government Trustee on the Telematics Course Development Trust Fund between 1991 and 1999. He has been a visiting professor at universities in South and Southeast Asian countries. More recently, in March 2006, he was Visiting Professor at the Centre for Cultural Diversity and Social Justice, Southern Cross University (NSW), and was Director of the Institute for International Education. Professor D'Cruz researched and published widely in a number of areas, as series editor of multi-volume publications in the areas of Education and in the areas of Language, Linguistics and Literature; with some 16 authored and edited volumes to his credit in areas such as politics, philosophy, education and culture, and some 16 chapters in books.