Asia & Europe *Bulletin*

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Editorial

Dear Readers,

In *The Futurological Congress*, one of Stanisław Lem's most acclaimed and brilliant science fiction novels, he describes an international convention, where papers are too numerous and time is too short for presenters to do more than call out some numbers within a few seconds. This one scene not only stands for the black humor of the entire novel, but also is an allusion to the overwhelming time pressure that science suffers. If we were to present a paper at that congress on the results and accomplishments of the URPP Asia and Europe in 2015, we would probably use our few seconds to yell "fifteen, eleven, 111."

What complex reality and hard work is hidden behind these three numbers? First, the number fifteen summarizes all of our academic activities. During the year 2015, the URPP, together with its national and international cooperation partners, organized three international conferences, five international workshops, two lecture series, two panel discussions, one theater performance, one internal research retreat, and invited one visiting scholar to Zurich (Dr. Pablo Blitstein, University of Heidelberg).

Second, eleven is the number of research projects for which members of the URPP successfully procured additional third-party-funding in 2015. These funded projects include one Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowship from the European Research Council (ERC) for Dr. Melek Saral; three research grants from the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) for both Prof. Bettina Dennerlein and Dr. Aymon Kreil, Prof. Annuska Derks, and Prof. Sandro Zanetti; one seed money grant from the Indo-Swiss Joint Research Program in the Social Sciences for Prof. Johannes Quark; two project grants from the Swiss Bilateral Research Program of the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation for Prof. Annuska Derks and Prof. Johannes Quark; fellowships from the SNSF for Dr. Julia Obinger and Ayaka Löschke; and two research fellowships from the University of Zurich for Ulrich Brandenburg and Tobias Weiss. We gladly congratulate all of them on their successful applications.

Third, if we sought to quantify the scientific output of the URPP, we might come up with the number 111, which stands for scientific publications and qualification works in 2015. First and foremost, it is with great pleasure that we highlight the successful conclusion of two habilitations and five PhD theses. Prof. Fabian Schäfer (former senior scholar and lecturer at the URPP and, since September 2013, Professor in Japanese studies at the Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nuremberg) completed his habilitation review in December 2015, and Dr. Marco Vitale (former doctoral student at the URPP) completed his in March 2016. Each of them completed their habilitation at the University of Zurich. We also congratulate Patrick Brozzo (Law), Aliya Khawari (Political Sciences), Rita Krajnc (Indian Studies), Linda Maduz (Political Sciences) and Miriam Wenner (Geography) for successfully defending their PhD theses in 2015, and we wish them all the best in their future careers. We are also pleased to congratulate Dr. Justyna Jaguścik, who has been granted the Annual Award 2015 of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences for her dissertation, which she has been writing at the URPP. Moreover, the number 111 stands also for scientific output in the form of 104 scientific publications thematically relevant to the URPP by its participating professors and by researchers.

Beyond our three numbers, we welcome Prof. Martin Dusinberre (Global History) and Prof. Nicolas Martin (Modern India / South East Asian Studies) as new participating professors at the URPP. Immediately after joining, Martin Dusinberre was generous enough to perform the keynote speech for 2015 at our annual internal retreat. We look forward to new ideas and impulses these new members will bring to the URPP in the years to come.

In this time of rapid global and local change in and between Asia and Europe, we are convinced that an organization such as the URPP is as relevant and urgently need as it was when it was established back in 2006. For more information about the URPP, we invite our readers to consult the continuously updated URPP website.

Overall, given that the URPP has entered its final phase and that, since 2014, its budget has decreased by a third of its former total, we nonetheless look back on a highly dynamic and engaged 2015 full of achievements and events, teaching, learning and research. As academic directors, we thank all URPP members and our wonderful staff for their commitments, dedication, and sustained engagement and support. We now look forward to an equally successful and fruitful academic year in 2016.

Prof. Dr. David Chiavacci and Prof. Dr. Mareile Flitsch

Looking at the Globe through the Eyes of 19ᵗʰ–20ᵗʰ Century Chinese Reformers

In September 2015, Pablo Ariel Blitstein was a visiting scholar at the URPP Asia and Europe. He held a seminar on the history of the concept of "politics" in late 19ᵗʰ–early 20ᵗʰ century China. Additionally, he gave a talk, in which he set forth a connected history of this concept between East Asia, Europe, and the Americas. In this essay, he reflects on "global history" and "nation" through the example of reform-minded literati who, in the late 19ᵗʰ and early 20ᵗʰ centuries, attempted to transform the Qing empire in a nation-state.

Pablo Ariel Blitstein

Most of us are aware—and my reader is probably no exception—that it is extremely difficult to convey a complex idea in a single word. Since we know this difficulty, we generally remedy the shortcomings with paraphrases, explanations, descriptions, and stories. But even when following those strategies, we often have trouble to make ourselves clear. What happens, then, when some particular circumstances force a historian to find that single, precious term that should clearly identify a leading idea? The result is very often a tragic one. It's literally tragic because, just like in Greek drama, the heroes follow what they think is the right path, struggle their way, and end up beaten by the forces they have summoned with their own actions. Many global historians are becoming such tragic heroes. The sword they wielded to step onto the stage, "global history," was intended to be a powerful means to overcome national histories. It was supposed to

deliver other historians from nations and nation-states as major frameworks of analysis, encouraging them to think of human societies at the scale of the globe and letting them explain through large social and geographical connections what has been traditionally explained through national endogenous forces. But they are sometimes trapped by the word they use to characterize their agenda. "Global" immediately brings into our minds its contrary, "local," and since we never know what the boundaries between "global" and "local" are (for nothing is completely global or completely local), many scholars actually take "local" as another name for "nation" and "global" as a another name for "society of nations"—thus naturalizing the nation as much as the national histories do. Is the word "global" to blame for that? It depends on how it is used.

Ideas from the two sides the Pacific

The discussions I had with students and colleagues during my stay at the URPP Asia and Europe in Zurich turned around historical phenomena that concern the global history agenda. In the seminar I was kindly invited to give, we dealt with a particular group

of people between the late 19ᵗʰ and the early 20ᵗʰ centuries: the Chinese reformers who wanted to turn the Qing dynasty—the last one to rule China—into a constitutional monarchy. This group is certainly one of the favorite topics of many national histories of contemporary China. Since these reformers were born in China, spoke Chinese, and their projects concerned Chinese institutions, how could their history be anything other than a Chinese history? But the fact is that many of the most important reformers did not lead their activities in Chinese territory, but somewhere else, in Tokyo, San Francisco, or Mexico. In such places, many reformers published newspapers, built overseas associations, discussed institutional models from different parts of the world, and combined the ideas of the "sages and virtuous men" of the Chinese past with ideas coming from Europe and the Americas. In so doing, they contributed to the formulation of reform projects that would be implemented in Qing China. The purpose of my seminar was thus to explore the extent to which modern Chinese political languages were shaped by reformers on the two sides of the Pacific. And such a topic inevitably leads the historian to wonder what "global" means.

What I retain from the term "global" is the image that comes to my mind when I use it: the globe, with its inhabited and uninhabited portions, with its seas and lands, with its mountains and plains; not the political map of modern nations, but the physical map, where the clear-cut lines of political borders just look like what they are: an artifice, an accident of human history. When someone talks about the history of China, but also about the history of France, Mexico, or the United States, I

try to think of the globe first. Then I wonder: How could one write the history of any of these places as if they were alone on Earth, or as if they got in touch with the rest of the world only by accident? There certainly are discontinuities between people: not everyone has a relation to everyone. And we are fully aware that the nation-states, with all their boundary-making devices such as police, armies, civic education, and national languages, manage to a large extent to shape the circulation of people, things and ideas on the world surface. But now, no historian could seriously take nation-states as the exclusive boundaries that organize the world population. I am not referring here to the evidence of migration or transnational institutions: I am referring to the concept of "nation" itself. The shared language of the "nation" is a sign of the intellectual, social and institutional interconnections that have built the modern world.

The "Great Qing" and the nation

The history of late 19th and early 20th century China is an example of how the nation, as a political idea, has been one of the most successful modern devices to regulate boundaries, delineate groups and create discrete forms of allegiance and feelings of belonging. Most nations are actually the result, not the cause, of nationalism. Nations do not precede nationalists, but nationalists actually create the illusion that the nation exists—and, if successful, they build institutions on its name. This is particularly clear in the case of Chinese reformers at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. China was not a nation at the time, but rather a segmented empire identified with its ruling dynasty, the "Great Qing," which was supposed to rule over "all-under-Heaven" and treated its territories as its owner. This was, for Chinese reformers, a huge problem. They thought that the "owner" of China should be the "nation," which they

mostly conceived as an active, consistently defined community that was expected to take part in political issues. However, they knew that no one except a reduced group of learned men and women knew this concept in the Chinese-speaking world. The nation thus had to be "discovered." In 1902, one leading reformer, Liang Qichao, gave the example of historiography. Traditional historians only focused on the Qing court, on how emperors inherited imperial power from their parents and how they bequeathed it to their sons. According to him, they ignored that there was a larger, more important historical actor, the "nation," the majority of the population within imperial borders. For Liang, traditional court history was no more than a family genealogy. Only the history of the nation was real history. Some years earlier, in 1898, another leading reformer, Kang Youwei, complained to the emperor that China was not united, that the different ethnic groups were ruled according to their customs and institutions, that the minds of the people were divided according to different local loyalties: China, he claimed, was not yet a real nation, but only a collection of different groups. The nation did not exist. At the same time, he proposed the

abolition of the socio-institutional segmentation of the empire to "protect the nation." So did the nation exist at this point or not? The empire, which could potentially extend its boundaries without limits and include new groups as long as the supremacy of the emperor was recognized, made false any claim that "China" was a national community with a common race, culture, or territory. The reformer's nation thus was a theoretical nation. Only institutional reform could turn that theoretical nation into an institutional reality.

Segmented reality of the empire

These Chinese reformers certainly felt the paradoxes of their situation. They knew that, for the time being, the nation was just an idea, an imperfect conceptual tool for political action. They were inspired by different and sometimes contradictory sources, from English-language treatises of international law to classical texts of Euro-American political theory—most of which increasingly arrived through Japan. But they also spontaneously found in the words and texts of past "sages" and "virtuous men" arguments and forms of rationalization that were compatible with the new concept of nation, and that, in some cases, even

A French map of the Chinese Empire by Conrad Malte-Brun, published in 1837.

seemed to provide better arguments than the ones they took from what they called "Western learning" *(xixue)*. The richer the arguments, the better: it was indeed difficult to find evidence that, behind the segmented reality of the empire (based on seemingly natural hierarchies and distinctions), there was an active, internally coherent, history-making nation that was asking to have a say in the institutional organization of the polity. What was indeed the "Chinese nation"? Was it a common "race"? But Manchus, the ruling group, were a different "race" from Han Chinese or Tibetans. Was it a common language? There was no common language between the inhabitants of the empire. A common "culture"? But what was the common "culture" within the Great Qing? The ambiguities of the concept of nation were particularly apparent in its different Chinese-language translations. Many old words were used: *minzu,* lit. "lineage of people," which could also be understood as ethnicity; *guomin,* lit. "people of the country" or "of the kingdom," which could also mean the inhabitants of the emperor's lands; *guojia,* lit. "country-house" or "kingdom-house," which kept in a way attached to the analogy between the empire and an extended household. All these words could mean nation; but they could also be as easily associated with the segmented institutional reality of the empire.

The fact that there were different translations of the word "nation" in Chinese, or that it could be justified with the words of the ancient sages, is not a sign that the reformers did not understand the concept of nation, but an accurate expression of the insurmountable vagueness of this modern concept itself. The concept of nation was neither an "import," for it was not a conceptually consistent entity, nor the final expression of the self-discovery of a thousand-year old reality. It was a floating signifier that enabled the reformers both to transform the institutions of the monarchy and to synchronize (not necessarily to replace) their own political language with the languages that were being used in Japan, Europe, and the Americas. This synchronization was made possible by a shared representation of the globe underlying both East-Asian and Euro-American uses of nation: the idea that each nation was an individual and that the world was a society of nations. The Chinese reformers no longer conceived the globe as the potential territory of the ever-extending boundaries of the Great Qing, but as a collection of consecutively arranged national polities that struggled for supremacy in the world order.

Image of the globe

A decade after Kang Youwei's reform proposals in 1898, and partially thanks to the efforts of these reformers, the pretension to rule over "all-under-Heaven" had been widely replaced with the more modest aspiration to exert national sovereignty, and the mythology of universal rule gave way to a religion of the national identity card. We would certainly be unfair if we said that, wherever it shaped political languages, the idea of nation only produced parochialism. In China, like in many other places, it actually pushed thousands of people to feel that their own fate was related to the fate of distant and unknown persons living thousands of kilometers away, in the city or in the countryside, in their own or in other social classes. In some cases, it even pushed them to adopt a common language that enabled communication with people they had so far seen as strangers. And the image of the globe it conveyed was also far from parochial: the nation only put limits to the ambition of a universal monarchy, but not to the idea that a world society existed in the form of a society of nations. However, it is likewise undeniable that many of our most parochial representations are grounded in the nation. We too easily forget that national boundaries are the result of wars and arrangements, that they are preserved by repressive and non-repressive cohesion-making devices and boundary markers, that most groups who claim to be nations never become one, or that strange aggregations of heterogeneous groups puzzlingly manage to have their borders recognized by their neighbors. If it is true that the idea of nation could have a sense in the case of the Chinese reformers or of other nation-builders of the world who, instead of excluding, want to include populations, this should not lead the historian to overlook the evidence that national institutions, just like the idea that produced them, have been the result of, and are preserved by, wider processes on the world surface. "Global history" has emerged as a reminder of this evidence. And although "global" might sometimes look like a slightly inaccurate word (what word is not?), it can at least be used to recall the image of the globe every time we are told that some nation has made its history alone.

Pablo Ariel Blitstein

Dr. Pablo A. Blitstein is an associate researcher at the Cluster of Excellence "Asia and Europe in a Global Context: The Dynamics of Transculturality" at Heidelberg University since 2013. He works on a project on the relation between text circulation, travel experiences and political imagination in late imperial and early republican China (19th–20th centuries). His research interests are global and conceptual history, with a special focus on the history of writing and political institutions. He is co-founder and co-organizer of the Chinese history section of the Research Centre on the Slavic and Chinese Worlds (CEMECH) at the University of San Martín (Argentina). He is the author of *Les Fleurs du royaume: Savoirs lettrés et pouvoir impérial en Chine (Ve–VIe siècles),* Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2015, and of several articles and book chapters.

