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ASIAN RESPONSES TO THE RUSSIAN WAR IN UKRAINE

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Editorial



Hans Martin Krämer
CATS Speaker

When President Putin of Russia ordered the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, he envisioned a fundamental change in the global geopolitical order. The Russian invasion undoubtedly led to such a transformation, albeit in ways entirely unintended by Putin.

In Europe, geographically closest to the war, a wide embargo on Russian energy resources was perhaps anticipated by the Russian leadership, but the ensuing unity of Europe, reaching all the way to expansion of the NATO, certainly wasn't. The Middle East and parts of Africa were quickly affected by the war because grain deliveries were suddenly made much more difficult and in fact hinge on Russian acceptance of a grain deal until this very day.

Yet the Russian war against Ukraine also has various repercussions in Asia. Regionally leading countries such as India and Japan were under immediate pressure to position themselves vis-à-vis the unprovoked aggression, and were forced to strike a balance between (mostly energy-related) economic interests, security considerations, and the good relationship to those (mostly Western) countries that immediately took position against Russia.

It was especially China, however, that quickly emerged as a key factor

in deciding the further course of the war. Ostensibly neutral (like India), Chinese interests were instrumental even in timing the outbreak of the war (not coincidentally, four days after the end of the Winter Olympics in Beijing). Since then, Chinese imports of Russian energy no longer sold on the European markets have arguably been crucial in financing the continuation of the war.

"Asian Responses to the Russian War in Ukraine" is the focus topic of this issue, and China is covered in the contribution by Belinda Uebler, who focuses on public opinion in the People's Republic, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, instead of the reactions of political leaders. Uebler can show that public opinion is homogeneous not even in the People's Republic, allowing for criticism of Putin that may also allow the leadership more easily to shift in its attitude towards Russia and its war.

Dieter Reinhardt write about the fragility of the Indian relations with Germany in the face of the Russian aggression. Different from the U.S., German foreign policy mostly shuns direct criticism of Indian deficits in democracy, while attempting to woo India to its side in the Russia-Ukraine War.

Wolfgang-Peter Zingel points out that Pakistan was among those countries abstaining from a vote when the United Nations passed a resolution in support of Ukraine towards the beginning of the war. This has probably less to do with Russia and more with Pakistan's difficult relationship with the United States, a situation that is also true for many of the other abstaining governments of the global South. At the same time, Pakistan has on the ground actually been aiding Ukrainian forces.

In the two Koreas, the response to Russia's attack of Ukraine has been decidedly local, as In Young Min points out in his contribution to this issue. South Korean politicians

have noted how the threat of nuclear weapons wielded by Russia has been a decisive factor in shaping reactions to the war both in Ukraine and the rest of Europe and North America, a dynamic that the South sees as potentially replicated if North Korea managed to fully develop nuclear weapons. At the same time, the South Korean government has not hesitated to take a strong stand against Russia.

In this, it resembles the conservative Japanese government under Kishida Fumio. As Hans Martin Krämer points out in his essay, the assertiveness and speed with which the Japanese government has declared its backing of Ukraine has in fact been somewhat surprising given a history of Japan's caution to stay out of divisive international political developments. The Japanese public is usually reserved about Japan's involvement overseas, and Japanese dependency on Russian natural gas also should have been a factor in tempering Japanese responses, but turned out not to be decisive.

Finally, this issue features an unusual spotlight on Siberian minorities and their discursive (and real) deployment in the war. Egor Novikov highlights how such minorities are coopted in the war and made complicit, thus strengthening their loyalty to Russia. Novikov analyzes more closely how Kalmyk and Buryat leaders reacted to such attempts at cooptation, stressing that the economic destitution in the Russian Far East basically dictated the acceptance by the population of their role as colonial soldiers.

As the essays in this issue show, Asian responses to the Russian War in Ukraine are strongly shaped by local conditions and highly varied. They are also highly relevant to the further course of the war and thus need to be watched for the remainder of the war and a post-war future of Ukraine.

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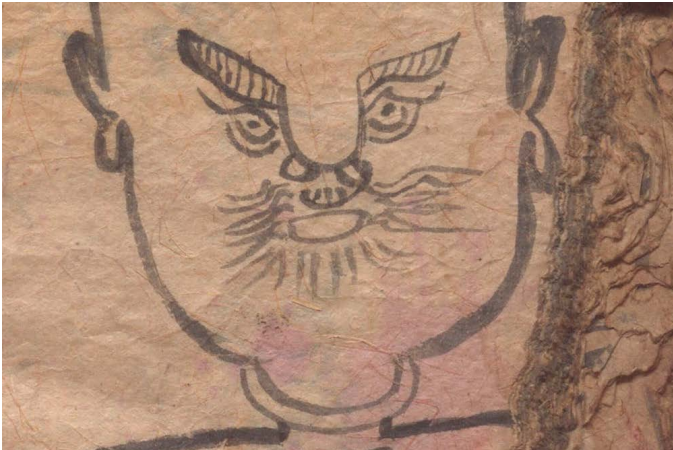
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Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Un in April 2019 (Action News 5)

Asian Responses to the Russian War in Ukraine

Siberian Ethnic Minorities and the Ukraine War

Egor Novikov

Doctoral candidate, HCTS

One of the recurrent memes of the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war is the orientalist image of “combat Buryats”—the brutal colonial soldiers fighting on the Russian side. The image was born already in the first phase of the war in winter 2015, when military regiments based in the capital of Buryatia, Ulan-Ude (Southern Siberia, some 250 kilometers from the Mongolian border) and consisting largely of ethnic Buryats went into battle at Debaltsevo in Eastern Ukraine. Although back then Russia officially denied direct involvement in the war, unofficially, their participation was glorified. While recovering from burns in a Donetsk hospital, a Buryat tank crew member Dordje Batomunkuev was interviewed and aired on television as the hawkish wing of Russian propaganda called on the “Buryat brothers” to march on Kiev and reported that the locals in Donbass lovingly (in fact rather mockingly) called them “our Buryat Indians” (referring to the Native Americans’ “noble savage” image in Soviet popular culture).

As Moscow launched a full-scale invasion in 2022, every rare appearance of Asian-looking Russian soldiers among the POWs and in journalists’ reports added to the already popular image. Russian state-controlled media showcased the “indigenous fighters” performing their native rituals and enthusiastically joining what they pictured as a multiethnic patriotic war against the “Ukrainian Nazis.” On the other side of the frontline, Ukrainian media talked about the “savage Asians,” occasionally singling them out as marauders and

the perpetrators of the numerous war crimes. The persona of the Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu, who belongs to the traditionally Buddhist Siberian ethnicity of Tuvans, further strengthened the “indigenous soldiers” stereotype. In addition, this image, which had already been mythologized on both sides of the frontline, became most infamous after the leaking of a scandalous smartphone footage of a prolonged sadistic mutilation of a Ukrainian POW with a utility knife and his consequent execution by a pro-Russian militant of Asian phenotype. The perpetrator was consequently identified as a resident of Kalmykia—another traditionally Buddhist ethnic region in the south of Russia.

What is the reality behind this stereotype of the Russian war in Ukraine? Siberia is home to about 35 indigenous ethnicities compactly living on the state periphery in areas named “republics,” following the Soviet tradition. These diverse ethnic groups are historically tied to the Turkic, Mongolo-Tibetan, and Central-Asian worlds: some are Buddhist, many practice varieties of shamanism, many speak Turkic languages. Meanwhile, among approximately 35 million Siberians, they account for mere 1.5 million and are drastically outnumbered by the ethnic Russian majority.

Unlike the European maritime empires, Russia was formed as an inland empire, colonizing territories adjacent to the metropole. Alexander Etkind dubbed this process *internal colonization*—the territories were swallowed into the borders of the colonial state, while their population remained strangers to the metropolitan culture.

The Muscovite empire colonized Siberia from the late sixteenth century on, in pursuit of precious furs (sable, squirrel, ferret, etc.), which generated great profits on the international market. As the furs were depleted and lost importance on the international market, the colonization focused on other resources: metals, precious stones, oil, and gas. As Etkind shows, the local populations were never really important in the process—the metropole saw the territory as an empty space, which had to be populated for the sake of guarding, mining, and delivering the resources. Indeed, one of the main definitions of the colonization of Siberia in Russian historiography is *osvoenie*—appropriation or domestication. In this situation of internal colonization, the large spaces of Siberia that were swallowed were not integrated into the dominant cultural sphere. Instead, to the metropole they remained obscure sources of wealth stripped of political subjectivity. The atomized Siberian regions ended up hierarchically bound to an overcentralized imperial system; just to get from one Siberian city to another by plane, instead of flying a thousand kilometers directly, one has to cover a tenfold distance flying all the way to Moscow and back. Because of this colonial organization, Siberian ethnicities, historically organically woven into the Asian world through language, religion, and culture, were severed from the complex horizontal connections with their neighbors. Siberia became a permanent colony and a lost land—the forgotten northern quarter of Asia.

Waging an aggressive war against another former colonial ter-



Mongolia, close to the Russian border. Thousands of Siberians fled across the border to the culturally close Mongolia during the mobilization in Autumn 2022.

ritory—Ukraine—the Kremlin tries to kill two birds with one stone in Siberian colonies: mobilize the indigenous human resources, otherwise useless in the imperial logic, for the war and, at the same time, make the locals complicit in the imperial aggression, strengthening their loyalty. Some ethnic groups, like the Turkic-speaking Altaians, passively resisted the mobilization announced by Moscow on September 21, 2022, sending only a handful of volunteers to the front-line; the officials did not bother to collect the men one by one from the mountainous territories that are hard to access. Meanwhile, the participation of other Siberian ethnic minorities like Buryats and Tuvans in the war, even though minor in the general picture, is dramatic in scale. Independent journalists report that the draft officers drained some smaller villages in the Buryat hinterland dry during the first phase of mobilization without causing any protest.

As it is hard to generalize about all Siberian ethnic groups, in the following paragraphs, I will focus on the ethnicities that belong to the Tibetan-Buddhist religious family and are particularly involved in the war and its media coverage: Buryats,

Tuvans, and Kalmyks (the latter are settled in the steppe outside of geographic Siberia). Although weakened by seven decades of Soviet secularization, religion remains integral to their collective identity. It gains extra importance during a war when deaths and the accompanying rituals become frequent and public. In the Russian political tradition, pre-dating the Soviet era and continuing now, religions are heavily controlled by the state. Thus, it is not surprising that although their supreme Buddhist leader, the current Dalai Lama, has spoken out against the war, Russian Buddhist authorities mostly support the official Kremlin course. The head of the Buddhist Traditional Sangha of Russia, the 24th Pandito Khambo Lama Damba Ayusheev from Buryatia, called for his flock to support the Kremlin's military effort already in March, just like other religious leaders in Russia. In autumn, he proudly wrote about a Buddhist chaplain sent to the frontline with the Buryat soldiers: "Lama Bair Batomunkuev is serving on a combat post among real warriors worthy of their great ancestor Genghis Khan."

The only loud defection came from the former spiritual leader of Kalmykia, Telo Tulku Rinpoche

Erdne Ombadykow, who was born to a Kalmyk immigrant family in the United States. Ombadykow condemned Russian aggression, moved to Mongolia, and after the Russian state declared him a foreign agent (a standard label attached to anyone whom the Kremlin considers an "enemy of the people" these days), officially resigned from his position. In his interviews, Ombadykow opined that the majority of Buddhists in Russia in fact do not support the war, but also do not dare to speak out. In any case, the fact is that while the Buddhist clergy mostly accepts the political reality and plays along, the lay Kalmyks, Tuvans, and Buryats face the militarization of life through centralized media and heavy mobilization. They are pressed to either embrace the war as part of their daily life or defect from the established social order altogether. In September, the former Mongolian president Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj said that the Kremlin had been using the Buddhist ethnicities as cannon fodder in the war and invited men of the brotherly nations to hide from the mobilization in Mongolia. While thousands of Buryat men followed the invitation and crossed the border, many more stayed and joined the Russian army voluntarily or by draft, taking pride in not running away.

To those familiar with their world, it is not surprising that the ethnic population of the peripheries accepts the role of colonial soldiers imposed on them by Moscow. There are many cultural and material reasons, but the lack of economic and existential alternatives in the colonial order is one important underlying factor. Above all, the war glares at them with economic opportunities that are normally absent from these colonized areas. Even before the war, military service provided the

inhabitants of ethnic regions like these a unique opportunity to get a stable income and possibly even make a humble career. During the war, military salaries went through the ceiling—the mobilized can earn over 2,000 euros, which is unheard of in such places. Furthermore, the zinc coffins bringing home their sons' mutilated bodies from the frontline are accompanied by a life-changing financial bonus from the government of over 80,000 euros per family.

The constellation of economic and political dependency forces Siberian ethnicities to get involved in Moscow's war of aggression, without alternatives. Unemployment, poverty, heavy drinking, and violence frame the mundane reality in such places. The propaganda on federal television is the main bright image and source of information in the rather bleak social reality. Lacking alternative visions and choices, the people simply accept the war as a necessary, objective reality. For them, the participation in it can be a cause for pride and a way to feel personally related to a dramatic event happening in the big bright world seen in the media. Locked up in the internal colonies on the imperial periphery, the elites play the colonial game in exchange for local power, while the less privileged watch television, seek subsistence, and accommodate the political games of the metropole as part of their identity.

Egor Novikov

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Public Opinion Roundup

The Ukraine Crisis Viewed in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan

Belinda Uebler

Junior Researcher, Echowall

For almost a year now, the world has been looking at the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, and *Echowall* was one of the first academic projects to perform comparative observations of war-related media reports and discussions in different Chinese-speaking regions. The article "Public Opinion Roundup: Ukraine Crisis Viewed in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan," published by *Echowall* on February 28, 2022, pointed out different perspectives in public debates from the first days of the war in the People's Republic of China (PRC), Taiwan, and Hong Kong. The following text seeks to give an overview of the main findings.

When the war broke out, China's overall confidence in its major power status could be observed at all different levels, including the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the state media, and the Internet. MFA spokesperson Hua Chunying refused to label Russia's action an "invasion" or "aggression." Instead, she accused the United States of having fanned the flames in the Russian-Ukrainian relationship and pushing Russia against the wall with NATO expansion. Although Hua denied taking any side in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, the hashtag #RussiaInvadingUkraine (#俄罗斯入侵乌克兰) was blocked on the Chinese social media platform Weibo.

Similar to the MFA, Chinese public opinion focused more on the agency of the US rather than on the agency of Ukraine or Russia.



An International Herald Leader news report from 2015 praises "Vladimir the Great" for sparing no effort to go forward even in times of crisis

Furthermore, some Chinese citizens commented online that Taiwan would end up the same way as Ukraine did. Other dominant topics in Chinese social media revolved around the terms "wolf warriors" and "Ukrainian beauties" (乌克兰美女). The former refers to the announcement of the Chinese embassy in Kyiv advising Chinese citizens in Ukraine to post the Chinese flag as protection (similar to scenes in the movie *Wolf Warriors*). The term "Ukrainian beauties," on the other hand, was connected to comments from Chinese men offering to accommodate young beautiful Ukrainian women fleeing the war. This sexist topic triggered an angry backlash, both on the Chinese Internet and in the Ukrainian society.

Chinese official media also reported on a Russian blitzkrieg, relying on Russian official media and fake news without questioning their veracity. This narrative also fit

the Chinese public perception of Putin as a powerful, decisive, and warrior-like leader, also referred to as "Vladimir the Great" (普京大帝). Public comments furthermore seemed to indulge in old memories of Chinese-Russian friendship. However, anti-war views were also strong on social media. A Weixin (WeChat) essay titled "All Those Who Cheer on War Are Assholes" quickly went viral. Many took the chance to add that Russia had annexed large parts of Chinese territory back in the day.

Taiwan's online reaction to the Russian invasion of Ukraine has been characterized by a great fear of ending up the same way as Ukraine. Taiwanese netizens' apprehension was reinforced by the non-interference of the US and the similarities between Xi's and Putin's governing style and decision-making. The opposition "pan-blue" camp played a significant role in fostering the narrative

of “Ukraine today, Taiwan tomorrow.” For example, former Kuomintang (KMT) party chairperson Eric Chu called for “every effort to be made so Taiwan doesn’t follow in Ukraine’s wake,” as “the thing that really hits home for Taiwan is that like Ukraine, we’re both at the crux of a geopolitical standoff.” People from other political parties and academics criticized the viewpoint of “second-guessing the US” and the Ukraine–Taiwan analogy, expressing their hope that Taiwan’s position in global supply chains and other factors would protect Taiwan from this fate. Other topics dominating the Taiwanese public debate about the war in Ukraine were falling stock prices and the well-being of the thirty-three Taiwanese citizens in Ukraine.

Finally, Hong Kongers’ public reaction to the war was different from both the PRC and Taiwan. While Hong Kongers’ had shown great interest in Ukraine and Ukrainian history during the 2019 anti-extradition bill protests (comparing it to the Euromaidan protests), the interest in the war events in February 2022 was relatively small due to the city’s worst Covid-19 outbreak. However, Hong Kong’s criticism of the non-interference of the US, as well as a feeling of shared fate was similar to Taiwan.

To summarize, in the beginning, public reception of the Russian-Ukrainian war differed in the PRC, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, depending on the political and historical conditions of the respective regions. While public opinions were in general influenced by the political lines of the respective governments, some comments also stood in conflict with politicians’ statements and led to major debates. Hence, the importance of surveying online comments and debates of netizens as well as their agency for political action should not be underrated. In early 2023, instead of a quick victory for Russia, the

war in Ukraine is still going on, debunking the myth of Russia as a military superpower and “Vladimir the Great.” More and more voices critical of Russia can be observed in Chinese public discussions, indicating a subtle shift in Beijing’s attitude towards the war and in guiding public opinion.

For the original article, please visit our website at

» <https://www.echo-wall.eu/china-and-world/off/public-opinion-roundup-ukraine-crisis-viewed-china-hong-kong-and-taiwan>

The Echowall Project analyses further aspects related to the topic, like the geo-economical role of Taiwan based on its high relevance in the microchip and other industries. Experts in Europe and China investigate current developments in China and in Sino-European relations on an empirical basis and the results are made accessible online to an interested public in order to contribute to a dialogue between China and Europe. The project is part of Prof. Dr. Anja Senz’s working group on politics, economy, and society in contemporary China at the Institute for Chinese Studies at Heidelberg University.

