

Invisible Asia-Pacific Malaria

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People who live with malaria in the Asia-Pacific are often invisible – a new exhibition of photographs by Pearl Gan introduces us to these invisible people, giving them flesh, blood, feelings, and lives.

Most of us think of malaria as an African problem, a likely consequence of the widespread poverty, geographic isolation, chronic conflicts, and poor economic development of much of that continent. In the Asia-Pacific, in contrast, we have booming economies, hundreds of millions being lifted out of poverty, incredible transportation and telecommunications links, and relative peace and political stability. Among the 20 most powerful national economies in the influential G20, six are in the Asia-Pacific. Asia-Pacific schools produce students representing nations that consistently fill the top 5 rankings in abilities in mathematics, reading, and science. Despite the long march of extraordinary progress out of regional poverty and conflict, malaria in

the Asia-Pacific remains a very significant public health threat and burden. Over 2 billion Asians live at risk of endemic malaria, many tens of millions are infected (perhaps as many as several hundred million) each year and tens of thousands of those do not survive (perhaps as many as several hundred thousand). We cannot be sure of those numbers because the people who live with malaria in the Asia-Pacific are invisible – the most isolated, poor, and voiceless. This exhibition is about them. Pearl Gan's artistry introduces us to these invisible people, giving them flesh, blood, feelings, and lives.

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