The Human in Question

Organizing the 2016 annual conference under the title "Human : Non-Human— Bodies, Things, and Matter across Asia and Europe" (October 6–8, 2016), Bettina Dennerlein, Professor of Islamic and Gender Studies, Angelika Malinar, Professor of Indian Studies, and Andrea Riemenschnitter, Professor of Chinese Studies, discuss their interest in the conference's topic.

Interview: Roman Benz

The annual conference will deal with the ways in which cultural representations and social practices are based on how distinctions between bodies and things, humans and non-humans are conceptualized. In which theoretical traditions are such distinctions discussed?

Angelika Malinar: The spectrum of theoretical approaches and traditional discourse—Asian as well as European—is quite large. In the last few decades, well-established key terms such as "nature" were put into question and new theoretical frameworks were proposed, such as "new materialism" or "object-oriented ontology." Within these frameworks, the concept of matter plays a key role in querying classical distinctions between body and mind, humans and non-humans, or subject and object. For instance, object-oriented ontology emphasizes the agency of what is deemed a thing or "object" being at the disposal of "subjects" and explores the modeling of "subjects" by their handling of objects. Such approaches are intrinsically connected to debates on postmodernism and post-humanism, which are in turn intertwined with the criticism of colonial-modern regimes of power in postcolonial theory. The current theoretical concerns are thus intertwined with histories of colonialism, environmental destruction, and the exploitative structures that have

unfolded in modernity and at present in the so-called globalized capitalism.

Bettina Dennerlein: I think that the field of Gender Studies, for example, is already heavily involved in questioning such boundaries, especially with regard to body and corporeality. They have since long started to criticize simplistic distinctions, like the one between gender identity as socially constructed and sex as an anatomically fixed phenomenon that is to be taken as a "natural" given. Yet generally speaking, the conference is less dedicated to a particular set of theories than to pursuing questions that have been asked more recently as a consequence of different theoretical "turns" like the somatic turn, the material turn and, last but not least, the post-humanist turn. It is also about rethinking the categories that we use and the historical and normative baggage they carry with them. From this perspective, we have chosen to focus more particularly on entanglements between Asia and Europe, looking at how bodies, things, and matter are defined and positioned in relation to each other on different levels and in different respects. We are

interested in how concepts and constituted systems of knowledge as well as normative orders configure, impose, and at the same time "naturalize" boundaries between human and non-human, bodies and matter, matter and things. Such boundaries are actually highly contingent and subject to change over time. We suggest exploring the shifting contours, fissures and ambivalence of conceptual, scientific and normative schemes beyond a particular theoretical or political program.

Andrea Riemenschnitter: In the context of the conference, another perspective is interesting, namely how new disciplines come into being. An example would be the so-called environmental humanities, which developed in close interaction with the natural sciences. For a long time, the humanities were most interested in asserting their own disciplinary identities vis-à-vis the dominance of a science-based worldview and its exclusion of methodological tools from the humanities. By now, the dialogue between humanistic and scientific paradigms has become a mutual pursuit. Moreover the growing impact of environmental issues such as climate change intensifies academic interest in a multidisciplinary, integrative approach to matter. In the wake of these challenges, all academic disci-

Angelika Malinar: "Indian traditions are reconsidered for concepts and practices that defy anthropocentrism".

plines move away from the question of human sovereignty, studying questions of entangled human-nonhuman agencies in planetary ecologies, and thereby embrace the concept of an open relationship between human beings and other forms of matter.

Malinar: I think that the current theoretical attempts to reconfigure relationships between human and non-human is a challenge that will stay with us in the future and which will even intensify due to the changes that have already taken place. At the level of practice, the familiar ideas are often already disposed of. The technical possibilities more and more determine the scope of practice. Already today, we have the practical experience of how the old boundaries between body and thing dissolve, because the boundaries that used to define bodies are reconstructed due to the instruments made accessible by bio-technological, digital and other developments.

Is this shifting of boundaries between what is alive and what is not alive something that happens in practice, or is it due to a new perspective?

Dennerlein: I would say that shifts take place on both levels. There are important changes happening, for example, in the fields of bio-engineering

and life sciences, but it takes time for the consequences of these changes to be perceived and understood not only by a broader public, but also in the humanities and the social sciences. Look, for instance, at metaphors of organicism and related ideological stances especially with a view to gender and sexuality. While clearly no longer corresponding to scientific interpretations of the human body, organicist "truths" (or rather truisms) do not seem to lose in currency. Donna Haraway has argued long ago, that the biomedical understanding of the human body as an information-processing system may open up new avenues for critiquing positions that ground sexual difference in the fixed anatomy of the organic body. These avenues still need to be further explored.

Riemenschnitter: In my opinion, the recent advances in bio-engineering and other matter technologies are not the only reason for our perspectival shift towards nonhuman agency. In many Asian countries, we observe a return to traditions with a different approach to the relationship between human beings and things. In China, humans were in fact counted into the crowd of the world's ten thousand things as simply one variety among

them. In a modern Chinese poem from the 2000s, a painting from the eleventh century is praised for not privileging human subjectivity. When I read that a particular tree's self-cultivation is depicted as superior to the degree of self-cultivation reached by the people in the painting, I get the impression that the authority of artificial boundaries between body and matter as postulated in the West is finally questioned by non-Western intellectuals who until recently had no choice but to follow the hegemony of global scientific discourse. It has become obvious that these boundaries have been of limited use, considering the fact that we are now destroying what had helped us to advance our civilization and culture.

Dennerlein: I would like to add only parenthetically that the so-called Western perspective is probably in itself less stable and more ambivalent than we might think. Bruno Latour has shown from a history of science perspective that the boundary between the "natural" and the "social" has indeed never been impermeable.

Malinar: Regarding the conference, we want to explore whether there are other ways to envision relationships among humans as well as between humans and non-humans—differing from the hegemonic forms of practice that became dominant due to colonial-modern economic systems, exploitation techniques, and related discourses of justification. There are some attempts to go back to traditions. For instance, Western philosophers and intellectuals currently rediscover earlier thinkers as sources for alternative concepts of body and matter, in particular Spinoza and Aristotle. Also the Indian intellectual and religious traditions are reconsidered for concepts and practices that defy anthropocentrism, such as ideas of ritual ecology.

However, one must not forget that these traditional, alternative conceptualizations are connected to certain

Bettina Dennerlein: "The so-called Western perspective is probably more ambivalent than we might think".

regimes of power and oppression as well—slavery, for instance. Thus, it could happen that in the name of a return to so-called traditional forms of practice, suppressive techniques are continued that existed already in this tradition. There are many deplorable examples for these processes.

So, the recourse to traditions is not always successful?

Malinar: It does not automatically mean a questioning of the power constellations that support forms of practice we usually call capitalism, modernity, and so on. For example, in the region in India where I have conducted research for some years, there was a recurrent discussion about impoverished tribal groups, who have no other choice than to eat ground mango kernels. The discussion about the situation of these groups includes arguments about how healthy or traditionally accepted these mango kernels are and so on. Wrapped in the guise of traditionalism, this modern constellation of exploitation and poverty—which itself continues earlier forms of the same—is legitimized.

Riemenschnitter: Indeed, it is not clear whether this new interest in traditions involves rescue from precarious living conditions. Take the example of aid projects with a background in traditional discourses, such as the effort of international NGOs to protect Bengal tigers in the Sundarbans. For this aim, displaced people looking for a new home in the Sundarbans are forced to move on. Although the protection of the tigers is directed against the colonialist and capitalist assaults on so-called non-productive livelihoods, the project involuntarily supports the suppression of local people—in the name of seemingly respectable reasons. Therefore, a look at matter as an actant in Latour's understanding may be helpful, since it enables us to unmask shortsighted ethical dogma.

Dennerlein: We are obviously not in-

Andrea Riemenschnitter: "We are now destroying what had helped us to advance our civilization and culture".

tending to change the course of global capitalism, but rather to think about possibilities for critique that emerge from within the ruptures and fissures of globalization between Asia and Europe. Starting from different experiences of globalization, we intend to look at the contingencies—not to mention the constructed status—of existing schemes of classification and their effects, as well as look at different forms of resilience, displacement and subversion. Crossing disciplinary and regional perspectives may help here to contextualize the phenomena we study without reifying "context."

At what stage is the discussion of "human" and "non-human?" Is it in the stage of making inventory or do serious approaches to solutions exist for, say, the impending environmental destruction?

Riemenschnitter: If you grapple mainly with cultural or literary texts, you can see that a lot has changed already. For example, a contemporary Chinese poem describes a visit to a classical scholar's garden. This traditionally is a place where boundaries between the human subject and the surrounding substance are intentionally blurred, a place of contemplation where certain plants, rocks, and ornaments should be arranged in a given

order so as to create an environment that helps the visitor withdraw from the mundane world and reach a state of transcendence. In this poem, no subjective experience is described, but readers are made to watch what is happening today in this garden: Led by their guides, hordes of tourists fill it, looking for thrills, making noise and taking selfies. It becomes obvious that there is something fundamentally wrong with the current exploitation of such gardens by mass tourism, and that there are no benefits to speak of either for the garden or for the visitors. Actually, it is beneficial only for the accumulation of capital, which is abstract and has no relevance in matter-based cycles of improvement.

On the other hand, there are signs of hope. At the micro level, you can observe serious efforts to find solutions. Communities are formed that withdraw from the dominant system as far as possible and aim to live self-sufficiently. Some artists' villages in Asia retreated to the countryside, laid out gardens and grew their own food. Their inhabitants try to define themselves as part of, and in an organic relationship with, matter insofar as they no longer understand humans to be the singular subjects and ultimate targets of civilizational progress.

Constitutions under Debate

Organized by the URPP Asia and Europe in collaboration with the Faculty of Law and convened by Yasmine Berriane, David Chiavacci, and Matthias Mahlmann, the lecture series "Constitutional Reform and Social Change in Asia and the Middle East: Law, Politics and Theory" took place on three evenings between March and May 2015. The aim of this series was to look at different constitutional debates in Asia and the Middle East and to analyze ensuing political transformations, normative changes and emerging new discursive patterns.

Yasmine Berriane and Tobias Weiss

Constitutional reforms are being discussed and implemented in different regional contexts today. While these endeavors develop in a context of increased trans-nationalization of norms and orders, they vary from one region to another. Even though debates on constitutional reform do not always lead to concrete constitutional changes, they can evoke the emergence of new constitutional interpretations and lead to the transformation of norms and social practices. How are these debates evolving in different regional settings within Asia and the Middle East? What are the ensuing political transformations and normative changes? What are the new discursive patterns and concrete practices that emerge out of these debates? Three prominent scholars from the field of constitutional reform (Chibli Mallat, Hiroshi Nishihara and Arun Thiruvengadam) tackled these questions through regional perspectives of the Middle East, Japan, and India.

Post-revolution constitutions

Chibli Mallat (University of Utah and Saint-Joseph University, Lebanon) launched the series with a talk on what he considers the main challenges

to drafting constitutions in the Middle East after the revolutions in 2011. He presented his most recent book that represents the larger framework of his lecture and that deals with the *Philosophy of Nonviolence* (Oxford University Press, 2015), aiming to offer a philosophy of history where non-violence becomes the nexus of change. The three main parts of the book represent three central moments of the changes he analyzes: the moment of the revolutions that is the "only moment when non-violence is possible"; the "constitutional moment" when, after the collapse of dictatorships, people look for a new social contract; and finally the moment of judicial accountability when former dictators are brought to trial. With regard to this last moment, Mallat insists on the central figure of the judge in each democracy. In his view, this figure is intimately linked with violence, since force is always needed to establish the rule of law. Consequently, while revolutions are very often non-violent, violence cannot be avoided once a new government has been established.

Before moving to the Middle East, Mallat introduced the model that he calls LEJFARC, which stands for seven main elements composing each constitution since the Atlantic revolutions on both sides of the Atlantic between 1770 and 1820. These elements are as follows: legislative, executive, judiciary, federalism (depending on the form of state chosen), amendments, ratification, and citizens' right. In the Middle East, this general model is challenged by religious dissonance that takes two main forms: firstly, the supra-constitutionality of Islamic law, or the forced reference to Islamic law as the source of legislation; and secondly, religious sectarianism. The last section of his talk was dedicated to this second challenge.

In Middle Eastern constitutions, citizens relate directly to the state, as they do in Western constitutions. Yet in the Middle East, each individual relates to the state as a member of a religious community or sect into which the person is born. According to Mallat, the ensuing fractures are sociologically and theologically unbridgeable, because in the Middle East the religious community is an agency that is not necessarily a conscious political expression. While in the West sectarianism is peripheral to the constitution, in the modern Middle Eastern state, the citizen cannot escape the agency of his or her sectarian group in constitutional terms, i.e. the sect is a constitutional agent. Mallat concluded his talk by saying he could not find an adequate constitutional answer to solve this dualism. But he highlighted the historic duty of constitution-makers in the Middle-East at least to make a serious attempt to solve what he calls the "sectarian constitutional riddle."

Reforming the "pacifism-article" in Japan

Hiroshi Nishihara (Waseda University) presented his insight on the reform of the Japanese constitution through the case of the revision of article 9 of Japan's constitution, reflecting generally on why the majority of the Japanese population does not resist a constitution draft that is—in his view as a scholar of constitutional law—hostile to democracy and conducive to an authoritarian state. Since the conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) came into power in 2012, a shift towards the right is clearly noticeable within Japan's political sphere and society. The freedom of the press has been restricted, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) has been weakened by the last elections, and energy policies have gone back to how they were before the nuclear accident of Fukushima. The political left and liberal center seem to feel powerless to resist these assaults against some of the most important issues on their

political agenda. Calls for boycott against the liberal newspaper "Asahi," hate speeches against Korean minorities, and the boom of anti-Korean and anti-Chinese publications are all indicating a sharp push to the right.