If you would like to receive e-mail alerts for new articles, please contact Prof. Senz at

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Pakistan and the Ukraine War

Wolfgang-Peter Zingel

Associate Member, SAI

In the United Nations General Assembly Resolution ES 11/1 on Ukraine, Pakistan abstained, like 34 other governments of the global South, together representing half of the world population. Each of them did so for their own reasons. In the case of Pakistan, a nuclear power and, with 248 million inhabitants, the fifth most populous country, an explanation can be found in its history, mainly in the roller-coaster relationship with the USA. Pakistan has always been looking for help beyond the United States, first with the Soviet Union, then China and at times Russia. That does not mean that there is not much sympathy for Ukraine.

Pakistan-US relations are a history of misunderstandings. Pakistan, one of the twins born out of British India, was looking for allies to defend its independence against India from the start. The USA in turn needed to close the gap in the ring of containment of the Red Scare, between NATO and the Baghdad Pact (later Central Treaty Organization or CENTO) in the west, and Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty (ANZUS) in the east, whereas Afghanistan and India refused to become part of any defence systems. Pakistan became known as the most allied ally but, as early as the late 1950s, it also established contact with the Soviet Union. Having been refused a visit to Camp Badaber, the US listening post near Peshawar, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the young US-educated acting foreign minister, had to realize the "myth of independence"

(title of his famous book) and became the most prominent critic of the US in Pakistan. After a U2 spy plane that had started in Peshawar was shot down over Soviet territory in 1960, Bhutto convinced President General Ayub Khan to urge the US to leave.

Pakistan was ready neither to assist India in the war against China in 1962, as President John F. Kennedy had suggested, nor to join the war in Vietnam, despite being a member of SEATO. In 1965, Bhutto convinced Ayub of the chances of a blitzkrieg. However, Pakistan's advances in Kashmir were stopped and India invaded Pakistan territory just outside Lahore. He had underestimated not only India's preparedness but also the food crisis that was looming over the sub-continent. Both India and Pakistan were saved from famine by food aid from their American "friends not masters," the title of Ayub's book. The short war was stopped with the intervention of the US and the Soviets and was resolved by the Tashkent Declaration, brokered with Soviet assistance. However, other Soviet projects (steel works, shipbuilding, gas and oil exploration), annoying the US in no small way, were less successful.

During the East Pakistan crisis, Indira Gandhi secured assistance from the Soviet Union while the USA made only some half-hearted attempts to help Pakistan. What they were really interested in was direct contact to China: Henry Kissinger used a visit to Pakistan to secretly fly to Beijing for talks with Zhou Enlai, clearing the way for President Richard Nixon's visit to China and talks with Mao Zedong that allowed the US to end their engagement in Vietnam and

China to become the assembly line of the world.

After the loss of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), Bhutto became chief martial law administrator, president, and prime minister and embarked on his Islamic Socialism. While international attention moved away from South Asia, Bhutto was ousted by the very Army Chief he had installed. General Zia ul Haq started on a grand program of Islamisation of economy and society and had Bhutto hanged. But he continued Bhutto's plans to develop an "Islamic bomb," which earned him US sanctions under the Symington Amendment. By Oct 1, 1979, US aid programmes were stopped. Seven weeks later, after the Holy Kaaba in Mecca was taken over by Islamic zealots, Pakistan media reported that the attack had been instigated by the United States. Students in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, already prepared for a day X, laid siege to the US embassy in Islamabad, where diplomats had to take refuge in the strong room. In the end, they were airlifted, the embassy was torched, and several people lost their lives. It was the absolute low point in Pakistan-US relations.

Another five weeks later, on December 24, 1979, the Soviets marched into Afghanistan on the invitation of its government. Pakistan became the lifeline for the *mujahidin* (warriors). The country was flooded with military and civilian aid. Millions of Afghans took refuge in Pakistan, where young men were educated in *madrassas*, religious schools, and trained to fight the infidel invaders. Zia died in a mysterious airplane crash and Pakistanis could again elect a civilian government. As an irony of

history, the Geneva Accord meant that not only the Soviets agreed to leave Afghanistan, but also the Americans agreed to reduce their engagement in the region. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the Cold War was over. Aid was no longer pouring into the country, and while liberalization in India sped up economic growth, Pakistan fell back.

In 1998, India demonstrated their nuclear capabilities. Pakistan followed suit, but was hurt by ensuing economic sanctions more than India. In the following year, another military venture by the Pakistan army in Kargil, Kashmir became the first serious border war between two nuclear powers, frustrating all hopes for a nuclear dividend, and becoming another low point in the relations between Pakistan and the USA. Donors decided to “not let the country hit the wall,” fearing for the stability and integrity of the region.

After 9/11, Pakistan was coerced into a new alliance by the USA, as a “major non-NATO ally” (President George W. Bush) in the War on Terror, which—different from the Soviet war in Afghanistan—was spilling into Pakistan. To their dismay, the USA found out that Osama Bin Laden, the 9/11 mastermind, was hiding in a premier garrison town, not far from Islamabad. This was proof of evidence that the Pakistan army was playing a double game. The secret manoeuvre reaffirmed the lack of trust on the side of the American government, while Pakistanis were frustrated to find out that the US forces could enter the country and kill him, without asking, not even informing, their ally, which constituted another low point in Pakistan-US relations.

Not surprisingly, nowhere among their allies are the USA less well liked than in Pakistan, despite all US military and economic aid, according to Pew and Gallup reports.

In fact, Pakistan was never America's first choice in Asia. After

India started liberalizing its economy and initiated a Look East policy, it became closer with the US and later joined the Quadrilateral Dialogue Group (QUAD) together with Japan and Australia. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Russia could not be a substitute to the USA, certainly not economically and, after Pakistan had proven its nuclear capabilities, neither militarily. Quite naturally for Pakistan, sandwiched between hostile India, difficult Afghanistan, and estranged Iran, China became the ally of choice, their friendship praised as “higher than the mountains and deeper than the sea.” The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has set high hopes and an ambitious investment program. Accordingly, Pakistan sided with China in the General Assembly vote.

As for Pakistan-Ukraine relations, bilateral trade has been heavily skewed towards Ukraine. According to the UN trade statistics, in 2021 Pakistan imported USD 740 million worth of merchandise goods (especially wheat) from Ukraine against exports of only USD 62 million.

Figures may not include all trade in military equipment. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union was a major arms supplier, not just for India. Almost a third of Soviet arms industry was concentrated in (mainly eastern) Ukraine. According to the Carnegie Endowment, in the period 2009–2013 Pakistan was the second largest buyer of Ukrainian arms. Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, Pakistan has been sending humanitarian aid to help the people of Ukraine affected by the Russian invasion, but also military hardware, especially ammunition, via third-party countries.

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The Ukraine War and Discussions of Regional Security in Japan

Hans Martin Krämer

Professor, Japanese Studies

When the General Assembly of the United Nations put the draft resolution on Ukraine to a vote during its emergency meeting on March 2, 2022, Asian support for the measure was rather spotty. Although only North Korea voted with Russia against the resolution, no fewer than eight other countries in South, Southeast, and East Asia chose to abstain (Bangladesh, China, India, Laos, Mongolia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam). Next to Indonesia, South Korea, and Thailand, the support of Japan, the economic and political heavyweight in the region, was particularly important for Ukraine and the NATO member states.

Indeed, Japan not only supported the symbolic vote in the UN General Assembly, but also joined the NATO and EU countries in the far-reaching boycott measures starting as early as a few days after the Russian invasion: All major Japanese automakers and tech firms have halted production in and export to Russia; the Japanese credit card firm JCB has suspended its services in Russia; major energy companies have stopped importing Russian oil; Sony and Nintendo no longer allow online or hardware purchases of their videogames within Russia; and the Japanese government has banned Russian athletes from competing in Japan. With the extension to consumer goods, the Japanese sanctions in 2022 by far exceed those limited to military technology, enacted after the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014. However, as the former

top diplomat Noboru Sei'ichirō has pointed out recently, measures only targeting the Russian elite will not end public support for the war in Russia. Instead, including other goods such as used cars in the boycott should also be considered. Their sale has increased in Russia and 80 percent of imports of used cars now originate in Japan.

Be that as it may, the Foreign Ministry, supported by the government of Prime Minister Kishida Fumio, is definitely pursuing a hard line against Russia, and also went along with the G7 decision to put a price cap on Russian crude oil in December 2022. This is despite the fact that historically, Japan has avoided a confrontational stance with Russia, mainly because of its high degree of reliance on the import of energy. Energy security has in fact long been a central factor in deciding Japan's foreign policy, trumping other political considerations, thus explaining Japan's open support of Arab states in the Yom Kippur War in 1973 and perhaps even Japan's decision to attack Pearl Harbor after the US embargo on oil shipments in 1941.

Although Russia supplied only 8 percent of natural gas and 4 percent of oil in Japan in 2021, even these amounts are crucial in the inflexible Japanese energy mix. Having to make do without Russian natural gas and oil, Japan now finally has to seriously confront its reliance on fossil fuels, raise its level of self-sufficiency, and get serious about its contribution to combating global warming. Efforts to raise the level of renewable energy have continued since the reactor catastrophe at Fukushima in 2011, now hovering

around 12 percent, but realistically fighting global warming means the extended use of nuclear energy, and indeed Prime Minister Kishida has announced a revitalization of nuclear reactors in August 2022.

Despite the difficult situation in the realm of energy security, the hard line against Russia is supported by a broad majority of the population, and this remains the case even though inflation has hit Japan in a similar way as the European countries. Hovering well under 1 percent for the past few years, it has hovered steadily around 4 percent throughout the second half of 2022. Although still lower than what the EU countries are currently experiencing, there has been a sharp debate about the rise of prices for everyday commodities over the summer of 2022, especially because the wages have remained frozen for many years. Still, public support for sanctions against Russia, which stood at 80 percent towards the beginning of the war, seems to have wavered only little.

To explain this steadfast support for the cause of Ukraine in Japan, two further non-economic factors have to be considered. One is that despite a joint declaration of 1956 to end the state of war between the two countries that began in 1945, no peace treaty has ever been signed between the Soviet Union (or Russia) and Japan to fully end World War II in the Pacific. The main reason behind this is the territorial dispute over the Southern Kuril Islands. These islands were part of Japan between 1855 and 1945, but were then occupied by the Soviet Union just before the end of World War II. Up until today, a majority of Japanese view the Northern Territories, as the four islands are known in Japan, as Japanese territory and their occupation by the Soviet Union as illegitimate. There has thus been little understanding and sympathy for a Russian

government that has continued to refuse returning the islands even after the fall of the Soviet Union.

The other crucial background factor is the volatile security situation in East Asia. Indeed, just as in the early days of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Taiwan question loomed large in the minds of decision-makers in the United States, most commentaries on the war in Japan inevitably return to considerations of China and the likelihood of its making a move to swallow Taiwan, an immediate neighbor of Japan. The precedent of not punishing Russia for going after Ukraine would all too obviously allow China to similarly turn its long-standing rhetoric of Taiwan as an integral part of China into military action. Similar to the German ruling coalition, the Japanese government has utilized the Ukraine war to increase military spending in unprecedented ways. In December 2022, Prime Minister Kishida announced that because Japan “faced the most severe and complex security environment since the end of World War II,” it would double its military spending, already high in global comparison, within the next five years. The contrast to Germany is, of course, that there is not any real new threat, given that Russia’s territorial ambitions seem to be strictly directed towards its Western frontier. Much of the support for Ukraine in Japan, be it the government’s or on the part of the public, hence has little to do with Ukraine itself or even Russia, but is fueled by worries over China and Japan’s immediate security situation in the Western Pacific.



Hans Martin Krämer

is a Professor of Japanese Studies and the current CATS speaker.

The Ukraine War and the Two Koreas

In Young Min

Lecturer, Korean Studies

South Korea has historically maintained a “head-down” approach to issues not of its immediate concern. Despite increasing calls for South Korea to play a more active role in the global community corresponding to its growing economic power, it has generally avoided speaking out or implementing policies that would jeopardize its narrow economic interests. When it comes to global security issues, South Korean contributions have been restrained due to its primary occupation with its neighbor North Korea. And while the South and North apparently stood with Ukraine and Russia respectively, they seem to have drawn a similar lesson from the war, namely that nuclear weapons are ever more important for their security in a new world.

War is not in my backyard

Following Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014, South Korea shied away from imposing punitive sanctions against Russia due to its unwillingness to sacrifice its economic ties with Russia. When the war broke out with Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, South Korea initially took a similarly tepid and hesitant course of action. While it supported the international sanctions against Russia led by the United States and the European Union, South Korea, unlike Japan and Australia, the other American allies in the region, did not go as far as imposing independent sanctions of its own to punish Russia. That

the ruling leftist coalition was anything but committed in supporting Ukraine was not only evidenced by the government’s reluctance, but more dramatically by public remarks of Lee Jae-Myung, the leader of the ruling Democratic Party. As the presidential candidate of the party for the upcoming election, Lee caused controversy on his campaign trail when he blamed Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky as a “novice politician of six months” who “provoked Russia” by declaring Ukraine’s membership in NATO. While he apologized for his blunt comment right away, Lee’s view that the onus is equally on Ukraine—especially on its inexperienced leader—was echoed by some other party leaders and loyal supporters.

Admittedly, political arguments during elections can take extreme positions to win support from loyal constituencies. Yet, they also reveal the widespread hesitation within South Korea to take a clear side in the war, which might push the country into committing more in support of Ukraine. Another moment of truth came when President Zelensky was invited to give a virtual speech at South Korea’s national assembly in April 2022. Not only was South Korea late in organizing such an occasion—in fact, 23 states had already hosted Zelensky—the address was so poorly attended that only 60 out of 300 lawmakers came to hear the Ukrainian president’s plea for support. Regardless of political affiliations, in other words, indifference towards Ukraine’s fight against Russian atrocities was all but prevalent.

It’s the nuke, stupid

While Europeans were grappling with the question of energy independence from Russia and other American allies in the region were discussing the possibility of China’s flexing muscles over the Taiwan Strait, South Korea was haunted by one specific aspect of the war in Ukraine—nuclear weapons. Vladimir Putin indeed took advantage of Russia’s massive nuclear arsenal to blackmail Americans and Europeans in his attempt to make Ukraine succumb. Just several days into the invasion, for a starter, Putin publicly put the Russian nuclear forces on high alert. As Russia was trying to hold onto its slipping territorial gains in Ukraine later on, he resorted to the aggressive rhetoric that Russia would use “all available means,” a thinly veiled reference to nuclear weapons. Though the prospect of nuclear showdown was also taken seriously in Washington and Brussels, it took a strange turn on the Korean peninsula where the divided Koreas have diverged over the issue of nuclear weapons.

North Korea, on the one hand, has adopted a military strategy that explicitly puts its nuclear arsenal at the centerpiece as the war unfolds in Ukraine. As a significant departure from its previous posture that the nukes are for deterrence, the North enshrined the right to preemptively use nuclear weapons to protect the Kim regime as a national law. It has also made crystal clear that the North would never give up its nuclear arsenal without which its survival cannot be guaranteed. While the North has never publicly acknowledged the linkage between Ukraine and its nuclear strategy, the war has certainly reinforced its belief that the nukes are its only life vest in the vast sea full of enemies. Had Ukraine not given up on its nuclear arsenal after the collapse of the

Soviet Union, the logic goes, Russia would have never been able to invade it. Hence, not only has the North used the war to bolster its narrative that nukes are essential for its survival, but the Kim regime has also found a good opportunity to advance its nuclear capabilities when all eyes are on Ukraine.

On the other hand, Ukraine's plight came as a chilling reminder for many South Koreans that a nuclear-armed power can coerce a non-nuclear neighbor as fears of a nuclear Armageddon make intervention extremely difficult. No matter how powerful South Korea's conventional military forces, according to the proponents, North Korea will always get the upper hand with its nuclear arsenal. While the idea of homegrown nukes has been popular among the public in South Korea for a long time, it has never been considered a serious policy option in the past for many reasons. Most importantly, the South is under the "nuclear umbrella" provided by the United States. Yet, the Ukraine war rekindled an old question about the credibility of the US security guarantee. Of course, drawing parallels between Ukraine and South Korea is a nonstarter—Ukraine is not a formal ally of the US. Still, the Ukraine war, along with North Korea's growing capabilities, has revived the debate over independent nukes in South Korea, and it is no longer a taboo to openly discuss it.

A global pivotal state?

This is not to denounce South Korea's willingness to become a more responsible actor beyond the Korean peninsula and the region of East Asia. In fact, one of the core foreign policy goals of the current Yoon Seok-yeol administration is to transform South Korea into what he calls a "global pivotal state" that promotes freedom, peace, and

prosperity based on its liberal democratic values. Yoon became the first South Korean president ever to attend the NATO summit where he reaffirmed his commitment to stand against Russia's blatant violation of international norms and human rights. The Yoon administration is also seeking to align more closely with the U.S. while stressing the risk of too much economic dependence on China. Yet, the dominating narratives within South Korea still revolve around its economic interests and specific security concerns. The media fanfare over South Korea's massive arms export deals—dubbed "K-Arms" with a clear reference to K-Pop—to Poland amid the war is just another example of such preoccupation. With the recent commitments from Germany and the US to provide tanks to Ukraine, it remains to be seen how South Korea will respond.

In Young Min

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The Fragile Indo-German Strategic “Partnership of Values” and the Ukraine War

Dieter Reinhardt

Associate Member, SAI

The relevance of India in the foreign policy of Germany and the European Union (EU) as a whole has increased significantly because of Russia's war of invasion against Ukraine. This can be seen *inter alia* in the intensified German and international diplomacy of visits to India. After the start of the Ukraine war, the German government, the EU, and the USA jointly tried, albeit by different means, to persuade India to abandon its traditional neutral position and distance itself from Russia's war of invasion. However, this was only partially successful. India has so far succeeded in a balancing act of, on the one hand, accommodating the West and criticising the Kremlin—in moderate, diplomatic formulations—for the war of invasion, and, on the other hand, not jeopardising its good economic and security relations with Russia.

For various reasons, India's status in German and the EU's foreign policy had already been rising for the past several years, but the war has accelerated the process. While China still outweighs India in economic and security terms, India's relevance is likely to further increase to the extent that USA–China relations—and, much more slowly, EU–China relations—are downsized. India's assumption of the G20 presidency in 2023 has contributed to the growing interest in expanding relations with India.