A prominent example of this trend is the debate over revising article 9 of the constitution—also known as the "pacifism article." This article outlaws war as a means to settle international disputes involving the state, declaring that no army will be maintained. As soon as it was promulgated in 1946, this article was rejected by an important part of the Japanese political elite but attempts to revise this article have since been adjourned. However, concrete practices such as the introduction of self-defense-forces in the 1950s and the expansion of international missions in the 1990s have circumvented the regulations included in this article. Under the government led by Shinzō Abe, an attempt has now been launched to change the constitution and to revise this article. The aim is to expand legal limits, such as the one that gave more powers to the country's self-defense forces in 2014 in the name of the right for collective self-defense. These changes have not

> **In India, the court has learned from its experiences, and has shown encouraging signs in recent years by focusing more on the implementation of its decisions.**

led to substantial forms of resistance from the Japanese population, which was an issue that Nishihara sought to explain in his talk.

In Nishihara's view this is mainly linked to the peculiar mode of reception of democracy by the post-war Japanese who tend to perceive their rights to freedom as a burden and not so much as a privilege worth protecting. This initial perception has been

reinforced by the decreasing revenue of newspapers and television stations, which—according to Nishihara—have increasingly led them to exclude critical voices in an exercise of self-censorship. In his view, the government's attempts to change the constitution are diversions aimed at moving the attention away from the real problems that Japan is facing: the growing inability of the nation state to exert control over economic actors, like for example multinational companies, which contributes to economic stagnation and a political legitimacy crisis.

Social rights in India

Arun Thiruvengadam (National University of Singapore) addressed the issue of social rights in the Indian constitution, concentrating more particularly on the enforcement of social rights through the judiciary. In his view, the judiciary is playing a constructive role in the improvement of social rights in the country. He first presented the Indian constitution showing that, even before independence, the nationalists have started thinking about economic and social rights (the latter including the right to education, housing, and food). The constitutional text that was adopted in 1949 distinguishes between fundamental rights (some of the classical civil and political rights), and directive principles of state policy (what we would call social rights today). According to article 37 of the constitution, these directive principles of state policy are beyond judicial review and under the responsibility of the legislative and the executive. However, the judiciary has found alternative ways to circumvent this regulation. One way is article 21 of the constitution that regulates the protection of life and personal liberty. After 1978, the court started using references to the word "life" in this article (interpreted as the right of a person to have access to food, housing and shelter) to "smuggle in through the back door," as formulated by

Thiruvengadam, social rights into the constitution of India.

According to Thiruvengadam, the role of the Indian judiciary in the enforcement of social rights went through three phases. The first phase (1950–1980) gave primacy to fundamental rights over the directive principles. During the second phase (1980–2000), the supreme courts started making bold pronouncements on social rights using article 21 to circumvent article 37. Yet during this second phase, the judges did not get involved in monitoring the implementation of social policies, which gave rise to much criticism. According to Thiruvengadam, this criticism tends to underemphasize the actual gains of social rights cases in the 1980s and 1990s, as well as to ignore the third phase that is characterized by recent cases which show that the judiciary has learned from past mistakes. The so-called right to food case that started in 2001 when the Indian state Rajasthan faced a draught shows, for instance, how the court has contributed to the nation-wide expansion of existing government schemes that tackle nutrition and starvation problems. It further came up with a novel monitoring mechanism that controls, via the involvement of NGOs and retired civil servants, the implementation of these schemes. This involvement of the judiciary led to significant changes, substantially increasing the reach of the schemes of the government.

To evaluate how the judiciary has engaged with social rights, it is therefore important to bear in mind that this is a dynamic process. In India, the court has learned from its experiences, and has shown encouraging signs in recent years by focusing more on the implementation of its decisions. This process has led to actual changes and its impact has yet to be studied from a much broader perspective, combining the work of lawyers but also social and political scientists.

Pathways to Sustainability

Hosted by the Chinese Studies Department of the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies, the three-day conference "Humanistic Scholarship in the Anthropocene: Approaching China from a Sustainability Paradigm" (Zurich, May 15–17, 2015) offered both critical reflection on our ecological crisis and productively engaged with historical, philosophical, religious, and aesthetic passageways towards a more sustainable future.

Jessica Imbach

We live in the geological age of the anthropocene. It is not yet clear whether the anthropocene began with the industrial revolution, the discovery of the Americas, or even earlier still. However, there exists a broad scientific and social consensus that humanity impacts our planet now on a global scale and determines, as Prasenjit Duara (National University of Singapore) pointed out, "the sustainability of the earth more than any other force." How do we respond to this fundamental change in our relationship to our planet? And how can humanities scholars working on China contribute to sustainable solutions? Heeding Gayatri Spivak's call to "imagine ourselves as planetary subjects rather than global agents,"[1] the conference, organized by Andrea Riemenschnitter and Justyna Jaguścik, aimed to address these questions and to foster a multidisciplinary approach to eco-critical Asian studies.

The first panel centered on the role that art and aesthetics play both in encouraging forms of green activism and in legitimating political ideologies of exploitation. Sheldon Lu (University of California at Davies) strongly emphasized the vitality of Chinese-language eco-cinemas. These movies not only retrain our perception of the world

1 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*, New York 2003, p. 73.

through an "aesthetic of slowness," but can also foster novel spaces for social commentary and a new sense of planetary morality. Meng Yue (University of Toronto) stressed in her paper that awareness of environmental issues alone is not enough, as we are both the victims and culprits in the production of chemical fertilizers, plastic, hormones, etc. Drawing on the works of English conservationist Eve Balfour, she distinguished a non-chemical view on life from the "logic of the chemist," which does not factor life itself into the science of plant growth and crop productivity. She explained that during the early stages of China's modernization there were, at least at the discursive level, possibilities for agricultural development through non-chemical farming. However, this changed completely by the 1930s, when a Marxist developmentalist discourse began to frame nature conservation and ecological resistance within the antagonism of the rural peasant and the urban worker. The multilayered entanglement of environmental discourses, politics and art was also the topic of Andrea Riemenschnitter's paper. She analyzed a variety of unofficial responses, both humorous and critical, to Xi Jinping's state campaign of the "China Dream." Especially the recent "burst in environmental topics" in contemporary Chinese art suggests that there is growing discontent with the government's underspecified green vision. Riemenschnitter put a big question mark behind the capability of the state's dream machinery to trigger sustainable solutions from below. Economic growth at any cost still trumps environmental and social reform.

In the second panel Mike Douglass (National University of Singapore) and David Strand (Dickinson College, Carlisle) focused on urban transformation

in China and Asia more broadly. Both argued that the idea of the city as propeller of growth is winning out on the city as shared living space, but they also showed, on a more hopeful note, that urbanization is not *a priori* an antagonistic force to sustainable living. Douglass explained that while urban growth in the post-colonial era had always been an important cornerstone of national development, this changed by the 1990s, when a neo-developmentalist paradigm came to dominate urban development throughout Asia. Neo-developmentalism emphasizes corporate driven development, but differs from neoliberalism in its belief in a strong state to secure investment, restrict migration and limit participatory governance. Asia's fast-paced urbanization has been accompanied by an increasing demand for green spaces. The pressures of real-estate development and population density on green infrastructures have, according to David Strand, not only resulted in demands for public park conservation and construction, but have also given balconies, drainage systems, roof-tops and abandoned buildings new recreational, alimentary, and spiritual roles. Strand showed that parks are more than simply the "green lungs" of the city, but are increasingly important "entangled spaces," which shape our community values and foster new human and non-human coalitions.

Ecological movements and traveling ideas
In the third panel Simona Grano and Zhang Yuheng (both University of Zurich) presented a comparative analysis of two tree conservation movements in Taipei and Nanjing, respectively. They argued that environmental movements in China are unlikely to become catalyzers of democractic change as in Taiwan. Mike Schäfer (University of Zurich) discussed recent developments in global climate change media coverage. With the exception of the U.S. and Great Britain, a "societal

turn" in global climate change media coverage has taken place: we have shifted our focus from understanding climate change to analyzing its political, economic, and social ramifications.

The fourth panel analyzed post-secular and post-human approaches to environmental ethics. Prasenjit Duara argued that it is necessary to replace linear, "tunneled" histories of nations with the idea of "circulatory histories." Circulatory histories are shared histories, as he explained, which take into account both the different experiences of events by different people and the often oblique routes, through which histories and ideas travel. One example is the transpacific shuttling of ideas between Bengali reformer Ram Mohan Roy, Henry David Thoreau, Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., which helps understand certain intellectual convergences between environmental movements in the U.S. and India. Duara also showed that while eco-spiritual movements in Asia today draw on very different spiritual resources and traditions, they all share a non-dualistic worldview and, in difference to Western deep ecology movements, do not regard nature as sacred for intrinsic values, but rather as a by-product of the moral and natural order. Kenneth Dean analyzed Daoist cosmological thought and the forms of

environmentalism these have fostered in Daoist ritual networks across China and Southeast Asia. He argued that while Confucianism has a strongly human-biased outlook on the world, Daoism has a much broader understanding of organic, inorganic, and cosmological interconnectedness. Drawing on examples from the Putian plane in Fujian, Dean argued that rituals are an important form of collective negotiation of communal values, which are increasingly also directed towards ecological issues.

Plant and animal perspectives

Justyna Jaguścik (University of Zurich) observed in the works of Zheng Xiaoqiong a blurring of biologic divisions of life forms by foregrounding the shared toxicity of bodies and landscapes. Zheng is known in China as the leading poetic voice of female migrant workers. However, the gendered plight of the factory worker in Zheng's poetic oeuvre is but one node in an expansive economy of pain, toxicity and marginalization. Iron and chemicals are in Zheng's work no longer symbols of industrial achievement, since they now pierce the body and pollute the soil. Jaguścik analyzed Zheng's poetic intervention into China's industrialized landscape as specifically eco-feminist, because it foregrounds the dominance

of patriarchal traditions in the exploitation of nature. Haiyan Lee (Stanford University) presented a paper on anthropomorphism and newly emerging forms of animal writing in Chinese literature. Modern Chinese literature is, in Lee's words, "a predominantly anthropocentric enterprise." However, recently there has been a small explosion in animal-themed novels, which reconfigure the human-animal relationship on aesthetic and moral grounds. Lee drew on Winnicott's psychoanalytic theory of the "transitional object" in childhood and Bonnie Honig's concept of the "public thing" to analyze the fictional re-discovery of the South China tiger in *Zhongguo hu* ("The Chinese Tiger," 2008) by Li Kewei. She argued that the environment in general and mega-fauna preservation more specifically fit the criteria of these analytic concepts particularly well. The tiger as "transitional object" and "public thing" can enchant us and create affective communities of solidarity, but also forces us to acknowledge our indebtedness to animals themselves.

The conference contributed to the discussion on environmental challenges in at least three fundamental ways. Firstly, it addressed the shortcomings of technology and corporate driven solutions to environmental problems. Secondly, it engaged with new perspectives on local environmental knowledge, green protests and spiritual communities of environmental care, which are emerging in China and across East Asia today. And thirdly, it theorized new possibilities for eco-critical scholarship through such concepts as "circulatory history," "metropolitan conviviality," "the precariate," "insurgency movie," and "heavy metal poetry," to name just a few. Overall, the conference demonstrated a constructive engagement with green narratives emerging from China and East Asia today, providing a welcome counterpoint to the reductive focus on the apocalyptic scenarios of the anthropocene.

Participants of the conference in front of the famous Cabaret Voltaire, birthplace of the Dada art movement.

Powerful Civil Societies

The two-day conference "Civil Society in Taiwan and Hong Kong: Looking back and Reaching out" (June 7–8, 2015), jointly organized by the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies – Chinese Studies at the University of Zurich and the Taiwanese Studies Program of the China Policy Institute at the University of Nottingham, was aimed at reviewing the progress in the development of civil society in Taiwan and Hong Kong, and the emergent trajectories of civic agency. The key topics included the achievements and shortfalls of civil society in Taiwan and Hong Kong, directions for future development, and the prospect of civil society reaching out to Mainland China.

Stefan Fleischauer

After a joint welcome address by Andrea Riemenschnitter (University of Zurich) and Steve Tsang (University of Nottingham), the workshop—convened by Andrea Riemenschnitter, Simona Grano, Brigit Knüsel, Natalia Lisenkova, Helena Wu (all University of Zurich), Steve Tsang, and Chun-Yi Lee (both University of Nottingham)—was opened by Michael Hsiao (Academia Sinica), who gave an account of the development of Taiwan's civil society since the beginning of the 1980s. The emergence of civil society organizations, which can be traced back even before the lifting of martial law in 1987, showed a paradigm shift in the state-society power relations away from state dominance over society and toward an emerging balance of power between state and society. A striking insight of Taiwan's experience is the indigenous origin of civil society, resulting partly from Taiwan's international isolation and the way its advocacy organizations initiated, facilitated and fostered an infant democracy for Taiwan. In recent years, as the "China factor" has become more pronounced,

civil society organizations in Taiwan have increasingly responded to the growing external interference on Taiwan's national security, democracy, social justice, and equality.

Yang Wan-ying (National Chengchi University) discussed the position and relevance of Taiwan's women's rights movement within civil society. The movement, which can be historically subdivided into the three periods of "pioneering," "awakening" and "post martial law," has been able to achieve a number of successes. In international comparison, Taiwan has scored well on the affirmation of women's rights. However, the movement still faces certain challenges, in particular with regard to the so-called "moral majority" within society, as well as the question of state feminism.

Union movement under pressure

In his presentation on balancing the rights of workers against the economic well-being of the country, Chiu Yu-bin (National Pingtung University) described Taiwan's rising income gap and mounting social inequality, which has been particularly pronounced in recent years. Due to rigid legislation and state interference, both the number and influence of company- or factory-based unions have been in constant decline, covering no more than 6% of Taiwan's workforce today. In contrast, the more conservative and pro-KMT occupational unions have enjoyed a period of constant growth. Faced with a heightened neo-liberal labor policy since 2008, the financially weak and insufficiently equipped union movement has struggled to offer effective resistance. However, several high-profile strikes in recent years may indicate the emergence of a new left-wing political force in the 2016 elections.

Some fundamental questions concerning the role of civil society were raised by Shelley Rigger (Davidson College and China Policy Institute). To what extent should civil society be superior to or aloof from partisan politics, and how can it effectively negotiate its own space between state institutions? Should civil society organizations emphasize and reflect the purity and unity of the movement and avoid co-option, or rather engage in compromise policy which, after all, is an essential component of a democratic society? In this context, it was also questioned whether the widespread disappointment of various civil society organizations with the DPP-led government after 2000 was justified.