However, the current political situation in India is not wholly conducive to this process. Since 2014, the Hindu nationalist government of the

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and its allied organisations, such as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), have progressively weakened democratic and regulatory institutions, and used state power to silence human rights activists and public intellectuals, critical media/journalists, and civil society organisations. While this must be problematic for German and the EU diplomatic efforts, at least publicly, they have continued to adhere—as did the governments under former Chancellor Angela Merkel—to the conventional diplomatic phrases of “shared values,” and “partnership of values,” described as the basis for “further development of a strategic partnership” with India.

US criticism of human rights in India and EU visiting and negotiating diplomacy

It is noteworthy that compared to diplomatic courtroom talk, public criticism of domestic developments in India seems to get a much higher priority in the USA than it does in Germany and other EU governments. On the one hand, the USA administration is trying to integrate India more closely into the “Quad Group,” which includes the USA, India, Japan, and Australia. On the other hand, India is heavily criticised for its very weak human rights record in the *2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* published by the US Department of State in April 2022. The report on India states: “Significant

human rights issues, included credible reports of: unlawful and arbitrary killings, including extra-judicial killings by the government or its agents ... ; torture and cases of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment by police and prison officials” (see box for details).

As early as May 2021, the EU and India agreed to resume negotiations on a free trade agreement, which had been suspended for nine years. During her visit to India in April 2022, EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen also advocated the expansion of cooperation between the EU and India in both trade and armaments. In the second half of 2022, the first three rounds of negotiations took place, with the very ambitious goal of concluding the negotiations by the end of 2023. In July 2022, the so-called 10th EU–India Human Rights Dialogue took place in New Delhi.

Intensified German visit diplomacy

German diplomacy is much more moderate towards India than the diplomacy of the US administration. In May 2022, Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Prime Minister Modi declared in their joint statement following the Indo-German intergovernmental consultations in Berlin—very similar to former Chancellor Merkel and PM Modi during the previous Indo-German intergovernmental consultations in Delhi in 2019—that the “strategic partnership” also included an arms policy partnership. On

Excerpts from the *Executive Summary of the 2021 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: India* published by the US State Department

India is a multiparty, federal, parliamentary democracy with a bicameral legislature ... Significant human rights issues included credible reports of: unlawful and arbitrary killings, including extrajudicial killings by the government or its agents; torture and cases of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment by police and prison officials; arbitrary arrest and detention by government authorities; political prisoners or detainees ... ; ... unjustified arrests or prosecutions against journalists ... ; serious government corruption; government harassment of domestic and international human rights organizations; lack of investigation of and accountability for gender-based violence; crimes involving violence and discrimination targeting members of minority groups based on religious affiliation. ... Despite government efforts to address abuses and corruption, a lack of accountability for official misconduct persisted at all levels of government, contributing to widespread impunity.

the Ukraine war, Scholz and Modi “emphasized that the contemporary global order has been built on the UN Charter, international law and respect for sovereignty and the territorial integrity of states.” However, there was no joint condemnation of Russia.

During her visit to India in December 2022, Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock spoke of a common “partnership of values” and called on India to criticise the Kremlin’s war of invasion more strongly. In late January 2023, German ambassador Philipp Ackermann visited Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who is one of India’s most radical anti-Muslim BJP politicians, and has been accused of hate speech against Muslims. His predecessor German ambassador Walter J. Lindner had already visited the RSS Chief at his Nagpur headquarters in 2019, to the surprise of many civil society groups in India. The Environment Committee of the Bundestag visited India already in October 2022, the Indo-German Parliamentary Friendship Group of the Bundestag, which includes members of all parties in the Bundestag, visited in January 2023 and Chancellor Scholz in February 2023. Scholz stated in a press conference with Prime Minister Modi: “I’m convinced that our

two countries share a close bond because we have similar ideas, particularly about democracy and what it means for our lives and for the future.” The very different policies of Germany and India regarding the Ukraine war were visible also during Scholz’s visit.

Political science perspectives on India's domestic political developments

Analyses of India’s domestic political developments and the weakening or destruction of democratic institutions in India present two perspectives. The first one holds that fundamental democratic institutions have been violated and weakened, but not destroyed; it considers the pluralistic and tolerant Indian civil society to be strong enough at the moment to be able to stop the growth of intolerant, anti-Muslim Hindu nationalist organisations. In this perspective, a close strategic partnership between the EU, the US, and Indian governments is not only desirable, but also possible and appropriate. Studies such as those by Amrita Narlikar (Narlikar 2021), president of the German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA)

in Hamburg, and Christian Wagner (Wagner and Lemke 2021) of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), can be assigned to this school of thought.

The other perspective, however, emphasizes that not only a weakening but a destruction of fundamental democratic institutions has already taken place, and a very strong threat exists to the basic substance of Indian democracy. The following analyses can be assigned to this perspective: Rochana Bajpai (SOAS, London University) and Yasser Kureshi (Trinity College, University of Oxford) use the concept of “democratic authoritarianism” in their analysis of India’s political system (Bajpai and Kureshi 2022), while the Swedish Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute of the University of Gothenburg calls India an “electoral autocracy” (V-Dem Institute 2022). Rahul Mukherji and Seyed Hossein Zarhani call India’s political system “competitive authoritarianism” (Mukherji and Zarhani 2023). Mukherji (2022) examines the causes of “India’s authoritarian turn,” and the Economist Intelligence Unit calls India a “flawed democracy.”

Is India a “value partner” in a coalition against aggressive Russian foreign policy?

While the USA is trying to persuade India’s BJP government to distance itself from the Kremlin through a combination of offers of partnership and criticism of its domestic policies, the German government pursues a distinctly different strategy towards India. It seems to be prioritising five objectives vis-à-vis India: (a) to win India over as a close partner against Russia and China; (b) to make India a bigger market for the German economy in the medium term, partly replacing China’s reduced market; (c) to win India over as a close climate change policy partner and a bigger buyer of renewable energy technologies; (d) to increase official development assistance (ODA); and (e) to talk publicly about the ongoing destruction of democratic institutions in India only very cautiously in order not to endanger the first four objectives.

It means that the so-called value-oriented and feminist foreign policy of the German government is very careful to document and, almost casually, address serious human rights violations and the dismantling of democratic institutions in its own publications or in other public forms.

There is no written “India strategy” of the German government, nor is there a broader political or political science debate on such a strategy, as is in the case of China, which goes beyond the small circle of very few expert politicians and India experts. However, such a debate is urgently needed, especially on the appropriateness of German diplomacy, which is prepared to establish direct and public friendly relations with extremely radical, domestically active Hindu nationalist actors of the ruling party

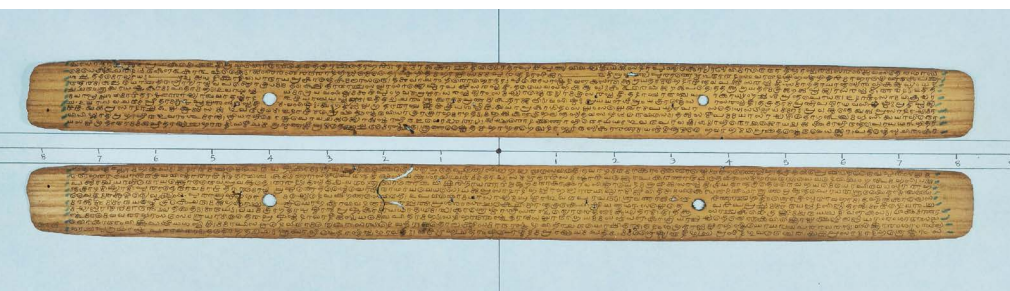
BJP and the RSS. It cannot be ruled out that in the near future German or Western foreign policy may find that Indian democracy has further declined under the onslaught of majoritarian Hindu nationalism, making the country a poor ally in containing the aggressive foreign policy of the Kremlin and China in the short and medium term.

Dieter Reinhardt

is a political scientist specializing in humanitarian aid and global migration. He is an associate member of the South Asia Institute of Heidelberg University.



Painting by Lao Zhu in the CATS Library's Reading Space, Photo: Susann Henker, 2021



Palm-leaf manuscript of the Hastigirimāhātmya, a Sanskrit temple legend of Kanchipuram

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New Academy Project Hindu Temple Legends in South India

Jonas Buchholz

Research Fellow

The Academies Programme funded by the German federal and state governments has awarded a new large-scale research project to the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (HAdW), led by Prof. Dr. Ute Hüsken from the South Asia Institute (SAI). The project, titled "Hindu Temple Legends in South India," commenced in August 2022 and is scheduled to run for 16 years with an annual budget of EUR 400,000. The project is housed by the Heidelberg Centre for Asian and Transcultural Studies (HCTS) on the CATS campus, with a branch office functioning in Pondicherry, India in cooperation with the École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO).

The project explores the temple legends of the South Indian city of Kanchipuram in their different forms of transmission and makes them accessible in a digital environment. Temple legends (*māhātmya* or *sthalapurāṇa*) are Hindu texts that relate the origin stories of temples and other holy places through mythological narratives. The project focuses on the temple legends of the temple town of Kanchipuram, located around seventy kilometers west of Chennai in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Counted among the seven sacred



The gods approach Śiva: woodcut from a printed edition of the Kāñcippurāṇam, a Tamil temple legend of Kanchipuram (1900)

cities of Hinduism, Kanchipuram is a site of great religious importance and has received a large number of temple legends. The eight sizeable texts, composed in Sanskrit and Tamil and representing different traditions of Hinduism (Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism, and Śāktism), have so far been largely neglected by scholarship. At the same time, temple legends do not only exist as texts, but also in oral, performative, and material form: they are transmitted by word-of-mouth, ritually enacted, painted on temple walls and fashioned into sculptures. Their narratives are also of central importance for contemporary lived Hindu traditions.

At the core of the project is the production of digital editions with annotated translations of the entire corpus of Kanchipuram's temple legends. In a second step, these editions will be linked with the documentation of the temples that are



Pillar depicting a scene from a temple legend, Kacchapeśvara temple, Kanchipuram

described in the texts, the respective iconography, as well as related rituals and oral traditions. In this way, textual and non-textual forms of the temple legends are brought together in a consolidated digital corpus, thus creating a new understanding of this important cultural heritage both in its historical significance and as living practice.

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Translating Asia



Reading of Japanese Poetry

Martin Gieselmann

Executive Secretary, SAI

The CATS project "TRANSLASIA: A Meeting and Production Space for Translators from South and East Asian Languages" started in June 2021. The funding was provided within the framework of NEUSTART KULTUR and was awarded by the German Translator Fund. TRANSLASIA does not only support new translation projects by freelance translators from Asian languages, but also makes the work of translators visible on a digital platform and in public events. Situated at CATS, TRANSLASIA further promotes exchange between CATS scholars and translators as well as actors in the cultural and publishing sectors.

The project team consists of staff from the CATS institutions SAI (Dr. Justyna Kurowska and Dr. Martin Gieselmann) and ZO (Dr. Asa-Bettina Wuthenow and Friederike Schneider-Vielsäcker) as well as external member Dr. Petra Thiel, Director of the Confucius



Exhibition of TRANSLASIA at the CATS library foyer

Institute Heidelberg. Within the two-year period, the TRANSLASIA project team has put together an extensive program.

The scholarship selection was organized in the first year. A total of twenty-two applications were received, selected were translators from Chinese, Japanese, Hindi, Dari, and Urdu. Most of the scholarship holders were in Heidelberg during the summer of 2022. They made extensive and enthusiastic use of the work opportunities in the CATS library. Details of the eleven translation projects can be found [here](#).

The TRANSLASIA program started at CATS in summer 2022 with readings of literature from China, Japan, and Bangladesh. At the Heidelberg Literature Days, "TRANSLASIA 3x15" presented three translators from the project. A workshop "Asian Science Fiction Literature and its Translation" took place in October 2022 and was attended by translators, authors, academics, and representatives of the book industry. In December, Dr. Asa-Bettina Wuthenow



Meet the (Bangladesh) Author Shaheen Akhtar

moderated the TRANSLASIA event "Übersetzen als Beruf(ung): A roundtable discussion with Dr. Ines Fornell, Ursula Gräfe, Claudia Kramatschek, and Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Schamoni." At the end of 2022, TRANSLASIA opened an exhibition in the foyer of the CATS library.

The two-year TRANSLASIA project marks a beginning for the better understanding of literature from South and East Asian countries at CATS. Podcasts of the project will be published during 2023, and further activities to promote knowledge of literature from and about Asia are in preparation. Thus, TRANSLASIA will continue to be available as a meeting place for all those who deal with the literature of so-called niche languages on an academic level and/or as a "cultural broker" in the field and, above all, for literary translators from Asian languages.

New Research Training Group **Ambivalent Enmity**

Joachim Kurtz

Professor of Intellectual History

The Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) will support the establishment of a new research training group (RTG) on the topic of "Ambivalent Enmity" with 6.5 million euros over five years. Focusing on the "Dynamics of Antagonism in Asia, Europe, and the Middle East," the RTG will train two cohorts, each with twelve doctoral students and two postdoctoral fellows, through a graduate program hosted by the Heidelberg Center for Transcultural Studies in conjunction with the Heidelberg Center for Jewish Studies.

"Instead of understanding enmity as a necessary evil or the essence of all things political, we emphasize its transcultural, processual, and ambivalent dimension. In our program, we want to train a new generation of scholars equipped to capture such ambivalences in the genealogy, performance, and practice of enmity—both, in the past as well as the present," says speaker Tanja Penter, a professor of Eastern European history. Other CATS members behind the initiative include co-speakers Joachim Kurtz and Johannes Becke as well as Monica Juneja and Hans Harder.

The RTG will bring together expertise in area studies with



Soviet monument to "Russian-Ukrainian Friendship", Kiev, demolished April 2022

history, political science, psychology, art history, literary studies, and philosophy. It builds on the transcultural approach developed at Heidelberg, which systematically examines the entanglements between countries, regions, cultures, and religions. Case studies will investigate three macro-regions and their interrelations: Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. "Exploring the ambivalences of enmity in and between these regions will contribute to expanding enmity studies beyond European experiences," Penter underlines.

The RTG is scheduled to start in October 2023.

Ruperto Carola Lecture Series

“Vom Ende als Anfang” (Endings as Beginnings)

Sara Landa

Postdoc researcher, "Worldmaking"

Do catastrophes and crises entail possibilities for metamorphoses and new world orders, for rewriting history? Can endings in all their destructive and threatening potential carry in themselves a new beginning, or the potential of different new beginnings? And how can such potentials be realized in different cultural and epochal contexts?

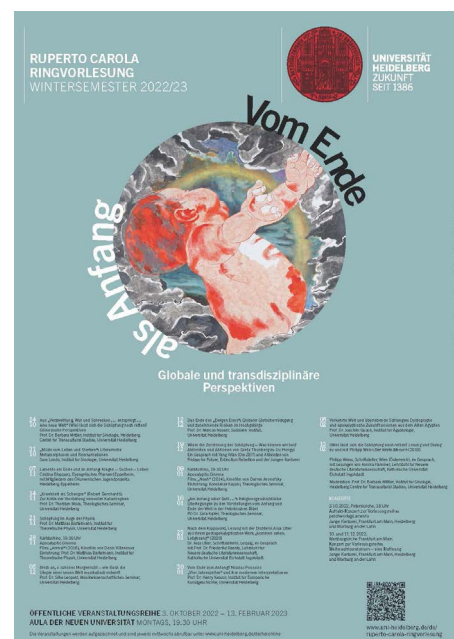
Against the backdrop of the environmental and climate crises, the pandemic, wars, and radically shifting world orders, the Ruperto Carola Lecture Series had its focus on the intricate relationship between endings and beginnings. It was conceptualized and organized by the BMBF funded project “Epochal Life Worlds,” situated at the CATS and part of the joint network “Worldmaking from a Global Perspective: A Dialogue with China,” in cooperation with the Centre for Apocalyptic and Postapocalyptic Studies, the Karlsruher Cinema, and the Junge Kantorei Heidelberg.

The aim was to reach out to different generations and audiences and to bring scholars, public actors, and artists from various fields into a dialogue with each other and the broader public. Taking a transdisciplinary and trans-cultural perspective, the lecture series included a broad range of lectures from dystopian future scenarios of ancient Egypt to Chinese imaginations of destruction and new beginnings, from the end of the glacier’s “eternal ice” to astrophysical perspectives on the beginnings as well as the end(s) of

the universe, from ambivalences in the Book of Genesis to Johann Sebastian Bach’s musical utopia in the Christmas Oratorio. Activists, journalists, and scholars from Heidelberg and beyond discussed frames and potential for action in different parts of the world. Two film screenings with commentary and discussion, readings of works by poet Anja Utler and dramatist Philipp Weiss as well as concerts by the Junge Kantorei framed and complemented the lecture series so as to test the potentials of rethinking the end of the world—and what can be done about it—in different creative modes of reinterpretation and action.

All lectures (in German) have been recorded and can be viewed here:

» <https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/de/transfer/kommunikation/ruperto-carola-ringvorlesung>



Poster of the Ruperto Carola Lecture Series

Fellowship Program at CATS

Epochal Life Worlds

Matthias Schumann
Research Fellow

Since April 2021, the CATS is home to the project “Epochal Life Worlds: Man, Nature, and Technology in Narratives of Crisis and Change,” which is part of the Joint Center for Advanced Studies “Worldmaking from a Global Perspective: A Dialogue with China,” funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). In tandem with researchers at partner projects at the universities of Berlin, Würzburg, Göttingen, and Munich as well as visiting fellows from Germany and the Chinese-speaking world, the project explores how epochal moments of crisis are narrated and represented and how they trigger new depictions and representations of the world.

At the heart of the project is a fellowship program that awards short-term fellowships for residential stays at the CATS and research trips to the PRC, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao. In the summer term of 2022, project participants were happy to host Dr. Renée Krusche (University of Erlangen-Nürnberg), who worked on a project “One Health in the Chinese Republican Period.” Wang Yizhou (Hong Kong Baptist University) and Joana van de Löcht (University of Münster) jointly explored the visual and literary representations of the “Little Ice Age” in Europe and China from a comparative perspective. They were joined by Wang Shangshang (LMU Munich), who studied “Evolutionary Imaginations in Late Qing and Republican China.” The fellows presented their ongoing projects in a lecture series “Ending Worlds,” which was jointly organized with the Heidelberg Center

for Apocalyptic and Postapocalyptic Studies (CAPAS, <https://www.capas.uni-heidelberg.de/>).