While the first day of the workshop focused on Taiwan, the second day examined recent developments in Hong Kong's civil society. In her presentation, Agnes Shuk-mei Ku (Hong Kong University of Science and Technology) offered a historical retrospective of Hong Kong's democratic movement, which can be traced back to the 1980s and finally culminated in the "Umbrella Movement" in 2014. During the early stages of the democracy movement in the 1980s, mobilization power remained limited, and it was not until June 2003, when the projected legislation on national security led to widespread mass protest, that the democracy movement entered a phase of rejuvenated mobilization power. At the same time, this period was marked by a new trend towards radicalization, stemming from forces within the pan-democratic camp, the so-called young generation, as well as radical local groups. The latest stage of civil protest in Hong Kong, the so-called "Umbrella Movement" of 2014, further witnessed both old and new forces unfolding and reshaping politics, with three distinct trends clearly visible: the transmutation into a community-based movement, the

radicalization of the democratic camp in the legislation, and the rise of radical forces within the new generation of Hong Kong's civic activists.

Cooperation in civil society

Malte Kaeding (University of Surrey) discussed the topic of Hong Kong's civil society and its linkages with their Taiwan counterpart. In terms of network building, three stages could be observed in recent years. During the first stage (2008–2012), the full impact of the "China factor" became apparent in both territories, giving rise to shared interest. Resistance against national education (Hong Kong) and media monopoly (Taiwan) gave activists on both sides reasons to define their respective situations and to strive to uncover commonalities. In the last stage (since 2014), various opportunities for cooperation were explored, e.g. through conferences, workshops, and the social media sphere. This in turn led to organizational learning, regarding topics such as support and leadership structures, media strategies, and mutual emulation of protest culture.

Hung Ho-fung (Johns Hopkins University) likewise followed a comparative approach, exploring the topic of the sovereignty question in Hong Kong and Taiwan. In Taiwan, the long-standing issue of sovereignty has been a hotly contested political issue between opposing political camps: while the ruling KMT maintains that Taiwan is identical to the Republic of China, the opposition party DPP claims that Taiwan's sovereignty status is indeterminate. By contrast, in Hong Kong the year 2003 marked a watershed. Faced with renewed nationalism and a hardening authoritarian rule in China, the discourses on sovereignty, citizenship, and self-determination for Hong Kong have been revived in recent years. While the "Mainlandization" or "Tibetization" of Hong Kong, brought about by economic integration and population engineering has become a common concern, the question of Hong Kong's future after the expiration of the "one country, two systems" formula in 2047 is also still looming on the horizon.

New waves of civil disobedience

In his presentation, Ho Ming-sho (National Taiwan University) again shifted the focus on the recent developments of Taiwan's civil society. Following the KMT's victory in the presidential elections of 2008, several "dormant" civil society movements, such as the "Wild Strawberry" or the anti-nuclear movement, have been revived and supplemented by new social forces. In recent years, these new waves of civil society struggle were able to attain a number of successes, such as the reform of the military judicial system (2013), and the halting of construction on Taiwan's fourth nuclear power plant (2014). In recent years, the prevalent discourses within those new social movements have particularly emphasized the sense of relative deprivation, since economic growth was perceived to benefit only few, while the majority of people were left behind. Further, the "China factor" has led to an increased sense of Taiwan's liberal rights as jeopardized though deepened and unchecked cross-Strait integration. Consequently, the concept of civil disobedience had become more acceptable to students and activists even before the beginning of the "Sunflower Movement" of 2014. Furthermore, the new cycle of protests that began in 2008 is no longer restricted to domestic issues, but even extends to topics concerning Taiwan's foreign relations, especially relations to the Chinese Mainland.

In the last presentation of the workshop, Helena Wu (University of Zurich) once again returned to Hong Kong. In her talk on the "Umbrella Movement," she analyzed its "artistic resistance." The creative output of the movement became visible in everyday life, such as in paintings, songs, photographs, moving images, poems, or street art. In this process, ordinary objects of everyday life were put to alternative use, being transformed into icons of the movement. Of particular significance is the Lion Rock, an epic landmark of Hong Kong, which had served as a symbol of spiritual and moral support for Hong Kong's people since the 1970s, and which has now been appropriated and redefined by activists of the "Umbrella Movement."

An anti-nuclear rally in the streets of Taipei. November 5, 2011.

Bernese Orientalism

On the occasion of the 160th anniversary of the Selamlik in Oberhofen castle, the conference "The Myth of the Orient: Architecture and Ornament in the Age of Orientalism" (June 12, 2016) took place at Oberhofen castle. It was organized by the Oberhofen Castle foundation, the University of Zurich's Institute of Art History, and the URPP Asia and Europe.

Elika Palenzona-Djalili

Oberhofen Castle has long been a sightseeing attraction on the Lake of Thun. In the mid 1950s, its interior became accessible for the public to visit. A main attraction of the castle is the smoking room at the top floor, which was built in an Oriental manner in 1855 and is conventionally designated with the Turkish name "Selamlik." The owner of the castle at the time was Count Albert de Pourtalès (1812–1861), and he was fascinated by the Orient. He commissioned the Bernese architect Theodor Zeerleder (1820–1868) to decorate the interior.

In the wake of the latest restoration work that ended in 2013 and with support from the Institute of Art History and the University of Zurich, Professor Francine Giese, discovered that the interior décor of the Selamik adapted an Egyptian interior that inspired the architect on his trips to Cairo (1847/1848 and 1849/1850).

The importance of the Selamlik along with other similar issues led to the organization of an international conference. Its aims were to investigate the aspects of the neo-Islamic architecture with a focus on Cairo, to present current research on the topic, and to participate in the ongoing scientific discourse on Orientalism in architecture and ornament. Since Napoleon's Egyptian campaign in 1798, depiction of the Orient became fraught with mythical meaning. This phenom-enon has become known as Orientalism. Orientalism means fascination, on the one hand, and the drawing of a frontier, on the other. This fascination resulted in increasing preoccupation with the visual arts, and especially architecture, in 19th century Europe. Orientalizing architecture, especially in Europe, is a relatively new topic that lacks sufficient research. Such considerations led to its being the topic of the Oberhofen conference.

Influences of Orientalism

The conference was divided up into five overarching themes. The first four were "Oriental Visions," "Architecture in Cairo," the "Transmission of Architecture" and "Ornament." They dealt with romantic visions of 19th century Cairo and the then prevailing image of the Orient. Instructive examples like the Shepherd's Hotel, Misr Bank in Cairo, and the Tabacco factory in Dresden shed light on the core of the subject. Further discussions took up the aspects of interiors from this period and the Islamic Ornament in the neo-Islamic context. The fifth section was dedicated to the interior of the castle, the Selamlik. Francine Giese presented the latest research results on the Selamlik, which is part of the research project "Mudejarismo and Moorish revival in Europe." This project, which is based at the Art History Department of the University of Zurich, follows the

> **Orientalizing architecture, especially in Europe, is a relatively new topic that lacks sufficient research.**

same path. The architect supervising the restorations of the Selamlik is Herman Häberli, who concluded the lecture series by reporting on the restoration and maintenance of this interior.

The conference was followed by the opening of the exhibition "The Myth of the Orient: A Bernese Architect in Cairo" (June 13 to October 15, 2015), which displayed the Oriental studies and travelogues of the Bernese architect Theodor Zeerlander. From these drawings the spectator witnesses the impact of the personal impressions of the architect on the Selamlik. On display were a variety of unpublished travel sketches and aquarelles by the architect, which were taken from his family archive and the Bernese Burger Library.

Orientalism at the shore of Lake Thun: The smoking room at Oberhofen castle, the so-called Selamlik.

Perspectives on Change

In different places and times, people use and operate with different concepts, even though they might use the same terminology. In the international workshop "Concepts in Transition" (September 2015, 9–11) held at the URPP Asia and Europe, scholars from various disciplines came together to approach this phenomenon. As could be seen in various contributions as well as in the unfolding discussions, this topic is a demanding one, but also provides great insights if properly approached.

Christoph Mittmann

Theories of concepts are being developed by several academic disciplines, reflecting the plurality of views on mind, language, and philosophy. Focusing on these developments, the workshop "Concepts of Concept" was organized in 2014 by members of the research group "Comparative Conceptual Research" of the URPP Asia and Europe. It addressed the issue of how "concepts" are defined in analytic philosophy, history, linguistics, and psychology.[1] The aim of the 2015 workshop—organized by Wolfgang Behr, Thomas Hüllein, Polina Lukicheva, Christoph Mittmann, and Philipp Hetmanczyk—was to take some of the results from the former workshop as the point of departure and to analyze how fundamental concepts like *space*, *time* or *practice* are defined and applied in different disciplines.

To provide common ground for the participating scholars, concepts were defined as means by which research domains can impact each other: changes in domains can occur as a result of a concept transition from one domain to another. For example, the conceptual input from cognitive sci-

ences, semiotics, and phenomenology into "classical" art history has turned art history into a more broadly defined discipline when it comes to studying images per se. In recent years, an interdisciplinary understanding of concepts that focuses on the crossing of boundaries between research domains has gathered momentum in cultural studies. How concepts move from one domain of knowledge to another, and what changes then occur both to the concepts and the involved domains, are being investigated with the aim of revealing hitherto unnoticed properties and functions of concepts and of understanding more fully how they contribute to change in various domains.

Questions of this type are even more relevant for scholars involved in cultural or regional studies, since ambiguity may arise in the process of comparing language use in various cultural and pragmatic settings. If, for example, the Chinese term *wèi* 位 (customarily translated as "place") is analyzed by scholars trained in "Western" paradigms, European notions of "space" are involuntarily superimposed on the Chinese term and may interfere with the indigenous epistemic context. The latter problem revolves around the applicability of pre-established European concepts and categorizations of knowledge for other regions of the world.

Concepts influenced by subjects

After the opening remarks of Mareile Flitsch (University of Zurich), Ralph Weber (University of Basel) gave a short summary of some of the questions and results from the previous workshop "Concepts of Concept" and introduced Raji C. Steineck (University of Zurich), who delivered the keynote lecture.

Focusing on Africa, Phillipp Seitz (University of Leipzig) proposed in the first panel to use Ernst Cassirer's *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* as an adequate means both to limit and expand the concept of culture itself. Oleg Benesch (University of York) turned to Japan and specific conceptions of *Individualism* that were formed and used in Modern Japan. He highlighted the different notions of the terms *Nation* and *Identity* and how their application helped to define different concepts of Individualism. Rebecca Pates (University of Leipzig) addressed the issue of how the term "human trafficking" is defined and used on different administrative and juristic levels. She showed how the same person can be considered a victim of human trafficking or not, depending on how institutions (NGOs, the police, legal courts, etc.) perceive and manage each case. One conclusion from the final discussion was that subjects who operate with concepts play a crucial role in the process of defining them. However, in many cases this fact is not properly addressed in the course of research.

Additional difficulties in translation

The second panel focused on how the *Outside* is conceptualized. Juljan Biontino (University of Seoul) showed in a case study how imperial rule influenced discourses on burial practice on the Korean peninsula under Japanese rule. In this period, various discourses made those practices explicit and in many cases the positions of the subjects often were influenced by conflicting opinions and social influence. Belief was also the central issue in Zhu Li's (University of Konstanz) case study of Chinese translations of the Passion story. She pointed out that, depending on textual and historical contexts, translations themselves lead to different meanings and connotations that are highly influenced by Chinese terminology since they bear

1 Cf. Polina Lukicheva, "Principles, Illusions, Names", in: *Asia & Europe Bulletin*, 4/2015, pp. 13–14.

their own meanings already. Accordingly, the message of the same story differs from case to case. A Christian topic was also addressed by Jens Rüffer (University of Bern) in his study of the concept of space within a monastery. He pointed out that even though the building's architect(s) and the clerics that use it afterwards plan and work on the same ensemble of buildings, they seem to have a different concept of space. Thus, liturgical space and architectural space are not synchronized, which subsequently affects the liturgy. Brian Baumann (University of California, Berkeley) closed this panel by his talk about emptiness as the starting point for making sense out of this world. He argued that an alternative way of world making would be to embrace this emptiness as the beginning for our intellectual endeavors. In that sense, the subject can be more creative in the process of making sense of the world.

Concepts in different scientific disciplines

The third panel followed concepts across the boundaries of scientific disciplines. Space was the main topic in this panel, featuring Steven Savitt's (University of British Columbia) elaboration on the concept of "space-time" and how space and time, traditionally thought of two separate dimensions, are in fact intrinsically connected to each other. Because of this link, it is possible to "see the past" if telescopes take pictures of galaxies and stars that are thousands lightyears away from earth. Although it is possible to understand that what we see when we look at the sun at a given moment is not the sun in its most current state, but the sun as it looked a few minutes before due to the delay with which its light reaches our eyes, it is difficult to perceive the movement of the sun as delayed. This led to the question of whether information that is scientifically true and meaningful to certain areas of human activity (e.g., explor-

ing deep space with large-scale telescopes) might impact how we perceive the world on a level that is not driven mainly by rational thought.

Catherine Stuer (Denison University) addressed landmarks in China and how certain geographical spots evolve into spaces represented in poetry and history, as well as how these locations and their representa-

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In recent years, an interdisciplinary understanding of concepts that focuses on the crossing of boundaries between research domains has gathered momentum in cultural studies.

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tions mutually impact each other. An important driving force in these processes is the link between geographic locations and identity as it is constructed in a given area. Sacred mountains and holy ponds might legitimize a whole dynasty and inspire generations of poets, which in turn might impact the location. These locations turn into reference points to legitimize, but also to challenge identity and power, which was strikingly similar to the importance attributed to Korean burial sites discussed earlier by Biontino.

Rainer Schützeichel (ETH Zurich) analyzed the history of "space" as a design element in city planning. For a long time in Western European city planning, space was what was left over after houses, churches, wells and monuments were built, though it became a design element in the 19th century. Streets, squares, and spaces between houses did play a role prior to this moment, but a significant shift occurred when psychological aspects such as the perception of individuals walking through the streets of a town or city center were deliberately integrated into the planning process. In

this case, studies addressing mechanisms of human perception led to a different perspective on city planning methods and, ultimately, made city planners aware of space as an important tool in their work.