The fellowship program of the “Epochal Life Worlds” project will continue in 2023 and we look forward to announcing the selected candidates in the upcoming weeks, who will explore topics ranging from environmental and pandemic history to Malthusian theory and urban gardening. Due to the end of pandemic restrictions around the globe, we also hope to finally welcome a number of fellows from East Asia. On June 15–17, 2023, the project will also be hosting the annual conference of the Joint Center for Advanced Studies, which will explore “The Making of Epochal Events: Narrating Turning Points in Chinese History.” The conference will take place at the CATS and all members are warmly invited to join.

For more information, visit the project’s websites:

- » <https://www.zo.uni-heidelberg.de/sinologie/worldmaking/>
- » <https://www.worldmaking-china.org/en/index.html>



Poster “Ending Worlds” Lecture Series

Internship in Pakistan

Dunya Wasella
Student

During my last semester break, I decided to pursue an internship at the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) in Pakistan. There, I supported the program section of the HSF with the preparation of events, communication, social media, and the evaluation of applications. Further, I edited academic and policy

papers before their publication, helped with conducting events, and was trusted to manage small projects on my own.

Although I had doubts joining an organization that propagates views I often do not agree with, I must admit that the internship was a great learning experience. As all my colleagues were Pakistanis, the office offered an opportunity for cultural exchange and language practice. Interning with a small organization allowed me to get insights into all areas of work. I was often allowed to join events such as Afghan-Pakistani summer school as well as debating competitions

and cultural celebrations. I learnt how to organize such events and made great new contacts.

The most insightful part of the internship was to watch application processes from the perspective of the employer. Before, applications always felt like a magic black box that cause anxiety and stress. Now that I have experienced the other side of it, I feel much more confident when writing applications and I make decisions more thoughtfully. Overall, I had a great time in Islamabad and can only recommend internships abroad and experiencing the beauty of Pakistan to other students.

Special services

Standing desks

Sitting in a chair for a long time is not doing your body any favours. Ergonomic experts recommend standing about 5-15 minutes out of every hour, and take breaks from sitting for a total of at least 2 hours in an 8-hour workday.

CATS Library offers two different styles of movable and customizable standing desks.

Our two small tabletop standing desks are portable and can be placed anywhere on top of our

fixed-height reading desks in the library. They are easily adjustable to a range of body heights to accommodate most people and offer a particularly large work surface for your laptop, tablet, or books.

We also provide two stand-alone standing desks that can be turned into a desk to sit in front of in just a few simple steps. The shelves can be easily adjusted to a suitable height for any body size and freely moved within the library.



Table-top standing desk



Stand-alone standing desk

Rental devices

CATS Library provides various short-term rental devices such as projectors, cameras, microphones, and tripods. While most of this equipment is mainly intended for classroom use, we also offer laptops that CATS staff and students may borrow for their work in the library, during class, or elsewhere. As a general rule, equipment should be returned before the end of the day or on the next working day at the latest. Please make a reservation in advance through our library homepage or directly via

» <https://sharepoint.uni-heidelberg.de/workspace/cats/it/equipment/>

Creating a New Body for the Deceased

Templates of Funerary Talismans among the Yao Manuscripts

Hui Sun
Librarian

Among the Yao manuscripts in the Western collections and those still in use in Northern Laos, templates of talismans (符 *pou* in Mienic and *fu* in Chinese) with Chinese legends sometimes form individual manuscripts and sometimes parts of individual manuscripts. The most numerous among the published templates depict talismans that are applied in the so-called *lin-tu* 煉度 (deliverance through purification) liturgy, a Daoist liturgy performed towards the end of a funerary cycle. No. 20 of the Yao manuscripts in the collection of the CATS Library also includes templates of such funerary talismans.

Characteristically, such templates encompass at least one talisman with the Chinese characters for “the name/soul of the deceased so and so” or the like (see image). Furthermore, they comprise talismans with legends referring to certain liturgical devices, certain deities or spirits, human organs, and certain liturgical processes.

The *lin-tu* liturgy (*liandu* in Chinese) was developed at the latest in the 12th century in China. During the liturgy, the priest summons various deities including the inner pantheon of the human body to create a new body for the deceased, who will be purified within a fire pool and a water pool, bathed, feasted, endowed with an immortal garment, and delivered into certain immortal spheres. The liturgy may encompass the process of a universal deliverance (*pudu* 普度), in which all the suffering souls of the

Seven Paths are set free through the rite of Breaking the Hell, bathed, feasted, and delivered as well.

Among the Yao people, talismans on paper are commonly created according to the templates in a separate rite before the performance of the *lin-tu* liturgy. In the same vein as their etymological prototypes, i.e., the Chinese *fu*-talismans (*fu* 符), such talismans are produced as succinct contractual messages between certain celestial and terrestrial parties. In the *lin-tu* liturgy, talismans must be used in combination with further (oral) texts, such as incantations, personal communication, etc., which deliver more information to the deities and spirits. Accordingly, the priest consults various further manuscript types, including certain liturgical codices (*hu* 科) and secret manuals (*pei-nui* 秘語). In many segments of the liturgy, he burns the talismans to remind the celestial parties of their contractually regulated duties, for instance the creation of new organs for the deceased.

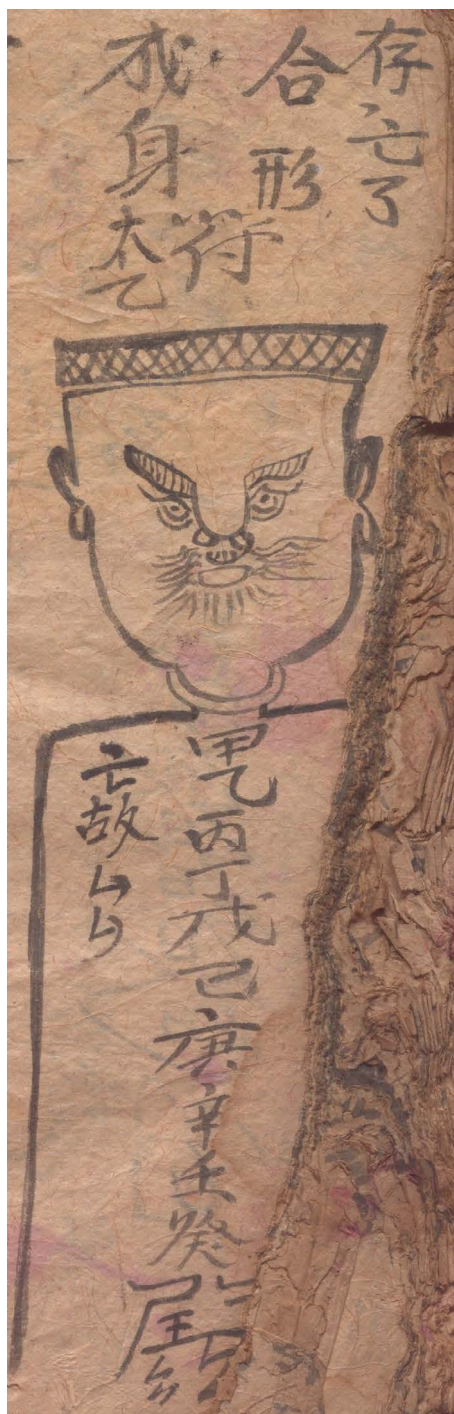


Image of the personified Great One (*taiyi* 太一) bearing a template of the name of the deceased. Section of a page from no. 20 of the Yao manuscripts in the collection of the CATS Library

The Centre for East Asian Studies comprises four professorships of Chinese Studies, two of Japanese Studies and two of East Asian Art History. Two Associated professorships are located in the Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies. Additionally, regular guest professorships have been established in all three departments and a guest lecture programme focusing on the history, culture and society of Taiwan.



Centre for East Asian



Studies

Heinz Götze Supported Lecture and Group Research Travel Summer 2022

Sarah E. Fraser

Professor for Chinese Art History

Dr. Cornelius Götze joined Heidelberg University students and faculty, including Professor Sarah E. Fraser who introduces Dr. Eugene Yuejin Wang, the 2022 Heinz Götze Visiting Professor. Wang, a specialist on Chinese Buddhist art from Harvard University, analyzed images of death and transformation in his public talk June 12, 2022 (fig. 1). Emerging from strict corona travel restrictions, summer of 2022 was filled with IKO Heinz Götze Stiftung-supported activities. Excursions to both Paris and London were made possible with generosity and commitment of the Foundation. Six days in London encompassed presentations by student participants focused on an object or at a site (fig. 2). Wang Yuechen, who researches is writing a dissertation on contemporary Asian art, led a discussion on street art in Shoreditch, London,

We were hosted at the British Museum August 9, 2023 by Dr. Luk Yuk-ping, the 2021 Heinz Götze Distinguished Professor.

The much-anticipated viewing encompassed works by Shitao (1644-1707) in addition to paintings by Zhang Daqian (1899-1983). These included Zhang's recognized forgeries of early artists on silk and his modern abstractions; also the discussion encompassed other twentieth century museum acquisitions (fig. 3).

During the IKO research trip to France during Asia Week, participants visited the Musée Guimet, Bourse, and the Musée Cernuschi in Paris. At the Château de Fontainebleau outside of the city, the group including Profs. Eugene Wang, Harvard University and Sarah E. Fraser, Heidelberg University, were given a private tour of Empress Eugénie's Chinese Museum, and and Napoleon III's newly renovated *Le théâtre Impérial* (d. 1853), June 2022 (fig. 4).



Fig. 1 Prof. Sarah E. Fraser welcomes Dr. Cornelius Götze (center), Founder of the Heinz Götze Stiftung and audience to lecture delivered by Prof. Eugene Wang (left), Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Professor, Harvard University, Heinz Götze Visiting Professor, Heidelberg University, 2022.



Fig. 2 August 2022 Excursion to London supported by the Heinz Götze Stiftung; Group visit and discussion of Street Art lead by Wang Yuechen, Shoreditch, London. Front Row (from left): Wu Tao, Spyros Triantis, Giulia Pra Florian, Wang Fengyu; Back: Chen Tianyi, Wang Yizhou, Yuechen, Wang Jialu, Bai Bing, Hanyang Zhong, and Alva Speth.



Fig. 3 August 2022 Excursion to London supported by the Heinz Götze Stiftung; Heinz Götze Visiting Professor, Heidelberg University, 2021, Dr. Luk Yu-ping (left), with painting and Heidelberg students.



Fig. 4 Prof. Eugene Wang with recipients of Heinz Götze travel funding at Château de Fontainebleau.

Teaching China in High School

Beyond Headlines and Stereotypes

Stefanie Elbern, Marjolijn Kaiser
Team China-School-Academy

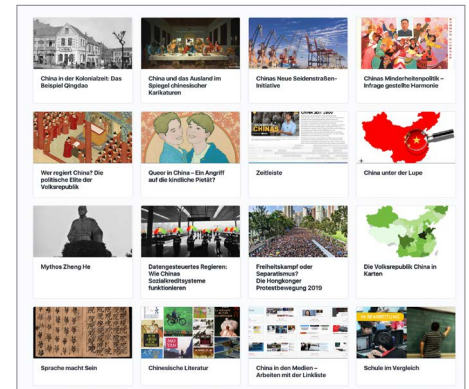
Over the last two years, the BMBF-funded China-School-Academy (China-Schul-Akademie, CSA) has developed more than fifteen China-themed learning and teaching modules with Education for Sustainable Development-compliant learning objectives and standardized goals for the generation of academic and social skills. The content of these learning modules is based on an extensive analysis of more than 200 curricula from sixteen German states and an equally large corpus of textbooks, focusing on subjects such as geography, history, politics, economics, social studies, and German language. Topics range from the Chinese political system to queer life in China (including the PRC, Taiwan, and Greater China). These modules are intended for use in upper-level courses (*wissenschaftspropädeutische Kurse*) that prepare German high school students for future academic work, and are freely available on the ChinaPerspektiven website.

The learning and teaching modules offer a diversity of Chinese voices. In order to provide these sources in German translation, the CSA has drawn on a large community of China experts from the academe, civil society, and politics. In addition to the modules, all of which have a strong historical, transcultural, and multi-perspective focus, the website also offers shorter blog posts (*Werkstattberichte*), on current topics such as Chinese responses to the war in Ukraine or the 50-year-anniversary

of German-Chinese relations. In order to show that/how China is connected to students' daily lives, a map of places with a China-connection in German-speaking countries, such as museums, memorials, and cultural centers, is available on the website.

The CSA also focusses on educating teachers, both on the job and during their studies. So far, more than 500 teachers nationwide have attended the digital training sessions hosted by the CSA. The current round of these online courses started in February. In cooperation with the Heidelberg School of Education (HSE), the CSA has developed the certificate "China: special skills for teaching in schools" ("China-Kompetenz für die Schule") that aims to provide students from different disciplines with a better understanding of China.

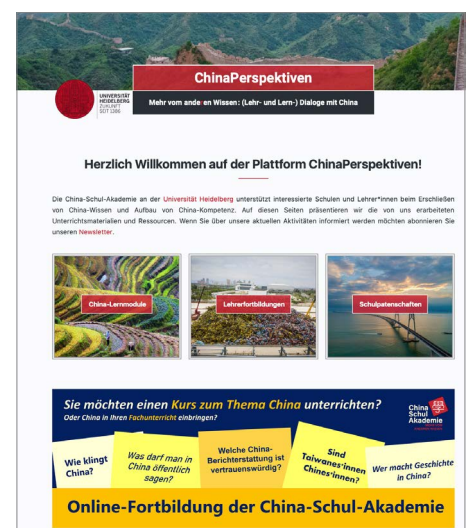
At the core of the CSA's mission is the idea that we need to go beyond media headlines and repeated stereotypes: knowing more about other places, cultures, and people, as well as different ways of knowing about them, will in turn help young students to critically evaluate themselves and their own role/place in the world at large. This idea is reflected in the German title of the project (which is impossible to translate): "Mehr vom A/anderen w/Wissen."



Screenshot: Overview of a selection of the teaching modules on the website ChinaPerspektiven



Screenshot: Example of a teaching material on the topic of the Chinese political system



Screenshot: Homepage of the website ChinaPerspektiven

Long Shall He Live!

The Lecture Series “Ten Thousand Thoughts” in Honor of Professor Emeritus Lothar Ledderose

Katharina S. Rode-Kaya

*Assistant Professor for
Japanese Art History*

Lothar Ledderose's research has enriched Chinese art history for decades, and continues to do so with the team of the research unit Buddhist Stone Inscriptions. Leading up to the celebration of his eightieth birthday on June 12, 2022, the Institute of East Asian Art History (IKO) and Heidelberg Academy of Science and Humanities organized a hybrid lecture series of eighteen speakers. Organized in panels, roundtables, and individual talks, renowned scholars, all students and colleagues of Prof. Ledderose, opened up a multifaceted spectrum of research on Chinese art: curating, religious iconographies,

aspects of transculturality and mobility as well as archaeological research, painting, photography, and mobility of objects. The lecture series was streamed online via multiple platforms and reached up to six-thousand viewers worldwide, making it the most popular lecture the institute has ever offered. Among the chairs and speakers were Dame Jessica Rawson, Lothar von Falkenhausen, Robert E. Harrist, Zhang Zhong, Zhou Yiqing, LaoZhu, Yukio Lippit, Anton Schweizer, Adele Schlombs, Burglind Jungmann, and many more. Close to one hundred people joined us for the big celebration with laudation speeches, further talks, music, and a feast. We wish Prof. Ledderose all the best for many healthy years to come.



Professor em. Lothar Ledderose

Photo: Susann Henker

East Asia Today

Lectures and Working Papers

Anja Senz

Professor, Chinese Studies

"East Asia Today" is the title of a regular series of lectures and panel discussions organized since 2018 by the research group of Prof. Dr. Anja Senz at the Institute of Chinese Studies. Thematically the lecture series focuses on current political, economic, and social issues in East Asia, including developments in the larger Chinese-speaking world, as well as the diverse interregional exchange processes.

In the last semester, numerous events were successfully hosted. Three guests from Italy, Spain, and Lithuania contextualized bilateral EU-China relations from a domestic perspective, while other experts covered trending research topics ranging from the discussion of internal crisis in China to ethnic borderlands in Yanbian/China and more.

Moreover, selected contributions and additional insights are available via the "East Asia Today – Working Papers" series and an upcoming podcast project. All working papers can be downloaded free of charge in PDF format. The podcast on the Echowall website contains regularly updated research on Sino-European relations.

In the winter term 2022/2023, the research group also welcomed Prof. Shapan Adnan from SOAS, University of London, for an intensive exchange about rural development, agricultural modernization, and social change in China, Bangladesh, and India.

» <https://ostasien-aktuell.uni-heidelberg.de/>

» <https://www.echo-wall.eu/>



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SINOLOGIE



CENTRUM FÜR ASIEN-
WISSENSCHAFTEN UND
TRANSKULTURELLE STUDIEN



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

Ostasien Aktuell

NOVEMBER 2022	JANUAR 2023
<p>16. NOV Rural Development, Agricultural Modernization, and Social Change in China: Comparative Perspectives in Relation to South Asia Prof. Shapan Adnan (SOAS) Mittwoch 18.00 Uhr - Hybrid Raum: 1. OG HS 05 (18.01.05)</p>	<p>18. JAN Ethnic Borderland: The Un/Homeliness of Korean Chinese in Yanbian China Dr. June Hee Kwon (California State University, Sacramento) Mittwoch 18.00 Uhr - Online</p>
<p>23. NOV Governing Chinese Mega-city Regions - Organizing Spatial Development or Resigning in the Face of Size? Dr. Anja Senz and Simon Yoon (Universität Heidelberg) Mittwoch 18.00 Uhr - Hybrid Raum: 1. OG HS 05 (18.01.05)</p>	<p>25. JAN Zur (Un)Sachlichkeit in politischen Debatten über China Dr. Thomas Arnold und Prof. Anja Senz (Universität Heidelberg) Mittwoch 18.00 Uhr - Präsenz Raum: 1. OG HS 05 (18.01.05)</p>
DEZEMBER 2022	FEBRUAR 2023
<p>12. DEZ Occupying Shops to Defend Rights to Spaces of Livelihood: From Tenant Shopkeepers' Fragmentation to Collective Consciousness in Seoul Dr. Yoon Lee (Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen) Montag 13.00 Uhr - Online</p>	<p>1. FEB The Restraining Belt: Physical Infrastructure as China's Means of Territorial Control Dr. Konstantinos Andrioukas (Vilnius University) Mittwoch 18.00 Uhr - Hybrid Raum: 1. OG HS 05 (18.01.05)</p>
<p>14. DEZ Chinas Volkswirtschaft im Krisenmodus: Neuorientierung in turbulenten Zeiten Prof. Markus Tiede (Universität Duisburg-Essen) Mittwoch 18.00 Uhr - Hybrid Raum: 1. OG HS 05 (18.01.05)</p>	<p>6. FEB The 2022 Presidential Election in South Korea: The Politics of Resent and Revenge Confirms Older Trends and Cleavages and Reveals New Ones Dr. Youngmin Kim (The University of Edinburgh) Montag 13.00 Uhr - Online</p>

Kontaktinformationen:
Prof. Dr. Anja Senz, Dr. Joon Hee Kwon: ostasien-aktuell@uni-heidelberg.de
Universität Heidelberg, Centrum für Asienwissenschaften und Transkulturelle Studien
• Heidelberg 2 • 69121 Heidelberg • www.cats.uni-heidelberg.de

In Kooperation mit:
The Academy of Korean Studies
und Echowall
<https://ostasien-aktuell.uni-heidelberg.de/>





Peter Kornicki

Every year, the Ishibashi Foundation in Tokyo generously sponsors two visiting professors to come and teach at the Institute for East Asian Art History (IKO). Due to the pandemic, we had three professors in the year of 2022.

Professor Emeritus Peter Kornicki (Cambridge University) is perhaps the world's foremost expert in the study of Japanese book history. He taught a tremendously popular online lecture "The History of the Book in Japan" in the winter term and joined us in spring for an in-depth seminar. Professor Kornicki brought a couple of books for the students to handle in class and explore their materiality: the margins, paper quality, the colors of the covers, and the binding. All aspects of the actual books have just as much meaning and purpose as the written content. In an excursion to the Bavarian State Library, a group of students had the chance to look at even older printed texts, manuscripts, and maps. Finally, Professor Kornicki concluded his stay with the special lecture on "The Book in Japanese Art—Some Scenes, Some Problems," presenting the various roles of books in three case studies.



Vincent B. Lesch

In April 2022, Dr. Vincent B. Lesch joined the Institute for Japanese Studies at the Centre for East Asian Studies. He received his PhD from Hamburg University in 2019. In his thesis "Nonprofit Education in Japan: NPO-led Career Guidance at Metropolitan Senior High Schools" he focused on the education system, NPO-sector, and the transition from school to labor market in Japan. As a PhD student, he was a stipend holder at the German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ Tokyo) and visiting researcher at Waseda University and Sophia University in Tokyo. Since 2019, he is the organizer of the section meeting "Education" of the German Association for Social Science Research on Japan (VSJF). Before coming to Heidelberg, he taught at the Department of Global Studies, Aarhus University (Denmark). His research currently focusses on consumer education and consumer protection as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Japanese education system and society.



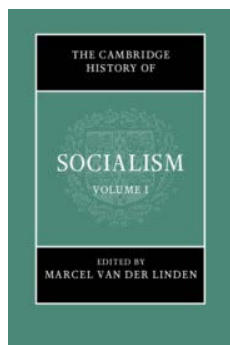
Halle O'Neal

Prof. Halle O'Neal from the University of Edinburgh is a renowned scholar focusing on Japanese Buddhist art and manuscripts. In her inspiring special lecture "Fragments of Handwriting: Buddhist Death Rituals in Japanese Epistolary Culture" she opened the world of different kinds of letter sutras to a stunned audience. In a palimpsestic act of devotion and grief, lovers or family members would inscribe the Lotus Sutra on the backside of letters from the deceased. Prof. O'Neal also taught a lecture on "Buddhist Icons in Medieval Japan," highlighting different aspects of embodiment, performance, and materiality, which she rounded off with an excursion to the Museum for East Asian Art in Cologne. Together with the curator, the group saw medieval statues and paintings in storage up close. Her seminar focused on the topic of "Buddhist Bodies in Visual and Material Culture." The students explored the relationship between the body, reliquaries, and ritual practice, even creating their own reliquary.



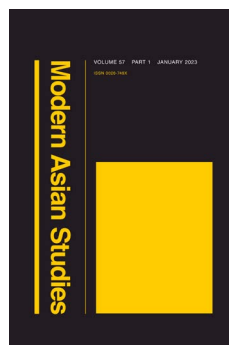
Ryo Furuta

Professor and curator Furuta Ryo from the Tokyo School of the Arts Museum (Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku Bijutsukan) joined us in May to teach the lecture “Modern Japanese Painters” and the seminar “Invisible Regions of Japanese Art.” The lecture singled out six artists representing different aspects of Meiji period painting: Kano Hōgai, Takahashi Yuichi, Kuroda Seiki, Watanabe Seitei, Uemura Shōen, and Yokoyama Taikan. In the seminar, the group of students approached Japanese art from a curatorial point of view via the concepts of time, ghosts, music and performance, literature and fragrance. Prof. Furuta is famous for his innovative exhibitions and enticed the students to reconsider their understanding of Japanese art. To deepen their understanding, a group went to Friedenstein Palace in Gotha, where they got the chance to examine several rare albums painted by *ukiyo-e* designers as diplomatic presents in the 1870s. Prof. Furuta also gave a special lecture on “Asia is One? Okakura Tenshin and His Idea of the Art.”



Gotelind Müller
Anarchism and Syndicalism in China
 In *The Cambridge History of Socialism*, edited by Marcel van der Linden, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022

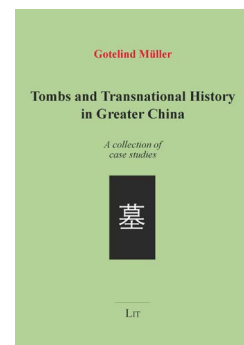
This handbook article deals with the topic of anarchism and syndicalism in China in the period 1907–1937, i.e. taking the founding of the first self-declared Chinese anarchist groups in 1907 in Tokyo and Paris as a starting point, and the beginning of the full-scale Sino-Japanese War in 1937 as the end. The main issues addressed include the various ways of reception and adaptation of anarchism versus Marxism and the entangled motivations from the Chinese point of view; industrialization and the rise of the labor question, paying heed also to the traditional “guild system” in China and its relation to the nascent syndicalist movement. Gender relations, their redefinition, and alternative life practices, which included experiments with the creation of communes, the rejection of marriage and of the Chinese family concept, are covered as well to do justice to the concerns of the actors themselves.



Hans Martin Krämer
An Anti-Secularist Pan-Asianist from Europe: Paul Richard in Japan, 1916–1920
Modern Asian Studies 57, no. 2 (2023): 487–504. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X22000087>

The modern Japanese nation-state that was established from 1868 onwards was marked by a strong tendency towards the separation of state and religion: religions were protected as a private matter, but the public sphere was resolutely kept free of them. This secularist approach to policing religions was broadly shared among Japanese elites—but it did not remain unopposed.

From around the turn of the twentieth century, dissatisfaction with the separation of the religious and the secular spheres began to be voiced, especially by pan-Asianist activists, who sought to combine the spiritual unity of Asia with the political liberation of Asian countries from Western colonialism and imperialism. This article shows how pan-Asianist activists in 1910s Japan, drawing their primary inspiration from India, opposed mainstream secularism and discusses what their vision for a unified Asia was.



Gotelind Müller
Tombs and Transnational History in Greater China: A Collection of Case Studies
 Vol. 11 of LIT Studies on Asia, Münster and Berlin: LIT, 2022. viii, 348 pp.

This collection of case studies is concerned with tombs that testify to transnational history. Special attention is given to tombs of Westerners and Russians still extant in Greater China, but also to those of some noted Chinese who were involved in transnational history during the twentieth century. Tombs have a special potential to cast familiar things in a new light. They also provide the possibility to counter-check received narratives, which might have been tailored along certain vested interests and circulated with specific target groups in mind.

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The South Asia Institute comprises seven professorships in Development Economics, Anthropology, Geography, History of South Asia, Cultural and Religious History of South Asia (Classical Indology), Modern South Asian Languages and Literatures (Modern Indology) and Political Science of South Asia. Furthermore, the Indian Government finances the Heinrich Zimmer Chair for Indian Philosophy and Intellectual History; Pakistan funds the Allama Iqbal Professorial Fellowship and Sri Lanka enables the Chair of Sri Lankan Studies. Three associated professorships are located at the Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies.



South Asia



Institute



Explaining the Violent Expulsion of Rohingyas from Myanmar

Shapan Adnan

*Professorial Research Associate,
Department of Development
Studies*

During my visit to Heidelberg University in late 2022, Professor Rahul Mukherji kindly invited me to contribute to the lecture series that he organizes at the Department of Politics of the South Asia Institute (SAI) in the Centre for Asian and Transcultural Studies (CATS). This was a great opportunity to make the first public presentation of the findings of my research over the last two years on the political and socio-economic factors underlying the expulsion of Rohingyas from Myanmar. My lecture at the South Asia Institute was delivered on November 7, 2022 with the title "Explaining the Violent Expulsion of the Rohingyas from Myanmar: Dynamics of Resistance to Ethno-Religious Discrimination and Dispossession."

Existing interpretations of the violent expulsion of Rohingya Muslims from Arakan (Rakhine) state of Myanmar since August 2017 emphasize factors such as punitive measures against Rohingyas regarded as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, land grabs driven by neoliberal capitalism and foreign investments, or communal violence

propagated through contentious identity politics. While these capture partial aspects of the overall picture, my research using a long-term historical perspective shows that the Rohingyas have been subject to recurrent bouts of mass expulsion beginning from at least 1978. Moreover, the social and political grounds for doing so have been prepared cumulatively over the preceding decades through denial of citizenship and civic rights, practices of exclusion, othering, persecution, land grabs, as well as interlocking restrictions on their social activities, everyday movements, and livelihood avenues. Indeed, the evidence suggests that the forms of direct and structural violence to which the Rohingyas have been subjected by the regime and dominant Buddhist ethnic groups of Myanmar embodies a "negative biopolitics" aimed at their mass expulsion, if not extermination.

The lecture and ensuing discussion was chaired by Professor Rahul Mukherji and attended by faculty members including Professor Hans Harder and Dr. Dieter Reinhardt of the South Asia Institute and Professor Anja Senz of the Institute of Chinese Studies. Quite a few PhD candidates and graduate students from CATS and

other university departments also attended. The Q&A session was lively, with critical issues being raised by faculty members and graduate students, which will help me to fine-tune the arguments in revised versions of the paper. Persecution by an authoritarian regime and exposure to negative biopolitics are by no means unique to the Rohingyas of Myanmar. A comprehensive explanation of their experience might well have relevance for a better understanding of the politics of ethnic and religious persecution in comparable instances in the wider regions of South and East Asia.

Nepal Day 2022 at Heidelberg University

**Manik Bajracharya,
Rajan Khatiwoda**
Research Associate

A two-day event Nepal Day was organized by the South Asia Institute (SAI) on July 21–22, 2022 to celebrate thirty-five years of academic cooperation between SAI and Nepal as well as sixty years of SAI.

The event began with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Heidelberg University and Tribhuvan University by Rector Prof. Bernhard Eitel and Rector Prof. Shiva Lal Bhusal. This was followed by an introduction of the Nepal delegation as well as the welcome addresses by Prof. Rahul Mukherji, director of SAI, Rector Prof. Bhusal, and Prof. Christiane Brosius. The first day of this event also included a conversation between Prof. Niels Gutschow and Prof. Axel Michaels titled “What Have We Learnt from Nepal?” Both of them first travelled to Nepal in 1962 and 1972 respectively, and headed numerous projects for several years that explored rituals and historical connections.

Nepal Day also created an opportunity for ongoing projects on Nepal to present their work. These included: Nepal Heritage Documentation Project (presented by Rajan Khatiwoda and Bharat Maharjan), “Documents on the History of Religion and Law of Pre-modern Nepal” of the

Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (presented by Dr. Manik Bajracharya and Dr. Astrid Zotter), “Urban Transformation and Placemaking” (presented by Prof. Christiane Brosius and Sujan Chitrakar), and “Himalayan Socio-Hydrology: Evidence from Nepal” (presented by Prof. Marcus Nüsser and Dr. Susanne Schmidt).

This was followed by lectures by Prof. Sagar Raj Sharma (Kathmandu University) titled “Dilemmas of a Nation in Transition,” dealing with the socio-economic and environmental challenges of Nepal, and by Prof. Martin Gaenszle (University of Vienna) titled “Ethnic Traditions and Global Archives: Changing Research Conditions in Nepal.” Prof. Gaenszle’s lecture highlighted some of the evolving potentials of ethnographic documentation by means of digital archives and reflected on the challenges accompanying them.

On July 22, Prof. Brosius moderated a roundtable discussion on future cooperation between Heidelberg University, Tribhuvan University, and Kathmandu University.

It was an enriching event that brought together researchers from Nepal and Germany and began the celebrations for sixty years of SAI and thirty-five years of academic cooperation between SAI and Nepal.



*Prof. Axel Michaels and
Prof. Niels Gutschow in conversation*



*Group photo of participants of the
roundtable discussion*

An Ancient City Comes Alive

Lived Sanskrit Cultures 2022

Miriam Grimm*MA Student*

The Lived Sanskrit Cultures excursion to Varanasi is an annual excursion organized by the Department of Cultural and Religious History of South Asia, funded by the DAAD as part of an overarching exchange program called "A New Passage to India" (NPI). The program seeks to promote academic cooperation between India and Germany, giving students the opportunity to deepen their understanding of diverse forms of learning, researching, and being in the world through direct experience. After repeated cancellations due to the global pandemic, the excursion finally took place again in the fall of 2022, providing a unique opportunity for students to conduct research on the colorful and diverse festival of Navarātri, with which the trip coincided for the first time, being otherwise conducted in spring.

Navarātri is a biannual festival celebrated in honor of the great goddess, primarily in her form as Mahiṣāsuramardinī. The festival takes diverse forms throughout the subcontinent, several of which happen to mix and intermingle in the ancient city of Benares, due to its great significance for diverse religious communities. The local tradition consists of a nine-day pilgrimage within the bounds of the city, as well as a nine-day fast kept primarily by local women (as well as the odd Indology student, who suddenly found herself wondering whether a pre-packaged ice-cream cone was a sufficiently sāttvika option, much to the amusement of a restaurant employee). It also includes a royally sanctioned theatrical performance of the story of Rāma, based on the Rāmacaritamānasa, a vernacular version of the Rāmāyaṇa, which enjoys great popularity across northern India. These local traditions

are increasingly supplemented if not overshadowed by the popular Durgā pūjā celebrations, organized by the city's Bengali community, one of the oldest and wealthiest communities in Benares.

Students explored each of these traditions in groups made up of both Indian and German participants, each focusing on one of the above-mentioned traditions. This approach allowed many of the German students to gain crucial first semi-independent fieldwork experience, immerse themselves completely in the cultural environment of the city, and form both professional and personal ties with their Indian colleagues, all of which is bound to greatly benefit them in the future. I know it has benefited me, because I shall return to this ancient city this year, as part of the DAAD's NPI program, to conduct research for my MA thesis.

*Durga Pandal in Banaras*

Photo: Miriam Grimm

*Morning scene at the river Ganga*

Photo: Miriam Grimm

Conference “Studies on Dharma in the Himalayan Region” in Naples

**Manik Bajracharya,
Rajan Khatiwoda**
Research Associate

A two-day (April 27–28, 2022) conference “Studies on Dharma in the Himalayan Region” was organized in Naples by the project “Documents on the History of Religion and Law of Pre-modern Nepal” of the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities in collaboration with the Śivadharmā Project and the Institute of Asian Studies of the University of Turin. The conference was attended by scholars and professors from a variety of disciplines, such as philology, jurisprudence, anthropology, and history of South Asia. The aim of the conference was to discuss and enrich the multifarious understandings of the concept of dharma with a special focus on the area of Nepal from medieval up to the modern times. During the conference, Manik Bajracharya and Rajan Khatiwoda of Heidelberg University discussed the concept of slavery in the first Nepalese legal code (Ain) of 1854 in comparison with the Hindu legal scriptures, dharmasastras. Simon Cubelic presented on caste and tribute exaction regulated in the



Group photo of participants of the conference

Ain of 1854. Axel Michaels' paper focused on how King Rana Bahadur Shah (ruled 1777–1799) manipulated the dharmasastric principles in order to legitimize his illegitimate actions. Ramhari Timalisina highlighted the echoes of dharmasastras in the late eighteenth to nineteenth-century Nepalese legal testimonies. Similarly, Astrid Zotter presented on the tradition of writing Hindu legal tomes (dharma-nibandha) in late medieval and early modern Nepal.

Sixty Years of South Asia Institute and Inauguration of Nepal Heritage Documentation Project's (NHDP) Touchscreen at the Patan Museum

Manik Bajracharya,
Rajan Khatiwoda
Research Associate

On September 27, 2022, the German Embassy in Nepal hosted a celebration for sixty years of the South Asia Institute (SAI) of Heidelberg University, thirty-five years of the branch office of the SAI in Nepal as well as the Germany Unity Day. The Nepal Heritage Documentation Project (NHDP) and the SAI Kathmandu branch office co-organized this event and presented their work to all the event guests. On this occasion, the German Embassy supported the installation of a touchscreen displaying the NHDP's data at the Patan Museum. Prof. Dr. Christiane Brosius presented Heidelberg University's research on Nepal's heritage, and introduced the NHDP and the touchscreen featuring the Digital Archive of Nepalese Arts and Monuments (DANAM), heritage walks, and heritage focus areas of the Kathmandu Valley. The touchscreen was officially launched and found ample interest among the guests. Dr. Thomas Prinz, the German ambassador to Nepal, said that the embassy considered it a great opportunity to support the NHDP's work. Nanda Kishor Pun, the vice president of Nepal who was present on the occasion, enthusiastically witnessed a briefing about the DANAM database by the NHDP team members Rajan Khatiwoda and Elias Michaels. He found the activities of the NHDP

highly important and gave his sincere thanks for the work being done towards the preservation of the cultural heritage of Nepal. On October 7, 2022, the touchscreen was installed and inaugurated at the Patan Museum with the participation of the ambassador.