Manifold transformations

Andrea Bréard (University of Heidelberg) followed up on the links between different fields of knowledge by elaborating on how authors and artists integrated mathematical tools and methods into their work. Her talk offered insight into the creative potential of applying rigorous mathematical processes in literary composition, explaining how an almost mythical belief in mathematical precision and logic made artists try to unlock the cosmic order. Bréard contributed an important element to the ongoing discussions by drawing attention to "operational" and "structural" features of concepts. While "operational" aspects allow certain things to be done to and with concepts, the structural aspects define the concept itself. It is important to understand that, depending on the circumstances, sometimes the operational and sometimes the structural elements of a concept might be more influential, leading to transitions of concepts between cultural, geographic or epistemic domains or changing concepts themselves over the course of time.

During a young scholars' panel, doctoral and postdoctoral students from the University of Zurich introduced their ongoing research projects. Helena Wu shed light on the Lion Rock in Hong Kong that is described and depicted in various forms of art, and is therefore in constant flux. Aymon Kreill's presentation was about contemporary Cairo. Based on his fieldwork, he described the social and political change that contemporary society witnesses. Daphne Jung closed this panel with her studies in art history.

In the last panel, Kwan Tze-wan (University of Hong Kong) concentrated on the issue of translating philosophical classics from one language into another. Whereas Chinese academia focuses on issues that deal with different philosophical conceptions, Kwan shifted his attention towards the linguistic structure of those translations. For this purpose, he incorporated lexical field theory. During his talk, he addressed the issues of the translation's readability, problems caused by the syntactic-typological distance of source and target language and, last but not least, issues of consistency in the translation of terms. In his conclusion, he noted the importance of the complete understanding of the source language for a successful translation.

Friedrich Wolfzettel (Goethe-University Frankfurt) closed the workshop with a study of the transformations *the sublime* underwent leading to the category that we still use today. Initially, *the sublime* had a core function for social conventions and only became a critical category in the works of Boileau. Those French translations influenced Winckelmann's ideal of sublime simplicity. Later on, Kant redefined it as man's inner response to outer impressions and his awareness of his own autonomy against social constraints. Thus, it formed the counterpart to social values as such. Lyotard made the final step towards the modern definition of *the sublime* that is still used today.

Overall, the workshop reached its goal by further intensifying the discussion about concepts and their transition in an interdisciplinary manner. To make the results accessible to a broader audience the organizers of the workshop are now working together with the participants in order to publish the contributions and the insights gained. Hopefully the discussion can be continued in the future on the occasion of a similar event.

Buddhist Influence on Japan

The two-day symposium "Buddhist Japonism: Negotiating the Triangle of Religion, Art and Nation" (September 18–19, 2015) was held at the Musée d'ethnographie de Genève (MEG), accompanying the opening of the exhibition "Madame Butterfly's Buddhism: Buddhist Japonism." Specialists from the fields of Japanese art, history and religions were invited from as far as Japan and the United States to confer and reflect upon the complex interrelations of state(s), religion and art at the end of the 19th century.

Carina Roth

The first morning was devoted to a discussion centering on the reception of Japanese Buddhism in Europe. After a few introductory remarks by the organizers, Jerôme Ducor (MEG), and Raji C. Steineck (University of Zurich), James Ketelaar (University of Chicago) opened the symposium with a reflexion on the categorization of words ending in *-ism*. In the 19th century, they often marked "religions of the world," which were seen as restricted to one cultural sphere (e.g. Buddhism, Mohammedanism), as opposed to "Christianity," which was perceived as the only transnational, transcultural religion. The same logic is at work in the term "Japonism," which was used in the late 19th and early 20th century in a cultural sense. All these terms involve a Western look on distant cultures. However, Ketelaar showed how Japanese art was eventually reappropriated by Japan for the construction of its history, to the extent that a "Japanese Japonism" came into being. The decades between 1850 and 1930 shaped both Japan and the West's ideas about Japanese art and Japanese Buddhist history.

Perplexed by the fearsome portrayal of Buddhism as a totalitarian regime in the *Secret of the Swordfish*, one episode of a well-known Belgian comic series by Edgar P. Jacobs, Jean-Noël Robert (Collège de France, Paris) deconstructed the notion of "yellow peril," showing that it was based on the fear of Japanese economic, not military power. Although the West usually equates Buddhism with peace and quiet, the association of it with the concept of yellow peril comes out as a highly reactive cocktail, which Robert analyzed with precision, showing how it intermingled with popular European culture in the 1950s.

Sell-out of Buddhist art

In the second part of the day, attention turned to what Raji C. Steineck called the "nitty-gritty part of the how and when" Japanese Buddhism was intro-

> **Japanese art was eventually reappropriated by Japan for the construction of its history, to the extent that a "Japanese Japonism" came into being.**

duced to Europe. Through an analysis of the first auctions of Japanese art in Paris, Joseph Kyburz (CNRS, Paris) vividly illustrated the fierce competition among art dealers, both Japanese and European, combined with the ideological stance of explaining a culture through its artifacts and especially through Japanese Buddhist art. The concentration on Buddhist art was helped by the political situation in Japan, where the *haibutsu kishaku* campain ("Expel Buddhism, Eradicate Buddha") in the wake of the Meiji Restoration allowed Western collectors to acquire ancient and valuable pieces of art for low amounts of money. Sekiko

Matsuzaki-Petitmengin (emeritus director of the Institut des hautes études japonaises at Collège de France, IHEJ) presented this time through the eyes of a young Alsacian officer, Louis Kreitmann, who travelled through Japan between 1876 and 1878, noting the poor state of Buddhist temples and bringing back 500 photographs of his journey[1].

After four talks concentrated on crosscultural viewpoints, Yamamoto Satomi (Kyōritsu Women's University, Tōkyō) turned the attention on the evolution of a 14th century Buddhist painting of the six destinies *(Rokudō-e)*. By retracing the history of its reception over more than six centuries in Japan, Yamamoto suggested that its changes over time might be considered as a form of "Inner Japonism." Challenging the general acceptance that Japonism is based on transcultural exchange between East and West, her proposition led to an animated debate that will certainly trigger further reflection.

A humanistic French collector
The second day's presentations centered on Emile Guimet, the erudite French industrialist who founded the Museum of Religions in Paris (now Museum of Asian Art). Omoto Keiko (emeritus librarian at Guimet Museum) opened the session with a reflection on Emile Guimet's interest in Japanese religions, showing how this humanistic industrialist combined his interest in ancient civilisations and religions with moral and social considerations. Omoto strongly underlined that Guimet was an avant-guardist on social questions, at a time of transition between patronage and social re-

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1 Some 200 photographs, as well as Kreitmann's diary, have been published last autumn: *Deux ans au Japon (1876–1878): Journal et correspondance de Louis Kreitmann, officier du génie.* Éditions de Boccard, Paris, 2015, coll. "Bibliothèque de l'institut des hautes études japonaises."

forms. He stayed true to his lifelong belief that, through their moral foundations, religions empowered people and led them to happiness. The following presentation by Frédéric Girard (Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient, Paris) stressed how deeply Guimet was imbued with the idea that religions and their founders were destined to solve the social problems of their times. Girard also demonstrated the importance of comparison in Guimet's thought, beyond his prevalent interest in Buddhism, which he saw as synthesizing all oriental religions.

Finally, Michel Mohr (University of Hawai'i at Manoa) provided an enlightening reflection on the question of universalism as a catalyst for understanding Japanese (and other) religions in the 19th and 20th centuries. With a concrete example to demonstrate the necessity of global rethinking on the fundamental meaning of universality, Mohr focused on the case of Hori Shitoku (1876–1903), a young Shingon priest who travelled to India in 1901, where he hoped to answer his queries on the universality of Buddhist precepts.

An ongoing reflection process
The symposium was concluded by a lively roundtable taking up the extensive topics covered over both days, and included a presentation of the current state of the project "Japanese Buddhist Art in European Collections" (JBAE project). The sole regret expressed was that the triangulation of state, power and religion had not been dealt with in depth. However, the crucial importance of reception, as determined on the side of the receiver (be it in one's own country or abroad), appeared very clearly in all contributions. In that sense, Japonism must be understood as an ongoing process of mutual mirror or prism-like reflections, not devoid of the danger of creating stereotypes.

New Participating Professors

In the last twelve months, two professors joined the URPP Asia and Europe as participating scholars:

Prof. Dr. Martin Dusinberre
History Department

General areas of research
History of the Asia-Pacific region; history of modern Japan; migration history; imperial and colonial history; maritime history; transcultural, entangled, and connected histories

Research topics
History of the prewar Japanese diaspora in the Asia-Pacific region; history of nineteenth-century Japanese imperialism; steamships and modernity; sugar production in the Pacific world; voice and narrative in Global History; the nuclear village in Japan

Prof. Dr. Nicolas Martin
Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies, Department of Indian Studies

Research interests
Political and economic anthropology of India/Pakistan; democracy and authoritarianism; clientelism; elections; violence; agrarian change; debt bondage; Islam; qualitative research methods; modernity; Sikhism

A Wider View

Organized by Angelika Malinar and Simone Müller, the topical lecture series "'Asia and Europe:' Actors, Concepts, Narratives" (fall semester 2015) aimed to illustrate the long and complex history of exchanges between Asia and Europe. Thematically, the individual lectures dealt with philosophy, literature, law, social practices, and material culture.

Roman Benz

The individual lectures were held by participating professors, postdocs, and alumni (whose current affiliation is indicated in parentheses) of the URPP Asia and Europe, offering a broad overview of its research activities.

In the first lecture, Mareile Flitsch and Norman Backhaus talked about street food vendors and the importance of their skills in Malaysia and in Switzerland. With the example of a small town in the northern Malay Peninsula, Backhaus showed the great importance that street food has in many Asian countries. From early morning until late night, vendors provide the town's inhabitants with affordable food and drinks. By this practice, they produce and reproduce space using formal and informal rules and regulations. For instance, although there is no legal claim of ownership with regard to the places the street vendors occupy, newcomers usually pay a fee or rent to the established vendors. The authorities tolerate the vendors at many in-official places, as long as they do not obstruct the traffic or cause hygienic problems. In Zurich, on the other hand, selling street food is highly regulated, as Flitsch pointed out. For example, only about 20 public places are available for running one of the popular roasted chestnut stands. However, these formal rules are interpreted and followed with individual variations. Moreover, Flitsch showed how important skills are for the production of traditional dishes on the streets, as well as for interacting with customers. After the lecture, the public was invited to have a snack in front of the building at Rämistrasse 59, where Asian street food was served.

"Occidental daughters of mother India"
In her lecture, Angelika Malinar focused on the careers of European women in colonial India against the background of Victorian notions of the roles of women and so-called "heretical" circles in Britain in which eastern religions, female rights etc. were propagated and Western colonialism and materialism criticized. Impressed by the teachings of the Hindu monk and scholar Vivekananda, the teacher Margaret Noble (1867–1911) moved to Kolkata in 1902, in order to open a girls' school. She was given the name Sister Nivedita by Vivekananda and she committed herself to the liberation of India from the British hegemony. In the same way, Annie Besant (1847–1933) strived for Indian self-determination and for a merging of "Eastern" and "Western" values under the umbrella of Theosophy. In England, Besant had already been a famous left-wing activist and feminist. After meeting theosophist Helena Blavatsky (1831–1891), she turned to spiritual questions and took on a leading role in the Theosophical Society. She moved to India and became in 1907 president of the Theosophical Society, whose headquarters were—and still are—located in Adyar, a neighborhood of Chennai in South India. Besant became an important figure in the Indian National Congress (INC) and its struggle for Indian independence. In 1917 she was interned by the colonial government because of her political commitment. At the peak of her political influence, she was the president of the annual congress of the INC in 1917. While being largely forgotten in Europe, Margaret Noble and Annie Besant are viewed in India as "occidental daughters of mother India."

Bettina Dennerlein and Aymon Kreil dealt with marriage in the Arab world. They approached the topic with a focus on family law, on the one hand, and with a focus on discourses on the tension between arranged marriage and love marriage, on the other. Dennerlein pointed out that in its contemporary shape, Islamic family law is a recent phenomenon. In traditional Islamic law, marriage was defined in purely private contractual terms. At the same time, the strictly hierarchical order between men and women (as well as between religions) was upheld.

The concept of time as a quantified, measurable and homogeneous system of coordination becomes "naturalized" in capitalist societies.

Upon marriage, the husband acquired an "ownership-like right over the marriage" (arab. *milk an-nikāḥ*). Accordingly, the union could be dissolved through repudiation by the husband's unilateral will. In contrast to traditional Islamic law, modern Islamic family law, which has gradually emerged since the late colonial era and has enjoyed support by religious reformers as well as liberal intellectuals and nationalists, has re-defined marriage and the family as the core institutions of state and society. Marriage and the family were considered the realm of national authenticity as well as of private intimacy. This redefinition significantly enhanced the appreciation of the women's role as a wife and mother, without questioning the husband's position as the head of the family. Kreil reported on his anthropological fieldwork in Cairo, where he studied the interactions between unmarried men and women. A telling example of current habits is the emer-

gence of Valentine's Day. Especially in the upper class, it has become quite popular for lovers to give each other presents on this occasion. Some conservative circles, however, consider Valentine's Day as a threat because it is an imported celebration and they consider it to lead to sexual excesses. However, the need for love and sexuality is most often recognized. Nevertheless, many parents try to convince their children who are in love—sometimes with the help of psychological consultations—to postpone their current needs for physical proximity until their wedding day.

Sandra Hotz (Universities of Fribourg and Zurich) compared the evolution of relationship and family forms in Japan and Switzerland. While the equality of husband and wife is constitutionally guaranteed in both countries, love marriage is less common in Japan than in Switzerland. Often, economic benefits are the most important reason for getting married in Japan, but the number of married people is decreasing, much like in Western Europe. In 1950, only about 1% of all Japanese under the age of 50 were unmarried (Switzerland: approx. 20%), but today, 20% of male and nearly 10% of female Japanese have no husband or wife (in Switzerland about 40% of the population under the age of 50). The life as a wife and mother is increasingly unattractive to well-educated Japanese women, as the work relationships are not compatible with the combination of parenthood and employment, and there are no governmental efforts towards an alternative family policy. The rise of celibacy is a demographic problem for Japan, because children are born almost exclusively to married women. In Switzerland, 20% of all children are born out of wedlock, but only 1% in Japan.