The DANAM database currently consists of five heritage walks besides a full documentation of more than 1100 monuments inside and outside of the Kathmandu Valley. The project not only documents individual sites of endangered heritage in the Kathmandu Valley and West Nepal, but also the usage of the sites and how they contribute to ritual practices, which is central to keeping the heritage alive. Sites are often related to each other, for instance, through processions. The activities and database of the NHDP are accessible through the link:

» <https://danam.cats.uni-heidelberg.de/>



Nanda Kishor Pun, the vice president of Nepal and Dr. Thomas Prinz, the German ambassador to Nepal, being briefed on heritage walk and functionality of the touchscreen by the NHDP team members.



Dr. Thomas Prinz, the German ambassador to Nepal, Suresh Lakhe, the member secretary of the Patan Museum and NHDP team members during the inauguration of the touchscreen at the Patan Museum.

Conceptualizing Muslim Identity across the Bay of Bengal

Heisenberg Fellowship for Torsten Tschacher

Torsten Tschacher
Heisenberg Fellow

In contemporary societies, to identify as a “Muslim” or to profess “Islam” carries certain understandings of precisely what “Islam” is, and how it relates to other social formations and identifications. But what did these terms mean to the people in other times and places? What did it mean to identify as a “Muslim” in the past, and how were these identities inscribed, negotiated, and contested? The southern Bay of Bengal, comprised of southeastern India, Sri Lanka, Sumatra, and the Malay Peninsula, provides a rich archive to study how an understanding of the terms “Muslim” and “Islam” developed and transformed from precolonial to colonial times. The German Research Foundation (DFG) has granted a Heisenberg Fellowship to Torsten Tschacher (SAI) to study the history of these terms in the region. The research project is titled “Conceptualizing Muslim Identity across the Bay of Bengal.”



Dr. Torsten Tschacher

Collaboration between Jagiellonian University
in Cracow and Heidelberg University

South Indian Temples: Nodal Points in Webs of Connections (SITes)

Ute Hüsken

*Professor and Head of Department,
Cultural and Religious
History of South Asia*

The project "South Indian Temples: Nodal Points in Webs of Connections" started in September 2022 and is funded in the context of Beethoven CLASSIC 4: Polish-German Funding Initiative. It consists of five subprojects conducted in close cooperation by a German and a Polish team. All subprojects investigate the connections between sacred sites in South India, facilitating a new understanding of South Indian temples as participating in relationships with each other, rather than stand-alone monuments. Since the diverse subprojects' networks overlap, and since individual temples are embedded in multiple temple networks, the project team will be able to view them from different perspectives.

The main questions that the project seeks to answer are: Do the networks laid out in the texts inform pilgrimage practice? Are observable pilgrimage circuits that connect temples authorized by textual sources? What is the relationship between temples at the center and temples at the periphery within such networks? What are the strategies of establishing links, how are these links articulated in various media? How do these aspects differ in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh? How are these strategies differently articulated in various languages



The Ekāmrānātha temple, housing both the 'Earth-liṅga' and one of the Vaiṣṇava Divyadeśas, the Nīlatuṇḍaperumāḷ

Photo: Ute Hüsken

(Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu)? Why and when do networks of temples appear, or disappear? By focusing on the dynamics that connect Hindu temples and sacred sites, the project will contribute to a new understanding of the role of mythological narratives as *mapping space* in the South Asian context. Marzenna Czerniak-Drożdżowicz (principal investigator, Cracow) and R. Sathyanarayanan (EFEQ, Pondicherry) work on "Srirangam in the Web of Connections," Ute Hüsken (principal investigator, Heidelberg) investigates "Overlapping Temple Networks: Divyadeśas Meet Pañcabhūṭaliṅgas," Ewa Dębicka-Borek's (Cracow) project is entitled "Ahobilam as Part of Spatial, Religious, and Political Networks," Olga Nowicka (Cracow) concentrates on "Temple Arithmetic: Sets of Brother Temples across Kerala" and Ofer Peres (Heidelberg) investigates "The Six Abodes of Murugaṇ (Ārupaṭaivīṭu)"

(for details, see <https://www.sai.uni-heidelberg.de/krs/forschung/sites.html>). The project members conducted a kick-off workshop in Cracow in September 2022. They gathered for common field visits in South India in March, and will organize the panel "South Asian Sacred Spots: Nodal Points in Webs of Connections" at the 2023 European Conference of South Asian Studies, held from July 26 to July 29 in Torino.

Internationalizing Heidelberg

Rahul Mukherji

Professor and Head, Department of Political Science, SAI

The Department of Political Science benefited immensely from Heidelberg University's Excellence Strategy that funded mobility in search of international research cooperation. The department invited eminent scholars and practitioners working in the focus areas of the department such as democracy and development. These included activist scholar Dr. Harsh Mander (a Robert Bosch Fellow and Nobel Peace Prize Nominee in 2022), notable authority on Northeast India Sanjoy Hazarika, and senior journalist Tarun Basu. Professors Anand Kumar (retired, Jawaharlal Nehru University), Shapan Adnan (Oxford), and Olle Törnquist (emeritus, Oslo) delivered seminars on democracy and human rights. Professor Priyaranjan Jha (University of California, Riverside) discussed the politics of economic development. These engagements strengthened the department's scholarly connections.

Travels to South Asia also enhanced the scholarly networks for promoting cooperation. Marie Curie Fellow and PhD scholar Jai Shankar Prasad travelled to India to pursue his doctoral research on the rights of Indian forest dwellers. Dr. Seyed Hossein Zarhani's Delhi trip enhanced research cooperation in the area of India's regulatory politics.

I visited India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal in 2022. These visits involved lectures delivered at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (New Delhi, India), the Jindal Global University (Sonapat, India), the Azim Premji University (Bangalore,

India), the ITM University (Gwalior, India), the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh (Dhaka, Bangladesh), the National University of Bangladesh (Dhaka, Bangladesh), the University of Peradeniya (Peradeniya, Sri Lanka), and the Nepal Institute for Cooperation and Engagement (Kathmandu, Nepal). The lectures in Nepal and Bangladesh were widely reported in the media.

The lectures provided the basis for sharing research on India's democratic future with our South Asian partners. They also provided the basis for engaging with South Asian scholars, some of whom will be invited to a workshop at the Institute in September 2023. This workshop is designed to produce an edited volume that will push the frontiers of knowledge on comparative democratization in South Asia, working largely with scholars from the region. These travels and the workshop would enable us to strengthen our understanding of the South Asian region as a whole.

Research cooperation needs to be complemented with faculty and student exchange. We deployed our networks created during these journeys to propose Erasmus exchange cooperation with the Jawaharlal Nehru University (New Delhi), the Jindal Global University (Sonapat), and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Mumbai).

Second German South Asia Day

Justyna Kurowska

Research Assistant, Department of Modern South Asian Languages and Literatures

After the first German South Asia Day in Bonn in 2019 and a break due to the pandemic, the Department of Modern South Asian Languages and Literatures, South Asia Institute organised the second German South Asia Day (Zweiter Deutscher Südasientag) on the October 28–29, 2022. During the two days of the event, more than forty established and early career scholars from all fields of the humanities and social sciences, and associated with German academic institutions, presented their research and discussed, in the predominantly in-person sessions, various aspects of modern and contemporary South Asian culture, literature, and society. Papers were presented in both, German and English. The keynote speech was delivered by Prof. Dr. Rahul Peter Das on the "Exzeptionalismus, kognitive Souveränität und Vernakularisierung im politischen System Indiens."

India Must Move Away From Fortress Models of Forest Conservation

Jai Prasad

Doctoral candidate, Department of Politics, SAI

The post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework negotiations are an important component in the pursuit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Discussions of the new Global Framework on Biodiversity (towards realizing the vision of “living in harmony with nature” by the year 2050) are debating the draft of the Convention on Biodiversity for the year 2030. This Convention proposes a rights-based approach that aims at complete participation of, and reliance upon, indigenous peoples and local communities for successful realization of its goals. However, it continues to give a central place to a protected area-based approach (dubbed as “30 by 30” approach), which requires states to invest in and commit 30 percent of their eco-diverse marine and green zones into an interconnected network of differentially protected areas by the year 2030. This “fortress” approach towards natural conservation advocates for inviolate natural zones, and

prioritizes distinctive over mixed land-use strategies. This approach has traditionally treated states as the sole agency of conservation, despite acknowledging the importance of local knowledge, traditions, and participation as such. Adoption of this strategy in the Convention—directly or indirectly—is likely to strengthen agendas of centralization and statist control in conservation efforts. India has large indigenous communities that rely upon forests for material and cultural survival, and have customarily lived in and around forest areas. Creating human-free zones will come at an enormous cost for India’s most disadvantaged. Moreover, conflicts between indigenous communities over forest resources will stymie conservation efforts, turning them practically ineffective. In this context, the Forest Rights Act (2006), if properly implemented, could show a way to transform the way India conserves its forests and wildlife. The FRA 2006 recognizes the legal right of millions of India’s poorest forest dwellers to access and conserve the forestlands they have customarily inhabited. Implementation of

community rights under the FRA will empower village level organizations, and provide them inviolable control over natural resource use. This, like nothing else, will push the nation towards balancing the rights of its poor citizens with the needs of environmental conservation by increasing peoples’ stake in conserving their forests, water, and wildlife. While inviolate zones may be needed for specific reasons, decision-making about conservation or resource extraction must begin with respect for both good science and peoples’ customary use of, and existential knowledge about, their natural environments. Policy emphasis in a country like India, with its enormous ecological, socio-cultural, and economic diversity, must be upon dynamic, regional models of conservation emerging from community level dialogue about needs of the people and needs of nature. This can only happen through decentralization of governance, aided by implementation of laws like the Forest Rights Act (2006).

International Research Seminar

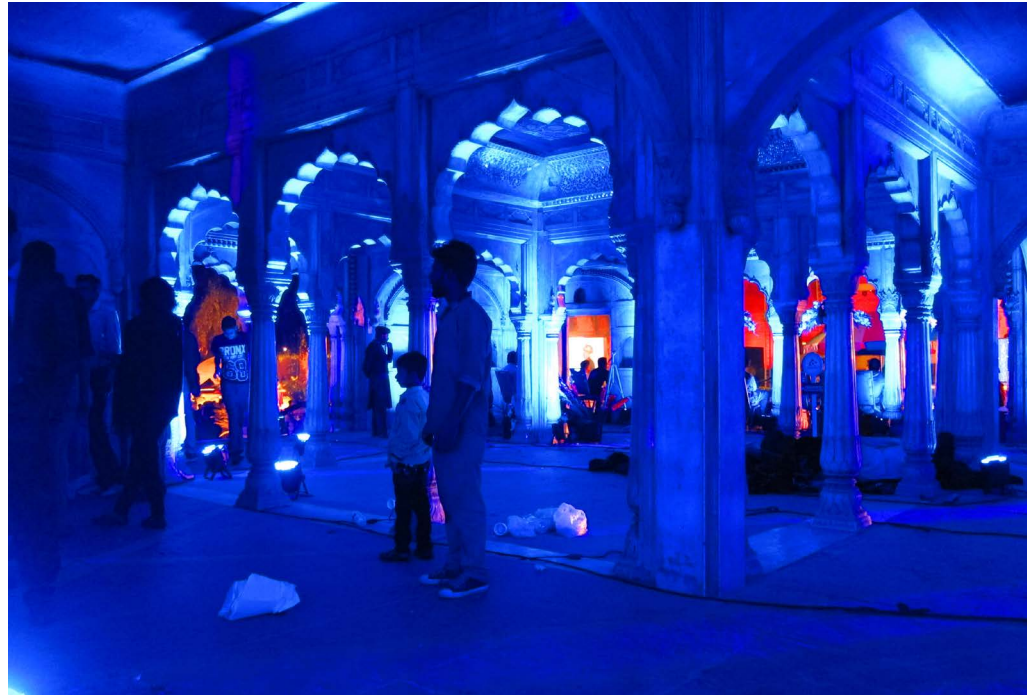
Heritage Conservation in Postcolonial Pakistan

Philipp Zehmisch*Senior Academic Staff*

The international research seminar “Heritage Conservation in Postcolonial Pakistan” (funded by the flagship initiative “Transforming Cultural Heritage”) took place on March 1–17, 2023 in different locations in Pakistan, such as Lahore, the Salt Range, Islamabad, and the Margallah Hills. The local cooperation partner was the Lahore University of Management Sciences.

The international research seminar explored the often critically endangered, forgotten, and/or ideologically revived cultural and “natural” heritage of postcolonial Pakistan. The main idea was to explore the discourses and narratives surrounding particular sites through physical and embodied *in situ* experience. Further, we listened to lectures by experts, networked with students, and talked to local custodians as well as everyday visitors.

Seven selected CATS students (master’s and bachelor’s) investigated the state of heritage conservation in contemporary Pakistan by looking at two categories. First, the limited range of already preserved heritage sites, meant for touristic



consumption and public representation. Second, the heritage sites that have been broadly neglected by state and non-governmental institutions, especially Hindu temples and Buddhist stupas. Applying a critical heritage studies perspective on the sites involved, the research seminar focused on why and in which ways heritage conservation should involve the contextual and relational societal factors that influence the making and unmaking of heritage, with

particular consideration of the embedding of heritage in people’s everyday lives. The international research seminar was thematically prepared by all participants in the master’s seminar “West Punjab: Heritage, Memorialization, and Ethnography” in the winter semester 2022/2023.

Governance and Politics in South Asia Lecture Series

Jai Prasad

Doctoral candidate, Department of Politics, SAI

The Department of Politics, SAI, organizes an exciting lecture series on governance and politics in South Asia that invites academics and activists from a diverse range of disciplines relevant to comparative politics, democratic transition, cultural and social history, as well as contemporary issues of relevance in the region. These lectures serve as useful networking opportunities for students and researchers, as well as help clarify academic concepts, methodological frameworks, and empirical questions, both for the presenters as well as the students of the institute. The last two semesters saw several prominent speakers, young as well as senior, make stimulating presentations virtually and in person. Professor Priyaranjan Jha, University of California, Irvine, spoke on the implications of two historical institutions, direct British rule, and the heterogeneous land tenure institutions implemented by the British, on disparity in present day development levels in India. Professor Rob Jenkins, Hunter College, CUNY, presented his paper on the ideational connections between advocates of world government movement in the United States in the 1940s and Indian political leaders of the age. Dr. Rajesh Veeraraghavan, Georgetown University, spoke about his ethnography of one of the largest development programs in the world, the Indian National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), examining the role of last-mile implementers in pushing the boundaries of information asymmetries to counter local level

power equations that usually mar successful implementation of such redistributive policies. Renowned South Asian journalist Tarun Basu, president of Society for Policy Studies, Delhi, talked about his experience of interviewing eight of India's prime ministers, the media behaviors of their offices, the opaqueness of Modi's office, and what that means for India's democratic functioning and future. Reputed journalist and writer Sanjoy Hazarika gave a lecture on the changing nature of politics and development in India's northeast, one of the region's most politically volatile zones turning peaceful and growing rapidly in recent decades. The lecture series in the winter semester (2022–2023) opened with Dr. Pankaj Parashar, Aligarh Muslim University, who gave a lecture on the need for greater academic work on the contribution made by individual *Tawaifs* or "nautch" girls, and their associations, in India's national movement during 1857–1947. Professor Shapan Adnan, SOAS London, spoke on the historical and socio-cultural underpinnings of the expulsion and genocide of the Rohingyas in Myanmar. Emeritus Professor Olle Törnquist, Oslo University, spoke about the successes and failures of liberal social democratic efforts during the second and third waves of democracy, taking the cases of Indonesia and Kerala in India. Renowned South Asia journalist and writer Paranjy Guha Thakurta spoke about the Pegasus software, and its scandalous use in India, allegedly to spy upon the activities of critics of the present government, social activists, and political opponents. The SAI department lecturer Dr. Seyed Hossein Zarhani

gave a talk on how scholars and thinkers of early medieval Persia perceived India (*Hindustan*) in a territorial and cultural sense, based on readings of texts from that period. Professor Francesca R. Jensenius delivered the last lecture in the Series on the trends in partisanship in voting behavior in Indian elections.

Diversity and Inclusion in Academic Research

Yale South Asia Conference 2022

Mostafizur Rahman

Doctoral candidate, Department of Politics, SAI

I had a great opportunity to receive a full scholarship to attend the Yale South Asia Conference 2022, which was held on July 29–30 at the Aloft, Kathmandu, Nepal. Nineteen young academics, pre- and post-doctoral, presented their work in the fields of politics, society, religion, environment, and state-society relations. Professor David Engerman, Leitner International Interdisciplinary Professor of History, and Dr. Rohit De, associate professor at the Department of History, Yale University, chaired the sessions. Dr. Kasturi Gupta, program director, Yale MacMillan Centre, coordinated the program. The conference emphasized a wide range of voices, viewpoints, and experiences. Diversity-centered research sought to address topics of social exclusion based on identity and ethnicity; secularism, citizenship, media, and freedom of expression; women's rights; social

movements and digitalization of social and political protests; economic and social policy; climate change and environmental protection; and a wide range of other perspectives from South Asia. The angles and storytelling methods were unique and innovative and often went beyond mainstream frameworks. For example, many admired a research presentation on how work-related body odor could lead to social exclusion among the fishing community in coastal Kerala, using a rather unconventional style and methodology. Furthermore, participation of a large number of women researchers was a remarkable aspect, given the tremendous socio-cultural obstacles South Asian women face in their daily lives and professions. All these aspects helped the conference generate vibrant and diverse conversations in an academic and policy milieu.



The participants of the Yale South Asia Conference 2022 with the sessions chairs



Mudagamuwe Maithrimurthi

In October 2022, Dr. Mudagamuwe Maithrimurthi retired from his position as Sanskrit lecturer at the Department of Cultural and Religious History of South Asia (KRS)—a position he held since 2006. Before joining the department, Dr. Mudagamuwe Maithrimurthi held positions as Visiting Numata Professor at the Department for Culture and History of India and Tibet (University of Hamburg), as lecturer at the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor), as academic assistant and lecturer at Leipzig University, and as sessional lecturer at the Universities of Kiel and Leipzig, among other appointments. Ute Hüsken, head of the department, says: “With Maithri, we lose our most popular colleague and our most successful teacher. We are very lucky that he agreed to continue with us as sessional lecturer for Sinhala and Pali, and is also involved as an advisor in a research project on women in contemporary Buddhist traditions in Sri Lanka.”