Hans Bjarne Thomsen dealt with East Asian art objects in Swiss collections, such as the Museum zu Allerheiligen in Schaffhausen, the Ethnographic Museum in Burgdorf and the

Museum der Kulturen in Basel. Thomsen stressed the connections between East and West that were (and still are) inherent in these objects. Acquired by Swiss merchants, engineers, and diplomats, numerous art objects made their way to Europe since the opening of Japan to the West, but knowledge of their precise origin was often lost over the years. Today, art history has a great interest to reconstruct the patterns of trade, the active agents, their histories, and motivations. For example, a group of students at the University of Zurich's department of East Asian art history are currently carrying out a survey of the archives and collection of Wilhelm Kuprecht (1868–1955), one of the early Swiss visitors to Japan. He traveled there in 1902–1909 to work with a textile company located in Kyoto and he assembled many Japanese art objects, including hundreds of woodblock prints. Scholars from Japan provide scientific support in several areas of expertise.

Francine Giese demonstrated the considerable influence that the Alhambra in Granada exerted on the European architecture of the 19th century. The medieval castle complex served as a model for Owen Jones's (1809–1874) Alhambra Court in the London Crystal Palace (finished in 1851) or

for the summer palace "Wilhelma" of the Württemberg Kings in Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, built between 1842 and 1864 by the court architect Ludwig von Zanth (1796–1857) and his successors. In the park of the Sanssouci palace in Potsdam, even the *Dampfmaschinenhaus* ("steam engine house") took up the so-called Moorish style of the Alhambra. Constructed between 1841 and 1843 by Ludwig Persius (1803–1845), the building supplied the energy needed to operate the park's large fountain.

Genuine Hindu art

In her lecture, Elisa Ganser dealt with the question of how the idea of "Indian art" changed in the course of time. The European interest in artifacts from India increased since the mid-19th century. To promote professionalism in the field of art, the colonial government established art and design schools in Madras, Bombay and Calcutta in the 1850s. At first, Indian art was considered as applied art, which was fed by centuries-old traditions and fell short of the individual creativity attributed to European fine arts. But within only a few years, artists such as Raja Ravi Varma (1848–1906) managed to catch up to contemporary European painting. Around 1900, many Indian artists turned away from European art. Un-

Ducklings in preparation for the snack offered after the first lecture of the topical lecture series.

der the influence of Indian nationalists, they went in search of genuine Hindu art, which they believed to have found in the Indian middle ages.

Andrea Riemenschnitter depicted the fragility of national identities by the example of Chinese settlement movements to South East Asia. Several millions of ethnic Chinese live in countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand—often in distance to the local population and exposed to occasional pogroms. Many of them feel a tension between their Chinese descent and their local rootedness, a feeling that can be found in the rain forest novels by the Malaysian-Chinese writer Zhang Guixing (*1956). Born in Borneo and now living as an English teacher in Taiwan, his novels deal with (spiritual) commuting between the country of the ancestors (a mythic China) and new homelands. In "My South Seas Sleeping Beauty" (2001), the young protagonist flees from Borneo to Taiwan, after his girlfriend slips into a coma upon falling from a tree house. He studies European literature in Taipei, but when he realizes that he is in love with the twin sister of his injured former girlfriend he terminates his relationship with a fellow student and returns to Borneo. In Riemenschnitter's opinion, Zhang's work can be read as an inquiry into alternative, postcolonial cosmopolitanisms for lack of other paths to escape the essentialism of ethnicity- or tradition-based national identities.

From anarcho-syndicalism to Bolshevism
Raji C. Steineck and Elena Lange focused on the reception of Marxist theories in Japan. As Lange pointed out, the early criticism of the consequences of industrialization such as the increasing inequality between the rich and the poor was not yet formulated in the context of socialist thinking. So, the Social Policy Association (1898–1924) admired Bismarck's welfare programs and advocated a restrained capitalism. With the Social Democratic Party, the first left-wing party in Japan was formed in 1901. Their members' claims were clearly socialist: for example, the claim for public ownership of land and capital. Around 1920, anarcho-syndicalist currents of thought were influential in Japan, but the Bolshevik-oriented Japanese Communist Party (JCP), founded in 1922, marginalized them. After the Second World War, the JCP stood for a Soviet-style Marxism-Leninism, while the economist Kōzō Uno (1897–1977) elaborated an independent interpretation of Marx's "Capital" and critically dealt with "dialectical materialism." Since the 1970s, a decline of Marxian theory can be noticed in Japan. Steineck presented the theorists Hiromatsu Wataru (1933–1994) and Maki Yūsuke (*1937). They used Marx's writings as a starting point for their reflections on the concepts of nature (Hiromatsu) and time (Maki). Steineck demonstrated how Hiromatsu was led by his reception of Marx to understand "nature" as the result of a process of object formation with essential links to the capitalist mode of production. This basic understanding was elaborated in some detail by Maki with respect to the notion of time. Maki was able to show how the concept of time as a quantified, measurable and homogeneous system of coordination becomes "naturalized" in capitalist societies. Capitalist social practices such as loans, wage labor, pension plans and the like make quantified homogeneous time a reality to reckon with in everyday life and one that takes precedence over other conceptions of time. Both Hiromatsu and Maki thus stand out for their original development of Marxian thought.

Ulrich Rudolph and Roman Seidel (Freie Universität Berlin) dicussed different types of the Argument for God's Existence elucidating how it constitutes a shared philosophical problem in the entangled intellectual history between Europe and the Islamic World. They showed how both rational Islamic Theology *(kalām)* and Islamic philosophers such as Avicenna drawing on Aristotle appropriated various forms of the argument, and how they were further modified and adopted by Medieval thinkers such as Thomas Aquinas or the Hebrew Polymath Maimonides. Beyond that Rudolph and Seidel turned to the 20th century and demonstrated, for instance, that Middle Eastern thinkers re-evaluated Kant's fundamental critique of classical philosophical arguments (the ontological, the cosmological and the teleological) for God's existence. Highlighting a discussion of the contemporary Iranian scholar Mojtahed Shabestari, they gave an example of a modern philosophical account of the concept of God as an instance of practical rather than theoretical philosophy. They further showed that an argument from creation brought forward by the Islamic Theologian and critic of the peripatetic tradition al-Ghazāli (d.1111) has been adopted by a strand of modern western philosophers labelling their own version "The Kalām-cosmological Argument." Accordingly, Rudolph and Seidel finally argued for a re-consideration of current Eurocentric narratives in the history of philosophy.

World Bank's fear of a damaged reputation
Matthäus Rest's (University of California, Los Angeles) talk was on the Arun 3 project in north-eastern Nepal. Although the planning was quite advanced and initial construction works were done, the World Bank withdrew from financing the hydropower plant in 1995, thus causing the end of the project. This withdrawal was provoked by protests of international NGOs, but also by concerns formulated by the World Bank's Inspection Panel, which was established in 1993. The Panel feared a breach of the World Bank's own environmental and social standards and thus a loss of reputation. The interests of the local inhabitants who hoped for an enhancement of their standard of living due to the Arun 3 project were not taken into account.

Since 2014, an Indian construction company continues the project in a public-private-partnership with the Nepalese government. After the construction works are finished, the company will be allowed to export nearly 80% of the generated electricity for a period of 25 years, before the power plant will pass into the possession of the Nepalese government. In Rest's opinion, the uncertainty remains as to whether the power plant will still work properly after so many years of use.

Peter Finke looked back on 25 years of post-socialist transformation in Central Asia. By the example of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Mongolia, he outlined different paths out of the socialist planned economy system. While Kazakhstan and—to a lesser extent—Mongolia have experienced a certain economic boom in recent years thanks to the extraction of mineral resources, Uzbekistan remains caught in post-socialist structures. The rural population's standard of living thus continues to decline. All three countries have in common that there was no economic plan for the transition. Not surprisingly, the transformation process has led to great social differences and distrust of public institutions is omnipresent.

In his presentation, Wolfgang Behr dealt with what was for a short time an influential thesis about Chinese civilization's origins in Western Asia. The French orientalist Albert É. J. B. Terrien de Lacouperie (1844–1894) held that Babylonian immigrants, the so-called "Hundred Families," had arrived in China about 2300 BCE, introducing fortified settlements, agriculture, calendar and writing systems, the Assyro-Babylonian mythology, and metallurgy. Although Terrien de Lacouperie was largely contradicted by contemporary scholars in Chinese studies, his thesis spread after 1900 in Japan and especially in China. Due to the postulated West Asian origins of the Chinese Empire, republican circles felt

confirmed that the ruling Qing dynasty (1644–1911), which was of Central Asian descent, had usurped power in China. The philologist and politician Zhang Taiyan (1868–1936) expanded the thesis of West Asian origins into an encompassing founding myth of a Chinese multi-ethnic state, which was to serve as a model for the formation of the modern nation-state. Since the 1910s, the findings of Neolithic and bronze age archaeology have contradicted the theory of Chinese civilization's having originated in Western Asia, effectively ending this debate.

Multiple Christianities

One of the main intellectual benefits of URPP Asia and Europe is confronting "Western" assumptions and prejudices with alternative perspectives. In the closing talk of the lecture series, Christoph Uehlinger asked why we usually speak of Christianity in the singular and not in the plural. A look to China past and present shows that the putative unity of Christianity is questionable. The Christian teaching first came to China in the 7th century CE, mediated by the Assyrian Church of the East, as demonstrated, e.g., by the so-called Nestorian stele from Xi'an. Erected in 781, it documents 150 years of early Christianity in China. The "brilliant teaching" on the stele differs considerably from contemporary views of Christianity both in Europe and Western Asia. Turning to modern classification, it is interesting to note that the People's Republic of China officially recognizes five religions: Buddhism, Daoism, Islam, Catholicism ("the teaching of the heavenly lord") and Christianity ("the teaching of Jesus," which stands for Protestantism). Two forms of (historically Western) Christianity are thus considered as separate religions. This distinction is not grounded in doctrinal differences, which are of little concern for the Chinese state, but reflect practical and administrative considerations: the two denominations differ in their rites and have produced distinct material and visual culture; they maintain strictly independent organizations and relate to very different transnational networks; and they pursue, after all, rather few common concerns in contemporary Chinese society. Whether to speak of Christian unity or of multiple Christianities is clearly a matter of perspective and interest.

The topical lecture series presented to the audience a wide range of issues dealt with by members of the URPP Asia and Europe. To preserve their talks in an easily accessible way, a publication is in preparation for 2017.

Tractors on the access road to the Arun 3 hydropower plant near Num, Nepal.

Broad-based Reconstructions

Led by Professor William H. Baxter (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor), the workshop "Linguistic Approaches to Premodern Chinese Literature" took place on October 17 and 18, 2015 at the University of Zurich, having been organized by Wolfgang Behr (URPP Asia and Europe). William Baxter introduced 20 MA and PhD students and university teachers to his methods and findings in the reconstruction of Old Chinese.

Mariana Münning

In 2014, William H. Baxter published *Old Chinese: A New Reconstruction* together with Laurent Sagart (Oxford University Press). As the state of the art in Chinese historical phonology, the book laid the basis for this workshop.

Baxter first presented the types of evidence that are used in the reconstruction of Old Chinese—that is, the language *before* the establishment of the Qin Dynasty in 221 BCE. In the traditional approach established by the Swedish Sinologist Bernhard Karlgren (1889–1978), the three most important clues about old Chinese are rhymes in ancient poetry, such as the "Book of Odes" *Shijing*, phonetic elements in the Chinese characters, and the reconstructed pronunciation of Middle Chinese. It is generally accepted that there is a systematic relationship between Middle and Old Chinese. Middle Chinese refers to the language preserved in rhyme dictionaries such as the *Qieyun* from 601 CE.

All aspects of language considered

In their new book, *Old Chinese: A New Reconstruction,* Baxter and Sagart present additional types of evidence. Among these are the modern Min dialects, assumed to have developed distinctly from other varieties of Chinese since the Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), as well as non-Chinese languages that have preserved loanwords from Old Chinese. Other important sources of information are excavated texts that have preserved the script from before the standardization efforts of the Qin Dynasty. These pre-standardized characters provide more clues about pronunciation, since the script was employed in a much more dynamic way at that time.

Another important endeavor of Baxter and Sagart is to reconstruct Old Chinese morphology. While Karlgren also laid the basis for investigating Old Chinese morphology with his theory of word families, Baxter and Sagart have been able to identify word roots as well as affixes in Old Chinese. These findings show clearly that the reconstruction of Old Chinese is not merely a phonological undertaking, but touches upon all aspects of language, including grammar. The following example will show how semantics, phonetics, morphology and paleography (the study of ancient writing) are intertwined.

Overcoming translation difficulties

The reconstruction of the Old Chinese pronunciation of *shè* 設 (set up) demonstrates the diversity of evidence that needs to be considered. Its Middle Chinese reconstruction is *syet*. How do we now get to the Old Chinese pronunciation? Sometimes, two or more characters can have a so-called xiesheng connection, which occurs when one is written with the other as a phonetic element. For *shè* 設 we do not have such a character, but luckily, the paleographer Qiu Xigui has noticed that *shè* was formerly often written with graphs (i.e. characters) that later developed into *yì* 埶 (to plant, Middle Chinese: *ngjiejH)*. *Yì* 埶 then again has a xiesheng connection with *shì* 勢 (circumstances, setting, Middle Chinese: *syejH)*, since *shì* 勢 is *yì* 埶 with the element *lì* 力 added at the bottom. The three can therefore be reconstructed as:

埶 *yì:* *ŋet-s 'to plant'
設 *shè:* *ŋ̊et 'set up'
勢 *shì:* *ŋ̊et-s 'circumstances, setting'
(Baxter/Sagart 2014, 29–30)

The conclusion here is that *shì* 勢 (*ŋ̊et-s) is the noun derived from *shè* 設 (*ŋ̊et) through the addition of the suffix -s. Findings like this one shed new light on the Confucian classics that were difficult to translate. Baxter and Sagart use their findings about *shè* 設 to improve the hitherto frequently quoted translation of a phrase from the Han *Fei zi: Nan shi* by A. C. Graham from 1989:

吾所為言勢者, 言人之所設也

Wú suǒ wéi yán shì (*ŋ̊et-s) zhě, yán rén zhī suǒ shè (*ŋ̊et) yě.

Graham: "When I speak of the power-base it is of something instituted by man."

Baxter/Sagart: 'The setup (*ŋ̊et-s) of which I am speaking refers to what is set up (*ŋ̊et) by men.' (Baxter/Sagart 2014, 30)

This example hopefully shows why investigations into the phonology and morphology of Old Chinese is not only fascinating, but also rewarding—and why sinologists might want to consider this line of inquiry. This workshop was a rare and important occasion to obtain first-hand information on reconstructive methods for Old Chinese, a field in which few scholars in the world have expertise. Baxter himself couldn't help but remark "what a treat it is to see so many people interested in Old Chinese phonology."

Nothing is Permanent

The workshop "Snapshots of Change: Assessing Social Transformations in Qualitative Research" (October 23–24, 2015) dealt with methodological approaches, scopes of relevance, and lines of causality when studying change in qualitative research settings.

Thiruni Kelegama and Madlen Kobi

Ever since the increase of protest movements that came to prominence since 2011, the issue of change and its assessment has become a prominent topic in scientific research. In this context, the link between protest and change has become a recurrent feature, and has been influenced immensely by researchers' own interests and political engagement. By focusing on the notions of "change" and "social transformation," this workshop aimed to reflect critically upon and discuss how we deal methodologically and theoretically with the notion of "change" in qualitative research. Historical and diachronic timelines assume that change happens on a chronological scale with linear and narrative qualities. How, though, can we concretely assess social change when conducting qualitative research, which is based on case studies often revealing surprising, unconventional and multiple approaches to change? Convened by Yasmine Berriane, Aymon Kreil, Dorothea Lüddeckens, Melek Saral, and Thiruni Kelegama (all University of Zurich), the workshop involved reflections on change based on a broad range of qualitative data in paper and poster presentations.

Non-linear change

We often take for granted that change is intrinsic to the social processes that we study. From a socio-anthropological point of view, the functionalist and structuralist assumptions of a rather static society (over against the diachronic emphases among evolutionists and diffusionists) have been replaced by more dynamic, multi-vocal perspectives on society and on social change. Flexible and individual biographies are seen as linked to collective temporalities in complex and multilayered, sometimes non-traceable and non-linear ways. Rather than presupposing a linear conception of change, the workshop participants assessed notions of social change in multiple ways. Irene Bono (University of Torino) approached the nation of Morocco as an independent object from the perspective of one individual. By reconstructing life situations in "biographical fieldwork" through the lens of one informant's analysis of objects, Bono used these traces not in order to underline hegemonic timelines, but rather in order to approach fragmented parts of individual histories. Through the ideas, traces, and experiences of one individual, Bono sought to understand a present view on the development of past events. Daniele Cantini (Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg) reflected on different temporalities in explanations of institutional changes at Cairo University, doing so through reshuffling his research materials instead of through an individual biography. He showed that the researcher actually creates chains of events with the background of his own ideas about change, and that the organization of research data is fundamental for assessing the changes one wants to explain. Most workshop participants agreed that there is a co-production of narratives around social change through the intermingling of individual and collective memories. Change is constituted by the researcher's assemblage of narratives, events and actions at different scales.

Narrating change

The wording of informants, media and literature remind us constantly that change is commonly considered part of everyday social life, forming part of most individual and social narrative data. In her example of change in post-war Vietnam, Rivka Eisner (University of Zurich) emphasized that narratives refer to different paces of change. Change can feel fast or slow. Narratives dealing with the past are not accounts of credible memories and exact facts, but rather are perceptions of change imbued with psychological, physical, and emotional aspects. Through narrative-biographical interviews with adolescents in Morocco, Christoph H. Schwarz (University of Marburg) assesses social change by focusing on the moral economy of inter-generational transmission and the potential spaces for adolescents in their educational environment. Through the central concept of "waithood" (the period of time spent waiting between schooling and employment), Schwarz combined the temporal potentialities for change in order to understand anticipations of change related to the post-revolutionary political situation. David Pichonnaz (University of Applied Sciences Western Switzerland / University of Lausanne) retrospectively explained change by sharing insights into the motives of a group of police reformers in Switzerland. Through the exploration of factors like predisposition, cultural capital and heterodox convictions, Pichonnaz referred to the motives of police officers committed to change within an institutional setting. However, as Benjamin Geer (University of Basel) commented, in such a context it is of utmost importance to discuss what we actually mean by "institution," before approaching its "change."

Methods for assessing change

Part of the discussion revolved around the hierarchy of different ma-

terials used for assessing change. But regardless of the source, the recurring issue of memory, its production, and how to deal with it emerged at several points during the workshop. Confronting interview partners with objects is a commonly reported practice in the research on social change. Sophie Feyder (University of Leiden) used the photographic collection of the South-African photographer Ronald Ngilima when talking with contemporary witnesses about the history of social life of Johannesburg in the 1950s. By constructing a chain of historical events through the photographs, Feyder showed that photos can provide snapshots into the historical period when they were taken. Similarly, Youssef El Chazli (University of Lausanne) reminded us that digital traces can deepen our understanding of various issues and events. In his research, he included Facebook data in order to approach peoples' motives in becoming activists. According to El Chazli, these "explicit traces" on Facebook produce *in vivo* complementary data that can be combined with conventional ethnographic interview and observation data. Concerning methodology, Benedikt Korf (University of Zürich) described narrative data as rather imprecise when it comes to the exact data of events. Although we can retrospectively reconstruct moments through memories, we could not have predicted them. Traces are not always something external to the researcher, but Maria Frederika Malmström (Nordic Africa Institute / New York University) included the relevance of the researcher's body as a receptive instrument that memorizes sounds, smells and vibrations. With the reference to the "sound of silence," she exemplified how the materiality of sound shaped her perception of ongoing political change during the military and police intervention in Cairo in August 2013. When dealing with objects, Philipp Casula (University of Zürich) highlights that the object is not the meaning itself, but that one can approach meaning through the objects. This basic idea aligns with the statement of Bettina Dennerlein (University of Zurich), who mentioned that even though memory takes place in the present, it links to the future by talking about the past. Through analyzing and discussing objects with informants, we learn not only about the past and how it has changed, but also about the present and peoples' perspectives (and expectations) on past events based on their standpoint today.

Scales of transformation

Working with qualitative interviews and material objects ("traces") implies looking at different levels of transformation. Not only is there an individual level that connects its own (hi-)stories to larger social changes, but also individual, regional and global scales involve narratives of transformation. Anne-Christine Trémon (University of Lausanne) points to continuities and discontinuities that urbanization brings to local place identities in the transformation of a village in Southern China. Trémon makes room for people's conceptions of change in social, economic, cultural and religious areas. The multiple links between individual and social changes are part of a study on nightlife and sexual practices in Morocco by Meriam Cheikh (Free University of Brussels). The political and economic changes on a larger regional scale, localized through the rise of a nightlife economy in Tangier, are here presented as closely related to more freedom for young, especially working class, women in urban economies of intimacy. As Annuska Derks (University of Zurich) pointed out, larger social changes shape the local social realities of these women in creating new opportunities and promises. She refers to multiscalar ethnography where rupture on one level can cause friction at another level. The question of overcoming the challenges of writing about change, while simultaneously dealing with both how and where it happens, was reflected upon by Ulrich Brandenburg (University of Zurich), who looked at the notion of change by highlighting the importance of looking at how different actors represented Japan as a world power. His paper about the Russo-Japanese war took an emic perspective, looking at how this inversion of hierarchies reconstructs patterns of change. Dealing with the question of how to assess change in historical research by looking at the sociological conditions in which the Egyptian intellectual Sayyid Qutb—known today as the pioneer of radical Islam—became revolutionary, Giedre Sabaseviciute (Oriental Institute, Czech Academy of Sciences) showed how Qutb moved from the margins of society to its center. This reconstruction of particular changes and subsequently the connection between individual and collective changes became the focus in this paper.

Why "change"?

Studying change often highlights the problem of how to name the transformations we observe or find interesting. Above all, the words that are applied to change matter, since they are value-laden and refer frequently to the direction in which a given process is expected to move. Notions such as "development," "transition," "evolution," "progress," "rupture," and "revolution" have often strong normative dimensions. Such norms are related to teleological presuppositions embedded within grand narratives of issues like liberalism, democratization, developmentalism, or socialism. By critically assessing such notions, the workshop succeeded in highlighting areas for future research.

New Players in the Hood

Organized by David Chiavacci and Julia Obinger, the conference "Activism in Contemporary Japan: New Ideas, Players and Arenas?" (November 5–7, 2015) aimed to shed light on the changing scope and relevance of civic engagement in contemporary Japan. To critically discuss these latest developments, emerging issues and theoretical implications, the conference brought together social and political scientists with media scholars, as well as Japanese activists involved in recent projects.

Julia Obinger

Japan's voluntary sector is multifaceted and dynamic, and the incorporation of NPOs saw a remarkable boom in the late 1990s after new legislation was passed. Simultaneously, small niches of subcultural activism developed, enriching Japan's protest culture with new tactics and repertoires, which were applied for example at protests against precarious working conditions of young *freeters,* against the Hokkaido G8-summit in 2008, and against the Iraq war in 2003.

Despite all this, the absence of large-scale confrontational public demonstrations and citizen protest movements—or the virtual absence of media coverage—has led to the impression of an "invisible" and thus powerless civil society in Japan. This is also due to general avoidance of potentially controversial issues and confrontational tactics by most social movements in Japan. However, this also means that social movements were never able to establish themselves as a fundamentally new force within the existing political power relations in Japan. Consequently, academic studies spoke of pre-Fukushima Japanese civil society as a whole that is composed of multiple, small-scale organizations, attributing to this civil

society only a small degree of political leverage, especially in comparison with other industrialized nations.

The "triple disaster" of 3/11 came as a turning point, both in terms of civic activism and of the understanding of Japanese civil society. New citizen groups formed and large-scale antinuclear demonstrations emerged, as well as movements in reaction to recent controversial legislation. In particular, the planned "reinterpretation" of Article 9, which postulates Japan's renouncement of ever again using force as a means of settling international conflicts in its post-war constitution, has prompted students to form the SEALDs (Students Emergency Action for Liberal Democracy) groups, who experiment with yet fresh protest tactics.

The conference was opened by a comprehensive keynote speech by Patricia Steinhoff (University of Hawai'i), who addressed theoretical questions regarding the interplay between Japanese research on Activism and European and American perspectives on the issue. In her closing argument, she reminded us to not be content with simply applying Western ideas to the Japanese context, but instead to continuously strive to extend the collective understanding that those theories embody.

Citizens and government

The first panel on established forms of activism was opened by Gesine Foljanty-Jost (Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg), who explored the role of the "citizen-as-activist" in Japan. She argued that there has been a paradigm shift from a vertical policy-making approach towards a "partnership approach" between citizens and local governments, which has been accompanied by new opportunities for

participation in Japan. However, both the lack of resources and restricted political opportunities create limitations in realizing political innovations in the short run. Her paper was followed by Christian Dimmer (University of Tokyo), who presented a case study of Japan's "First Collective House" *Kankanmori* in Tokyo, whose history can be traced back to the women's liberation movement of the 1960s. He argued that, as an experiment with new forms of social relations, this project prefigures a more inclusive, just, and sustainable future society. As the final speaker within this panel, Gabriele Vogt (University of Hamburg) presented another intriguing case study, in which she focused on the lessons to be learned from the emergence and

> **Access to alternative arenas, such as counter-spaces or no-man's-lands, has been an important aspect in processes of empowerment, leading to the strengthening of homeless activists' self-confidence as political actors.**

failure of the Okinawa Reversion Movement. While marginal in terms of resources, this movement's prevalent strength relied on innovative strategies of contentious action, and was based on its strong movement identity, which was framed along a joint historical consciousness of the activists.

The second panel, which focused on theoretical perspectives on activism in Japan, was opened by Simon Avenell (Australian National University). He presented us with his current work that aims to further a more transnational perspective on Japanese environmental activism since the 1970s. He discussed the central role of intermediaries, so-called "rooted cosmopolitans," who relayed information to local Japanese groups about movements abroad and helped to connect activists across bor-

ders into transnational mobilizations. Fabian Schäfer (Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nuremberg) then explored the chances and limitations of online social media network sites for becoming alternative political spheres after 3/11. Based on his case studies, he tentatively argued that within these newly developing online spheres lies the potential of forging alternative sites of digitally enhanced civic participation, or, what he calls "social non-movements."

The third panel, which centered on emergent forms of activism, began with Carl Cassegård (University of Gothenburg), who shared his research on homeless activism in contemporary Japan. He specifically explored the meaning of space within these groups, arguing that access to alternative arenas, such as counter-spaces or no-man's-lands, has been an important aspect in processes of empowerment, leading to the strengthening of this subaltern groups' self-confidence as political actors. He was followed by Julia Obinger (University of Zurich and SOAS London), who presented her on-going project on political consumerism in Japan. Against the background of changing roles and expressions of Japanese consumer citizens, she interpreted political consumerism as an emergent field of unconventional form of civic engagement. Apichai Shipper (Georgetown University) then spoke about immigrants' rights activism and xenophobic activism in Japan, assessing the background of both pro-immigrant and anti-immigrant activists in Japan. He found that, despite the obvious differences in their respective views, these groups did surprisingly share a similar socio-economic background.

The fourth panel sought to bring together Japanese activists from various fields to share their first-hand experiences in current projects. The panel was chaired by Yoshitaka Mōri (Tokyo University of the Arts), and the partici-

pants were Shiraishi Hajime (journalist and activist, Tokyo), Sakurada Kazuya (media activist and lecturer, Osaka) and Narita Keisuke (activist at the *Irregular Rhythm Asylum*, Tokyo). Each participant briefly presented their current work, showcasing different facets of innovative forms of engagement in contemporary Japan. Both the panel and the subsequent discussion were conducted in Japanese. The audience, who used this unique opportunity to gain insights into the daily work of these activists, engaged in a lively discussion.

Back towards the local level

The final panel of the conference addressed post-Fukushima activism, which includes anti-nuclear protests as well as reconstruction efforts and represents one of the most pressing current issues in social movement research on Japan. Koichi Hasegawa (Tohoku University, Sendai) opened the panel by sharing his theoretical work on the effects of social expectation on the development of civil society in Japan. He argued that the successful implementation of social expectation played the central role for creating a social flow towards non-profit organizational activities and for the passage of the Non-Profit Organi-

zation Law (NPO Law) in Japan in the 1990s. Then, Ayaka Löschke (University of Zurich) gave insights into her on-going Ph.D. project on a nationally organized mother's network, who began campaigning against nuclear power and advocating for radiation safety directly after 3/11. She showed how the focus of the network has changed since 2011, suggesting that a shift occurred from the national level back towards the local level. The final paper of this conference by Robin O'Day (University of Tsukuba) presented first findings on the SEALDs network in Tokyo from a joint research project at Tokyo's Sophia University. With his audiovisual presentation, which is based on current interviews and broad ethnography, O'Day showed how this student group developed its own particular way of contesting the Abe government, discussing successes and challenges of this emerging network.