Astrid Zotter

Dr. Astrid Zotter joined the department to replace Dr. Mudagamuwe Maithrimurthi on April 1, 2023. With her, the KRS department’s research and teaching gains a focus on Nepal and Nepali, Nepalese studies and digital humanities. She is also an expert on Sanskrit and Hindu traditions. She has been working in various research projects in Heidelberg since 2008, including the collaborative research project “Ritual Dynamics.” Since 2014, she has been the project coordinator and deputy leader of the research unit “Documents on the History of Religion and Law of Premodern Nepal” at the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities. Ute Hüsken comments: “We are happy to integrate with Astrid Zotter one of the South Asia Institute’s strongest research foci systematically into our teaching program, complementing existing regional and linguistic expertise.”



Anne Mohapatra

The Department of Modern South Asian Languages and Literatures warmly welcomes Anne Mohapatra as lecturer for Modern Tamil from October 2022. She received her BA in political sciences from Hamburg University in 2013 and completed her MA in communication, literature, and media at SAI in 2018. Apart from teaching courses in formal and informal Tamil and modern Tamil literature, she will also conduct research in the field of media studies with a focus on popular media such as films and magazines at the intersection of the modern cultural history of Tamil Nadu. She is particularly interested in the late colonial period and the early phase of India’s independence with its emerging mass media and new public sphere, society’s negotiations about modernity and consumer culture, and the influence of ideologies on these matters.

Guests at the Department of Modern South Asian Languages and Literatures

In summer and autumn 2022, our department received and hosted many visiting scholars from Asia, Europe, and the USA. Prof. Sayan Chattopadhyay from the English Department of Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur, India, taught on a DAAD fellowship during the summer term. Prof. Frank Korom, an ethnographer, folklorist, and South Asia scholar from Boston University, joined us from June to August as a Humboldt awardee. As holder of a PHEC fellowship,

translation scholar Dr. Faisal Kamal Haidri from Lahore, Pakistan—the first visually impaired scholar ever to receive such a fellowship—spent ten months at the institute. He was joined by Urdu scholars Dr. Muhammad Safdar Rashid and Dr. Davut Sahbaz (Ankara) who both came for prolonged research stints. Francesca Orsini, literary historian and former Hindi professor at SOAS, London, gave two lectures in May. Prof. Nishat Zaidi, literary scholar from the English Department,

Jamia Milia Islamia (Delhi), came for a ten-day visit in July in conclusion of a cooperation between the departments since 2019. In October 2022, Bengali scholar Prof. Jyotsna Chattopadhyay (Rabindrabharati, Kolkata) and Hindi scholar Prof. Pankaj Parashar (Aligarh Muslim University) came for research visits as Baden-Wuerttemberg fellows; Dr. Parashar was formally affiliated with the Department of Political Sciences.

The Frog and the Sloth

A Buddhist Story for Maithri

[This is a short story about Dr. Mudagamuwe Maithrimurthi, affectionately known by his students and colleagues as Maithri, written in the Pali Buddhist canonical style].

There was once a frog and a sloth. They were really good friends and decided that they wanted to learn Sanskrit. They asked around in the jungle where to find a good teacher, Lorient the snake told them that not too far away from them there was a village called Heidelberg. In a house over the river, there was the SAI. There they would find a great Sanskrit teacher who went by the name of Maithri. Maithri was short for Maithrimurthi, which means “the embodiment of friendliness,” and indeed this was his reputation. The frog and the sloth then left for their journey and when they

reached SAI, they saw that Maithri was sitting with his students and teaching, dropping pearls of wisdom on his pupils' heads. As it is said (*Hitopadesha* 2.10),

salabindunipātena kramaśaḥ
pūryate ghaṭaḥ |
sa hetuḥ sarvavidyānām dhar-
masya ca dhanasya ca |

„A pitcher is filled gradually by falling drops of water:
this (is) the cause of all sciences,
religion, and wealth.”

Having seen this, they were convinced that Maithri was endowed with all the great qualities and indeed taught his students according to the canon. There, in a dark office sat the students with the

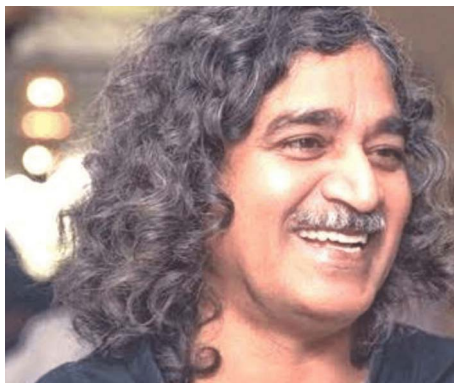
wise and compassionate Maithri and read various Sanskrit texts. The dropping of the pearls of wisdom could have easily been mistaken for a medieval torture method where difficult athematic verb forms, passive aorists, and root nouns were being pierced through the heads of the students, but students in fact were exiting the room with their bellies filled with warm green tea and a smile on their face.

The frog and the sloth then finally decided this was the best teacher they could find in the three worlds and went in.

Thank you for sharing your knowledge and love for Sanskrit with us. Your kindness allowed us to chase and fulfill our curiosity about languages. We will never forget Nala and Damayanti, Ahalya and that you like garlic.

With a lot of love and gratitude,
Your students

“The Last Possibility of the Beautiful”—Heidelberg University



Heidelberg University, symbolizing the cradle of academic excellence and humanistic culture, is a dream destination for any scholar or student in the world. I must say the moment I reached Heidelberg I was transported into a magical world mirroring what Mark Twain referred to as “the last possibility of the beautiful.” The forest on the hills resting in languorous slumber, and the river Neckar singing with the velvety seductiveness of a primal *raga* (melody) led me to a deeply illuminating personal and universal journey of the self and society.

It is this ethereal, enigmatic, and enchanting quality of cosmopolitan *logoi sokratikoi* (Socratic dialogues) that informs the path-breaking research and teaching of South Asia Institute (SAI) and the Department of Political Science. No wonder, internationally reputed scholar Professor Rahul Mukherji attracts the best talents from the pool of distinguished scholars as well as next-generation researchers from various parts of the world. Dedicated to fostering cutting-edge research and public action, Prof. Mukherji leads his colleagues, researchers, and students in his inimitable style of a dignified maestro with a sense of mission and humility.

The people and the intellectual environment at the Department of Political Science are immensely friendly and so energetic that I immediately became absorbed into the vibrant research agenda of the department. The mesmerizing range of diversity and multidisciplinary in the research and teaching of the department struck me. During my short stay as a visiting

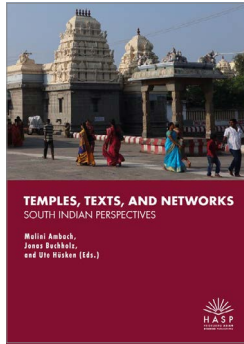
faculty member in the Department of Political Science and SAI in July 2022, I participated in the regular seminar series on governance and politics in South Asia, interacted with doctoral scholars, discussed student and faculty exchange programs, and explored the possibility of collaboration with the MA program in International Electoral Management and Practices (jointly developed by the Election Commission of India and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences). I also shared my latest book *Migrants, Mobility & Citizenship in India* (Routledge, 2022) and delivered a seminar talk “Missing Migrant Voters in India.” The lecture interrogated evidence of a vast democratic deficit among India’s internal migrants, and discussed the possibility of using remote voting for internal migrants.

Now that I have come back home to India, taking late evening walks on the seashore in Mumbai, I still see my favorite writers and philosophers Goethe, Hegel, Hannah Arendt, and Max Weber strolling in the pink and gold early morning mist over the Philosophenweg.

Ah, I wish to return soon and meet my colleagues and friends once more at the Department of Political Science at Heidelberg whence we shall together make a pilgrimage to the abode of peace, poetry, and philosophy!



Staircase in the CATS Library, Photo: Susann Henker, 2021



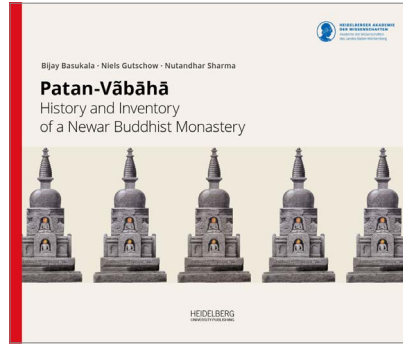
Malini Ambach, Jonas Buchholz,
and Ute Hüsken, ed.
**Temples, Texts, and Networks:
South Indian Perspectives**
Heidelberg: Heidelberg Asian
Studies Publishing, 2022
<https://doi.org/10.11588/hasp.906>

For many centuries, Hindu temples and shrines have been of great importance to South Indian religious, social, and political life. They do not exist in isolation, but stand in multiple relationships to other temples and sacred sites and are meeting places of different members of the communities, be they local or coming from afar.

The volume pays close attention to the connections between individual temples and the affiliated communities, be it within a particular place or on a trans-local level. These connections are described as “temple networks,” a concept which, instead of stable hierarchies and structures, looks at nodal, multi-centered, and fluid systems, where the connections in numerous fields of interaction are understood as dynamic processes.

Also, listen to Ute Hüsken and Jonas Buchholz talk about the volume on the *New Book in Indian Religions* podcast, available on all podcast platforms and at:

» <https://newbooksnetwork.com/malini-ambach-et-al-temples-texts-and-networks-south-indian-perspectives-hasp-2022>

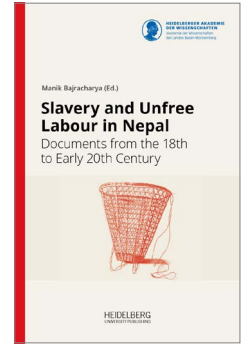


Bijay Basukala, Niels Gutschow,
and Nutandhar Sharma
**Patan-Vābāhā: History and
Inventory of a Newar Buddhist
Monastery**
Documenta Nepalica 5
Heidelberg: Heidelberg University
Publishing, 2022
<https://doi.org/10.17885/heiup.1116>

This volume presents the religious, architectural, and textual background of Vābāhā, one of the sixteen main monasteries of Patan, located in one of the three royal cities of the Kathmandu Valley in Nepal. The history of the Buddhist monastic courtyard and its objects is presented along with forty-two inscriptions, dating from 1596 to 2021.

The book is available for download at:

» <https://heiup.uni-heidelberg.de/heiup/catalog/book/1116>

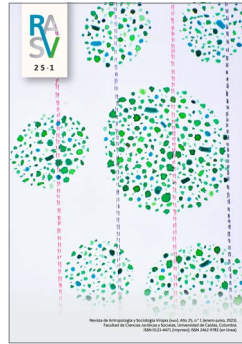


Manik Bajracharya, ed.
**Slavery and Unfree Labour in
Nepal: Documents from the 18th
to Early 20th Century**
Documenta Nepalica 3
Heidelberg: Heidelberg University
Publishing, 2022
<https://doi.org/10.17885/heiup.1003>

The topic of slavery is largely under-represented in the historiography of Nepal. This source book, aware of this disparity and wishing to encourage future studies on the topic, provides the reader with editions, translations, and a study of selected documents and legal texts of Nepal from the eighteenth to the early twentieth century. These sources are concerned with such different aspects of slavery as donations, transactions, bond servitude, forced labor, emancipation, and law.

The book is available for download at:

» <https://heiup.uni-heidelberg.de/heiup/catalog/book/1003>



Hans Harder, Nishat Zaidi, and
Torsten Tschacher

**The Vernacular: Three Essays on
an Ambivalent Concept and its
Uses in South Asia**

Heidelberg: FID4SA-Repository,
2022. [https://doi.org/10.11588/
fid4sarep.00004587](https://doi.org/10.11588/fid4sarep.00004587)

What is a “vernacular” language? The term is in wide use in South Asia today to distinguish regional languages such as Hindi, Telugu, or Santali from English. But given its Latin etymology from *verna*, home-born slave, is it a viable category to denote idioms some of which have long histories and belong to the top ten in the world in terms of the numbers of their speakers? In a co-authored monograph, Hans Harder (SAI), Nishat Zaidi (Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi), and Torsten Tschacher (SAI) discuss the term and its evolution, survey the sociolinguistic dynamics under its label in colonial and postcolonial times, and inquire into the particular aesthetics pertaining to it. *The Vernacular: Three Essays on an Ambivalent Concept and its Uses in South Asia* appeared in 2022 as a working paper under FID4SA, and a revised version has been accepted for print by Routledge India (forthcoming in 2023).

» [https://fid4sa-repository.
ub.uni-heidelberg.de/4587/](https://fid4sa-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/4587/)

Philipp Zehmisch
**Bringing Subalterns into
Speech? Investigating Anarchic
Resistance to Hegemonic
Modernity**

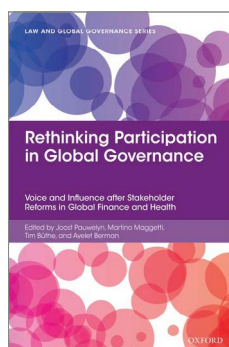
*Revista de Antropología y
Sociología: Virajes* 24, no. 2 (2022):
110–131. [https://doi.org/10.17151/
rasv.2022.24.2.6](https://doi.org/10.17151/rasv.2022.24.2.6)

This article by Philipp Zehmisch aims to critically examine Gayatri Spivak’s (1992) demand to undo subalternity by inserting subalterns into the circuit of hegemonic modernity. For Spivak, working for the subaltern does not demand speaking for them, rather it entails facilitating their speech acts. From the perspective of an anthropology of anarchy, the opening up of political communication towards inclusion of subaltern speech is, on the one hand, an essential goal. On the other hand, the insistence on including subalterns into hegemony entails an inherent paradox: many subalterns, who resort to anarchic ways of life, escape from the state and its communicational structures as a cultural and political survival strategy. Zehmisch addresses this tension with an ethnographic example from the Andaman Islands in India.

» [https://revistasoj.s.ucaldas.edu.
co/index.php/virajes/article/
view/7253/6384](https://revistasoj.s.ucaldas.edu.co/index.php/virajes/article/view/7253/6384)

Rahul Mukherji and
Seyed Hossein Zarhani
Economies and Development
In *Understanding Contemporary
India*, edited by Sumit Ganguly and
Neil DeVotta, 117–142. Boulder, CO:
Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2021.

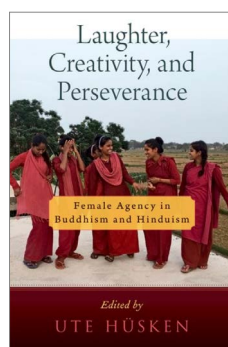
Professor Mukherji and Dr Seyed Hossein Zarhani contributed a chapter titled “Economies and Development” to a book edited by Sumit Ganguly and Neil DeVotta, titled *Understanding Contemporary India*, published by Lynne Rienner Publishers in Boulder, Colorado. The chapter discusses India’s socialist economy and why and how the country embraced globalization and private entrepreneurship. In doing so, the authors point to a number of policies the Indian state has adopted in order to try to alleviate poverty. However, they emphasize that, unlike in certain other states that developed in dramatic fashion, Indian leaders typically come to major decisions gradually. Extant policies are jettisoned only after alternative options tried incrementally prove more useful. When this happens amid a degree of institutional consensus, a tipping point is reached, upon which new policies become embedded.



Rahul Mukherji and Himanshu Jha
India and Bangladesh in
Global Financial Governance:
From Structural Conflict to
Embedded Liberalism in the
Climate Finance Regime

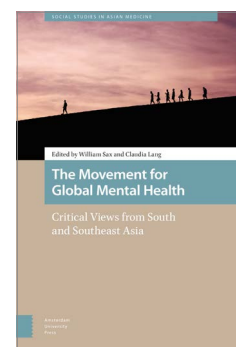
In *Rethinking Participation in Global Governance*, edited by Joost Pauwelyn, Martino Maggetti, Tim Büthe, and Ayelet Berman, 177–200. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198852568.003.0008>

Professor Mukherji and Dr. Jha contributed a chapter titled, “India and Bangladesh in Global Financial Governance: From Structural Conflict to Embedded Liberalism in the Climate Finance Regime.” The book brings together an expert group of scholars and practitioners to investigate the consequences of stakeholder participation reforms in the global governance of health and finance: What reforms have been introduced? Have these reforms given previously marginalized stakeholders a voice in global governance bodies? What effect have these reforms had on the legitimacy and effectiveness of global governance? To answer these questions, the book examines treaty-based intergovernmental organizations alongside newer forms of global governance such as trans-governmental regulatory networks, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and private standard-setting bodies.



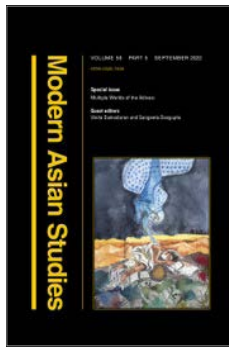
Ute Hüsken, ed.
Laughter, Creativity, and
Perseverance: Female Agency
in Buddhism and Hinduism
 New York: Oxford University Press, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197603727.001.0001>

In November 2022, the volume *Laughter, Creativity, and Perseverance: Female Agency in Buddhism and Hinduism* (edited by Ute Hüsken) was published by Oxford University Press in the American Academy of Religion (AAR) book series Religion, Culture, and History. The volume addresses the fact that in most mainstream traditions of Hinduism and Buddhism, women have for centuries largely been excluded from positions of religious and ritual leadership. However, as this volume shows, in an increasing number of late twentieth-century and early twenty-first-century contexts, women can and do undergo monastic and priestly education: they can receive ordination/initiation as Buddhist nuns or Hindu priestesses and they are accepted as religious and political leaders. This book offers ten in-depth case studies analyzing culturally, historically, and geographically unique situations addressing the emergence of new and powerful forms of female agency in mostly conservative Hindu and Buddhist religious traditions.



William Sax and Claudia Lang, ed.
The Movement for Global
Mental Health: Critical Views
from South and Southeast Asia
 Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022
<https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1kgdfk8>

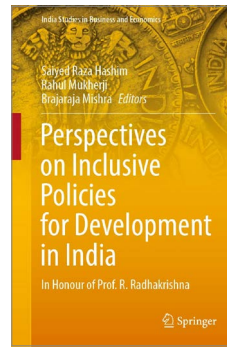
This book grows out of research conducted under the auspices of the cluster “Asia and Europe.” Prominent anthropologists, public health physicians, and psychiatrists sympathetically but critically question the assumptions of the Movement for Global Mental Health: the idea that “mental disorders” can be clearly identified; that they are primarily of biological origin; that the world is currently facing an “epidemic” of them; that the most appropriate treatments for them normally involve psycho-pharmaceutical drugs; and that local or indigenous therapies are of little interest or importance for treating them. The contributors argue that, on the contrary, defining “mental disorders” is difficult and culturally variable; that social and biographical factors are often important causes of them; that the “epidemic” of mental disorders may be an effect of new ways of measuring them; and that the countries of South and Southeast Asia have abundant, though non-psychiatric, resources for dealing with them. In short, they advocate a thoroughgoing mental health pluralism.



Philipp Zehmisch
**Can Migrants Be Indigenous?
 Affirmative Action, Space and
 Belonging in the Andaman
 Islands**

In *Multiple Worlds of the Adivasi*, special issue, *Modern Asian Studies* 56, no. 5 (2022): 1489–1514. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X2100038X>

This article by Philipp Zehmisch investigates with an ethnographic example from the Andaman Islands how the contested category of Scheduled Tribes (STs) is enacted in India in order to socially uplift indigenous communities. Reflecting on the existential relationship between land and people in popular understandings of indigenesness, this article explores alternative possibilities to think through the notion of indigeneity. In so doing, Zehmisch focusses on subaltern aboriginal labor migrants from Central India, the Ranchis, by highlighting their subaltern history of racialized labor migration, their lack of voice within the post-colonial welfare regime, and their striving for autonomy and autarky by applying principles of indigenous knowledge and cosmologies from their homelands to the Andamans.



Saiyed Raza Hashim, Rahul Mukherji, and Brajaraja Mishra, ed.
Perspectives on Inclusive Policies for Development in India
 Singapore: Springer, 2022
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-0185-0>

Professor Rahul Mukherji has co-edited and contributed a chapter to the volume *Perspectives on Inclusive Policies for Development in India* in the honor of late Professor R. Radhakrishna (1942–2022). This book presents perspectives by eminent economists, social scientists, and policy makers, exploring in depth the post-reform developments in India, including issues pertaining to growth and equity, issues that have been at the core of lifetime work of Prof. R. Radhakrishna. The book brings out how some public policy instruments created to promote growth have turned out to be regressive, promoting inequalities and creating a highly asymmetric federalism in India. The book provides insights into the working of an emerging economy and a large democracy, which has to strive for public acceptability of the tensions of its negotiations between equity and growth.

The Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies comprises five professorships for Global Art History (with a focus on South Asia and the Middle East), Buddhist Studies (with a focus on South- and East Asia, including Tibet), Visual and Media Anthropology (with a focus on South Asia), Cultural Economic History (with a focus on Japan) and Intellectual History (with a focus on China). Two Associated professorships are located in the Centre for East Asian Studies and in the History Department.



Heidelberg Transcultu



Centre for Global Studies



New DFG-funded Project on Chinese Buddhist Texts Ascribed to Paramārtha

Michael Radich

Professor of Buddhist Studies

The DFG has awarded funding for a project entitled “Problems of Ascription in the Corpus of Paramārtha: A Computational Philological Study.” The principal investigator on the project is Michael Radich, professor of Buddhist studies in HCTS. The project will study a corpus of Chinese Buddhist texts associated with Paramārtha (真諦, 499–569), commonly regarded as one of the four greatest translators in the history of Chinese Buddhism. This corpus

of texts has great significance in the history of Chinese Buddhist thought, but it is also riddled with numerous problems regarding the (often hybrid) nature of the texts included in the corpus, the authenticity of ascriptions to Paramārtha’s translation group, the relation of ideas in the texts to Indic and Chinese sources, and so on. Our project will run for three years, and apply original software tools developed by Radich and Jamie Norrish to the analysis of internal evidence in the corpus, with the aim of making progress on these foundational evidential questions.

Sangyop Lee to Move to Seoul National University

Michael Radich

Professor of Buddhist Studies

Since October 2021, Dr. Sangyop Lee has been at HCTS as a post-doctoral researcher, with the funding support of the Ho Foundation. Lee received his doctoral degree at Stanford University, under the supervision of John Kieschnick and Paul Harrison. His research focus is in medieval Chinese Buddhism, and he has already produced several insightful studies on questions in Buddhist thought, social history, and the early formation of Buddhism in China.

Dr. Lee has now been appointed to a permanent, tenure-track assistant professorship in Buddhist philosophy, in the Department of

Philosophy at Seoul National University. He takes up this new position in March. In the years to come, as he works towards his tenure review, Lee plans to continue his work on theory of mind in Indian and Chinese Buddhism, the anti-realist reading of Chinese Madhyamaka, and the early Chinese Buddhist translations of Abhidharma texts. It is a great gain for Buddhist studies in Korea that they have been able to lure Lee back to his homeland, and we can expect him to significantly strengthen the field in years to come. I am sure I speak for many in HCTS and CATS when I wish Dr. Lee all the best in this new phase of his career.

"Worlding the Sinophonecene and Planetary Aesthetics in Contemporary Art"

An Interview with the Co-Organizer Nora Gantert

Madeleine Eppel

MA Graduate, Student Assistant

Nora, you co-organize the symposium

"Cohabitation – Worlding the Sinophonecene and Planetary Aesthetics in Contemporary Art." Why "cohabitation" now?

With "cohabitation," our e-symposium on June 3, 2023 aims to shift the focus from a human-centred discussion to questions such as how human beings can ensure the well-being of other species. Given the devastating human impact on the planet, we believe examining how artworks explore ways of "cohabiting" will critically contribute to prevalent discussions on equal living rights and might creatively help to transcend species boundaries.

What is "the Sinophonecene" and how does it matter in the arts?

The "Sinophonecene" is a term recently coined by Professor Hai Ren (University of Arizona) in the on-going discussion of the Anthropocene which originated in the natural sciences and has provoked critical alternative concepts in the humanities such as the "Capitalocene" or the "Chthulucene." Put simply, they all ask whether the human impact is marked enough to merit calling an era after it and



Nora Gantert



Zheng Bo, "You are the 0.01%", installation view at Oi Art Centre Hong Kong, 2021. Courtesy of the artist.

how to date it. Now, Ren orients our attention to a regional aspect, claiming that the greater Chinese region is an important factor in the planetary crisis. We think his attempt to explore the relation between long-term, global and more recent and regional aspects might allow us to bridge research on contemporary art in the Sinophone world with the existent discourse on planetary aesthetics that is still often limited to case studies located in the West. Basically, we see artists worldwide who are questioning a dichotomous understanding of human/nature, but are also curious to learn how a geographically defined as well as environmentally challenged

area of the world such as greater China figures in this complex. However, we do not suggest a national framing; to the contrary, we intend to consider regionally situated, but often highly transcultural artistic practices.

What are the noteworthy parts of the event?

A lot of space will be given to emergent scholars' presentations and it will include talks by curators and artists. It is also the second gathering of the Research Network for Modern and Contemporary Chinese Art, an informal association founded in 2015. I met my co-organizers Xuan Ma (Utrecht University) and Cila Brosius (independent curator, Copenhagen) in a doctoral reading group organized by the network's co-founder Dr. Franziska Koch. Our shared learning and intertwining experiences inspired us to re-launch the network's blog on Hypotheses.org. We now aim for the symposium to become an annual, geographically rotating forum hosted by network members across the world.

Ruixuan Chen moves to Peking University

Michael Radich

Professor of Buddhist Studies

Dr. Ruixuan was the assistant professor in Buddhist studies in HCTS from 2018 to 2022. In fall of 2022, he took up a permanent, tenure-track position on the faculty of the Department of South Asian Studies at Peking University.

Chen received his PhD at Leiden University, under the supervision of Jonathan Silk, for a dissertation entitled "The Nandimitrāvadāna: A Living Text from the Buddhist

Tradition." For this dissertation, Chen was awarded the coveted Ernst Waldschmidt Prize. During his years at Heidelberg, Chen greatly enriched the Buddhist Studies program through his extraordinary erudition, his already legendary grasp of numerous difficult and out-of-the-way languages and sources, the high standards he expected of students, and his inimitable laugh. We were lucky to have him among us, and he is already sorely missed. However, our loss is China's gain. It is to be expected,

and sincerely to be hoped, that Chen's matchless dedication, seriousness, energy, and learning will contribute greatly to the currently ongoing surge in strength of Chinese scholarship on all aspects of Buddhism. We wish him every success in all his future endeavors.

Radich to Take Up Two Invited Positions, Antonello Palumbo Filling the Professorship during His Absence

Michael Radich

Professor of Buddhist Studies

The professor of Buddhist studies at HCTS, Michael Radich, has accepted two invitations for visiting professorships in 2023–2024.

In February to March 2023, he will be Directeur d'études invité at the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris, where he will deliver a series of lectures on Chinese Buddhism, digital humanities in Buddhist philology, and the history of Mahāyāna Buddhist thought and literature.

From April 2023 to March 2024, Radich will spend a year as

a visiting professor at the Institute of Advanced Studies on Asia (Tōyō Bunka Kenkyūjo 東洋文化研究所) at the University of Tokyo, where his host will be Prof. Norihisa Baba. This period will be dedicated principally to the completion of a monograph, tentatively entitled *Dharmarakṣa's Library: A Computer-Assisted Study of Style and Attribution in Western Jin Buddhist Texts*.

During Radich's absence, the teaching duties associated with the chair of Buddhist studies will be fulfilled by Dr. Antonello Palumbo, who formerly taught for a decade and a half at SOAS. Palumbo is

highly regarded worldwide as a leading expert in the historiography of Chinese Buddhism. In long-term projects, including ongoing work, he addresses, among other topics, questions like Buddhist models of kingship and the place of Buddhist ideas and institutions in the development of statecraft, taking a broad comparative perspective that encompasses not only the broader Buddhist world outside East Asia, but even other parts of Eurasia. Palumbo's thought and research will thus be of broad interest to the CATS community.

Worlding Public Cultures: International Academy and Workshop 2022

Eva Bentcheva

Postdoctoral Researcher

Over the course of 2022, Heidelberg University's team of the international research project "Worlding Public Cultures: The Arts and Social Innovation" (WPC, 2019–2023, BMBF/DLR no. 01UG2026) developed two large-scale events focused on the current state of pedagogies in art history and museum practices. The first was an international academy organized in partnership with one of Germany's leading art collections, the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (SKD). Titled "Lessons Learned? Transcultural Positions in Curating and Pedagogies" (July 14–16), this academy gathered scholars, curators, and cultural critics to explore current practices and future possibilities for developing pedagogical exchanges between museums and universities. With over twenty participants from Germany, the UK, Canada, the Netherlands, and elsewhere, the event offered a unique opportunity to learn about the work of SKD's curators, educators, and archivists, as well as to discuss the challenge of educating publics in the current politico-cultural context.

The second event organized by Heidelberg's WPC team constituted a two-day gathering (October 10–11) at the Institute for Cultural Inquiry in Berlin (ICI Berlin). The first day was devoted to officially launching WPC's publication series with a talk by a premiering author, Carine Zaayman (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam). This was followed by a special online guest lecture by Prof. Pheng Cheah (UC Berkeley)

titled "Beyond the World as Picture: Worlding and Becoming the Whole World." Given the centrality of Cheah's theorization of "worlding" in literary studies to the WPC project, his talk served as the basis for a rich panel discussion with Prof. Carmen Mörsch (Kunsthochschule Mainz) and Prof. Birgit Hopfener (Carleton University) on the methods used in the Arts and Humanities to promote "worlded" perspectives. Subsequently, the second day at ICI Berlin was devoted to the international workshop "Worlding Art History through Syllabi." This featured five presentations by prominent scholars from Germany, Singapore, China, Canada, and the USA, as well as over thirty international participants, who engaged in a daylong discussion about the role of syllabi, different national approaches to teaching art history, and re-thinking the structures of curricula in higher education. All proceedings from the academy in July and the workshop in October will be published by ICI Berlin Press as part of the WPC publication series in 2023–2024.



Visit to the 'Archiv der Avant-Garden' at the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Lessons Learned? Transcultural Positions in Curating and Pedagogies, July 2022



International Academy 'Lessons Learned? Transcultural Positions in Curating and Pedagogies', July 2022



Workshop 'Worlding Art History through Syllabi', ICI Berlin, October 2022

Presto Grant for a History of ID Photographs in Japan

Takahiro Yamamoto

*Assistant Professor of
Cultural Economic History*

I am fortunate to have received a research grant called PRESTO from the Japan Science and Technology Agency for three and a half years from October 2022. This research grant is given to individuals and each research project belongs to a certain field defined by the Agency. Each field recruits scholars three times, so if ten researchers are recruited at a time, a total of thirty researchers will conduct research in that field. In January 2023, I attended my first “field meeting” in Nagasaki, Japan.

My research is entitled “Historicizing Personal Identification and Its Implication for Pandemic Response: A Case Study of ID Photographs.” It aims to examine historically how personal identification methods can be used to ensure that socioeconomic activities are as close to normal as possible during a pandemic. This study belongs to the research field titled “Social and Technological Framework for Pandemic Resilience.” The field as a whole aims to utilize the lessons learned from COVID-19, conduct basic research, and build a network among researchers to better cope with the next pandemic. At this point, there are twenty-one researchers in this field, of which I am the only historian. The field aims to gather various researchers



A scene from the joint symposium on 23 January on the theme of global health, jointly held by Nagasaki University, JST Presto program, and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

for cross-disciplinary discussions, but I am still in the minority. The other researchers range from virus experts to engineers, pediatricians, statisticians, and epidemiologists.

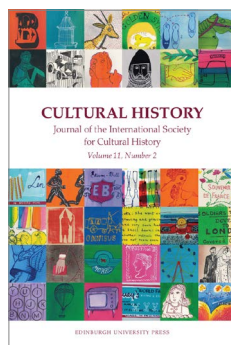
Discussions in such a forum have been very fruitful, as I have received feedback and questions from unexpected directions and have honed my ability to explain things to non-specialists. The most important lesson I learned was that different disciplines have different attitudes toward data. While I am often skeptical of the personal data collection by modern states as a means of capturing and managing the population,

other participants often lamented the lack of usable data in Japan. This is evident, for instance, in the way contact tracing has been done. Most East Asian societies combined information from databases normally used for criminal investigations with information from contact tracing apps, credit card information, and so forth, but in Japan, police-related data has not been available to epidemiologists. Whether this should be changed or not, or how to balance this with privacy protection, is the question to be investigated further.



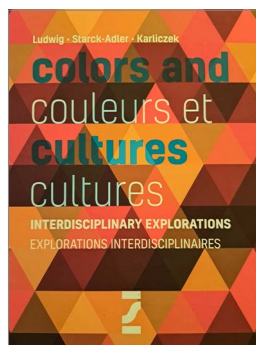
Rafal Felbur

I have just joined Michael Radich and his Buddhist studies team from the University of Leiden, where I was a postdoctoral researcher at the Leiden Institute for Area Studies (LIAS). I received my PhD from Stanford University in 2018. My scholarly interests are in the intellectual, cultural, and social dynamics of the encounter between India and China in the first millennium CE, one of the most extensive and consequential processes of cross-cultural interaction and transcultural formation in pre-modern times. My scholarship focuses primarily on the textual evidence for these historical processes—translations of Indic Buddhist texts into Chinese, commentaries, bibliographic works, indigenous polemical and exegetical tracts, and official documents—all of which testify to the activity of the Buddhist monk and nun on Chinese soil. At the HCTS, I will teach thematic courses on various aspects of Buddhism between India and China as well as read seminars on primary materials.



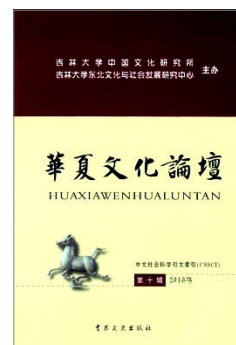
Chang Liu and Florian Freitag, ed.
“Cultural History and Heritage in Chinese Theme Parks.”
 Special issue, *Cultural History* 11, no. 2 (October 2022)

The articles collected in this special issue discuss the multiple ways in which both older and more recent Chinese cultural history, folklore, and literature figure in commercial, themed entertainment spaces. Through their analyses of various sources, representational strategies, and functions of historical theming in contemporary Chinese theme parks, the contributors seek to further the scholarly debate on the theme park industry in China, taking it out of the cul-de-sac of the topics of copying and glocalization. Written by German, Italian, Chinese, Canadian, and American scholars working in Europe, Asia, and North America, this special issue thus seeks to instigate an exchange of ideas and research findings on Chinese theme parks across linguistic, disciplinary, and national boundaries.



Chang Liu
“Madonna: Why She’s Red (In Post-Mao China?).”
 In *Colors and Cultures: Interdisciplinary Explorations*, edited by Sămi Ludwig, Astrid Starck-Adler, and André Karliczek, 173–181.
 Jena/Mulhouse: Salana, 2022

This article examines the early reception of American pop star Madonna in post-Mao China. It is often said that Madonna is in control of her career, yet, this article shows how the Chinese press makes use of her as an example to depoliticize the color red and introduce a new conception of star in post-Mao China, which is beyond Madonna’s control. This article appears in a bilingual volume in English and French by a group of international scholars who discuss the phenomenon of color to reflect on what the color experience means in various domains of human lives and beyond.



Chang Liu, ed.
“Music, Technology, and the Environment.” [In Chinese]
 Special cluster, *Chinese Culture Forum* 17, no. 1 (2022)

This special cluster derives from an online lecture series co-organized with Jilin University, and features articles by Emily Dolan (Brown University), Kyle Devine (University of Oslo), Willie Wright (University of Florida), and Daniel Stein (University of Siegen) to examine the complex relationship between music, technology, and the environment.



Reading space in the CATS Library, Photo: Susann Henker, 2020



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Cover Image
Protest against the Russian invasion of Ukraine in Tokyo, 27 February 2022
(Sankei Shinbun)

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Public Art at CATS
Friedemann von Stockhausen, *CATS/web* 2018