This conference brought together eminent scholars in the field as well as Japanese activists to discuss current issues in social movements and activism in Japan. Since the paper presentations and discussions proved so fruitful for all participants, the organizers decided to publish an edited volume, which is currently in preparation.

SEALDs activists protest against the revision of the war-renouncing article 9 of the Japanese constitution.

Insights into Publishing

The URPP Asia and Europe and the Graduate School of East Asian Studies (GEAS) at the Free University of Berlin held a joint "Publication Workshop" (December 14–15, 2015) at the University of Zurich. The event aimed to provide PhD students with an insight into the peer review and publication process to enable them to increase their research manuscripts' chances of journal acceptance, as well as to promote academic exchange between fellows from GEAS and the University of Zurich.

Nora Gilgen

Organized by David Chiavacci (University of Zurich) and Verena Blechinger-Talcott (Free University of Berlin), the workshop was designed to give five advanced doctoral students the opportunity to discuss a draft paper intended for publication in a peer reviewed journal with senior scholars, journal editors and fellow PhD candidates. The papers selected for discussion were circulated among all participants for close reading prior to the workshop.

Increasing the chances of acceptance

During a welcome dinner, the participants had the opportunity to discuss the papers as well as their broader research projects in an informal, relaxed setting. Before long, many were engaged in lively debates across research fields. The workshop was formally opened the following morning with a short speech by David Chiavacci and the introduction of the other experts, namely Verena Blechinger-Talcott, Flemming Christiansen (University of Duisburg-Essen), Brooks Jessup (Free University of Berlin, written comment), Katrin Gengenbach (Free Universiy of Berlin), Christopher Gerteis (SOAS, London), Simona Grano (University of Zurich), and

Jieun Kim (Free University of Berlin), each of whom provided comments on drafts of one or two papers during the workshop. The papers were then discussed in separate sessions, during which the commentators pointed out the strengths and weaknesses of each draft and offered suggestions on how its chances of acceptance in the review process may be increased.

The research presented in this workshop covered a broad range of academic fields such as political science, religious studies, and linguistics, and investigated a wide variety of topics. The PhD candidates from GEAS composed papers exploring online civic engagement and the anti-domestic violence movement in China (Angela Leggett), environmentalism in Taiwanese popular religion (Jacob Tischer), and the term "comrade" as a form of address in the Chinese Communist Party (Paul J. Kohlenberg), while the candidates from the University of Zurich contributed papers on the activism of a national mother's network in Japan after the Fukushima incident (Ayaka Löschke) and the visual representation of Kazakh eagle hunting, power relations, and tourism in Mongolia (Linda Tubach). The commentators' detailed explanations and the open discussion that closed each session not only provided the authors themselves with ample hints on how they might proceed with the writing process, but also gave participants valuable information on how to improve their own academic writing skills and chances of publication.

First-hand insights

In the final session, the participants learned even more about what to keep in mind when trying to publish successfully. Flemming Christiansen, a

member of the editorial board of *China Information*, and Christopher Gerteis, a co-editor of *Japan Focus*, offered comprehensive first-hand insights into the selection and peer-review process used by scientific journals. Both urged participants to carefully study the journals stylesheets before submitting a paper, since not meeting the formal criteria or poor readability may cause papers to drop out of the selection process without their content even being considered. They also pointed out that carefully aiming a paper at an appropriate journal and strictly adhering to the concept of "one idea, one paper" could significantly increase the chances of being published.

A glance "behind the scenes"

Despite—or because—of there being significant varieties in research interests and methods as well as in regional specialization, all participants profited greatly from this workshop. It provided young researchers with the opportunity to cast a glance "behind the scenes" of academic journals and to learn about how papers are evaluated in the selection and review process. Plans are already underway for the next joint workshop, where fellows from GEAS and the University of Zurich will meet in Berlin to discuss new topics and further strengthen their academic network.

Postdoctoral Researcher

With this Spring semester, Dr. Ross Porter (anthropology) took up his research at the URPP Asia and Europe. He is working on the project "The Conceptual Makeup of the Yemeni Revolution: Towards an Anthropology of Worlds-In-Common."

Love Will Find A Way

The two-day workshop "The Means of Love in the Arab World: Pragmatics Beyond Norms and Trangressions" (December 11–12, 2015) came as the last in a small series of meetings that center on love, marriage and affection in the context of the Middle East and North Africa. Intimate relations and love have been scantly studied in anthropologies of the region but attention to these topics is increasing.

An Van Raemdonck

Workshops were set up in Lausanne (2012), Alexandria (2013), New York (2014) and finally Rabat (2015) to discuss and develop new research. Earlier meetings focussed more on discursive frames concerning the problems of love, family authority, religious norms, morality, and the materiality of affect. The aim of the workshops was to build upon anthropologists' ongoing move away from the discursive, normative, and ideal and toward a more holistic approach that considers ordinary, everyday ethics and pragmatics. This approach blurs the boundaries between discourse, practice, and hierarchical conceptions of people's actions as important and unimportant. It attempts to consider power structures, ethical discourse and materiality all together. Organized by Aymon Kreil (University of Zurich), Maria Frederika Malmström (Nordic Africa Institute / New York University), Zakaria Rhani (Université Mohammed V), and Samuli Schielke (Zentrum Moderner Orient), the Rabat workshop aimed to highlight the means by which love is communicated, practiced and embodied through language, poetry, music or objects, material exchanges and gifts. It succeeded in bringing scholars together who shed light on the pragmatics and the interactional means of "love in action."

As one of the locations, Morocco had a large share in the discussions. Annerienke Fioole's (University of Amsterdam) research explores "the experiences of Moroccan couples involved in cross-sex relationships deemed inappropriate." She focuses on the role of communication and available resources in enabling cross-sex couples to establish a relationship as licit or in making them keep it unknown or illicit. Such questions are not only a matter of the couple alone, but also of their communication with family, friends and neighbors. How people handle "publicity, discretion and secrecy" in combination with available resources is therefore central in shaping marriages or affairs. The importance and omnipresence of secrecy and discretion as acts of love were also emphasized by Mathew Carey (University of Copenhagen). His research in northern Morocco demonstrated the use of concealing—even including mundane activities—as signs and acts of love. Markedly, material and visible exchanges that show or enable love were strongly absent in his fieldwork sites, since "romantic love is either private and self-referential or hidden and hard to identify."

Spirits and humans

The work of Zakaria Rhani (Université Mohammed V), Nico Staiti (University of Bologna) and Jamal Bammi (Rabita Mohammedia des Oulémas / CJB) shared an interest in the material and spiritual mediation of love. A concern with the "deconstruction of the dichotomy between the material and the discursive" is central in their work. Rhani and Staiti presented ethnographic work on spirit *(djinn)* possession, relations between spirits and humans, and how love figures prominently in these relations. At

Rhani's fieldwork sites, which were places of sacred therapies and sanctuaries, "all kinds of love stories and love concerns" are experienced, with the typical characteristics of desire, jealousy, passion, pleasure, feelings of powerlessness and even the construct of marriage. Among these experiences are that a *djinn* inhabits, temporarily possesses, or loves the human body; that it is responsible for tying two people together or, on the contrary, blocking them from each other. The *djinn* is called on to change his/her feelings to liberate the involved person. A fascinating case study of inter-human *djinn* relations was given by Staiti whose ethnographic work centers on groups of female musicians *(m'almat)*—major protagonists at female parties, marriages and rites of passage—in the city of Meknes. These groups in question don't consist exclusively of women but are joined by "effeminate men" who understand themselves as "sons of Malika," the spirit that possesses them. Staiti's work offered an in-depth look into the workings of one specific troupe in Meknes, its major personalities today, and its social position between marginalization and acceptance. Their *djinn* possession enables female and male members to live their homosexuality. Jamal Bammi discussed the mediation of love through the use of natural plants and herbs. Certain herbal compositions are used by women to draw men to them and make them commit. Other mixtures are used as aphrodisiacs or are specifically used by men. It is important, argues Bammi, to study these gendered uses of plants, to understand which plants are used for which purposes and what it means when some are exchanged as gifts, since their mediation plays a large role in those people's conceptions of attracting, keeping, or maintaining love.

Such worries and concerns were also central in Sihem Benchekroun's

discussion, but in a radically different social setting. As a psychotherapist in Casablanca, Benchekroun shared her observations on young men and women's searches for love, as well as on couples' relational troubles.

Obtaining social respectability
The development of intimacy and the material transactions that are involved were the common focus in the last part of discussions. Both Mériam Cheikh (Université Libre de Bruxelles) and Sandra Nasser El-Dine (University of Helsinki) argued for the importance of considering different forms of exchanges of money and gifts as expressions of actively shaping love against a background of desire for social respectability. Cheikh looked at a group of young Moroccan women's trajectories of meeting with men, having sexual relations and doing sex work (the whole being defined as "going out"). Focusing on the fluidity of expression of intimate relationships— potentially moving from commercial exchanges to conjugal relations— Cheikh shows how these women developed their knowledge and experience on intimacy and relations in the context of obtaining social respectability and status. Such transactions and exchanges or the "expenses of love" were finally looked at from masculine perspectives by Corrine Fortier (LAS / CNRS) and Luca Nevola (University of Milano-Bicocca). Fortier discussed male courtesy in extramarital relations among the Moorish people of Mauritania, while Nevola examined romantic discourses among countrymen in Yemeni highlands. In both cases, poetry plays a crucial role as a mediator of male discourses and expressions of love and passion.

In sum, the workshop succeeded in shedding light on the interactional and transactional nature of love in the region, presenting this topic as a fascinating and challenging field for more research.

Gods and Demons

Organized by Elisa Ganser (URPP Asia and Europe) in collaboration with Elena Mucciarelli (University of Tübingen), the University of Zurich's Ethnographic Museum presented two performances of Kutiyattam by the ensemble Nepathya on July 26, 2016. Kutiyattam, literally "playing together," is a regional form of Sanskrit theater stemming from Kerala, South India.

Elisa Ganser

With roots reaching back into the medieval period, Kutiyattam was declared immaterial world heritage by UNESCO in 2001. The ensemble Nepathya, based in the village of Moozhikulam in Kerala, acts both as a company and as a school for training actors and musicians. It was founded by Margi Madhu Chakyar, the company's director and one of today's major exponents of Kutiyattam theater. A complete representation of a single act from one of the classical Sanskrit plays can take up to one month. The dramatic texts are transmitted within the families of actors, replete with elaborate acting protocols and stage directions. Nepathya not only trains young artists in the sophisticated techniques of Kutiyattam *playing together,* but also contributes to transmitting and preserving a classical repertoire. That is, were it not for Kutiyattam artists' bringing the plays to life on stage, they would end up in manuscript libraries as dead letter.

Performances of Kutiyattam are traditionally held in Kerala temples in front of an assembly of humans and gods. Due to time constraints and the different setting, the Ethnographic Museum has been home to the staging of two extracts adapted from larger plays, and separated by a one-hour session of questions and answers between the public and the artists. This

dialogue revolved especially around the first piece, enacted by Dr. Indu G and called *Putanamoksham* ("The Liberation of the Demoness Putana"). The dialogue also served as preparation for the second piece *Toranayuddham* ("The Battle at the Portals"), performed by Margi Madhu Chakyar and the musicians of Nepathya: Kalamandalam Manikandam and Nepathya Jinesh on the Mizhavu drums, Kalanilayan Rajan on the Edakkya drum.

Emotions between love and anger
The first piece, *Putanamoksham,* narrates how the dreadful demoness Putana, with copper-like hair, bulging eyes and big canine teeth, failed to poison the godly baby Krishna, and was killed in his stead, thus reaching spiritual liberation at the hands of the god. As Putana reaches Krishna's house and holds him in her hands, she experiences a moment of deep conflict and undergoes contrasting emotions, all enacted by Indu G through subtly changing expressions to correspond with different moods: motherly love towards the prodigious child, grief for the thought of killing him, anger towards his uncle Kamsa who ordered the killing.

The second piece stems from the third act of Bhasa's classical Sanskrit play *Abhishekanatakam.* On the verge of death, a demon (Ravana) remembers his deeds at the doors of the citadel: how he lifted mount Kailasa and played with it; how at that time, on that very mountain, Shiva and Parvati were in a dispute over the god's holding another woman, Ganga, in his hair; how the two of them were reconciled as Parvati fell into Shiva's arms, letting loose of her jealousy, fearful of the earthquake caused by the uplifted Kailasa. The multiplication of points of

view, typical of this theater, was played out by Margi Madhu Chakyar through a skillful exchange of roles, alternating feminine and masculine characters.

Kutiyattam theater leaves plenty of space to the play of visual expressions, accentuated through a sophisticated make-up-made mask (Ravana's face-paint required more than three hours of work by the artist Kalamandalam Ravikumar). It also involves a visual vocabulary of codified hand-gestures, as demonstrated by Rebecca Weckenmann in the introduction to both plays. As an assistant, Madhu and Indu's son Sreehari also contrib-

uted to the success of the performance, coordinating the subtitles with the gestures of this pantomimic theater, another effort at translating this art for the appreciative audience gathered in the Museum's auditorium.

Rules and improvisation

As Indu G explained, despite the repertoire's fixity and the numerous rules and conventions of Kutiyattam techniques, Kutiyattam is nonetheless an art of improvisation that requires constant dialogue during the play between actors and musicians. In the conventional setting of the Kutiyattam

stage, with the orchestra at the back and the actors in the front, a good musician will accompany the actor's movements, but an excellent one will also tune with the actor's imagination. Made lively by the engaging presence of the artists of Nepathya, this event was conceived as a space for dialogue, which is one of the aims of the Ethnographic Museum: rather than being just a space for the exhibition of cultural diversity, the Museum is a space for encounter and cultural translation, as its director Mareile Flitsch pointed out in her welcoming address at the outset of the event.

Ravana lifting mount Kailasa in *Toranayuddham*, played by Margi Madhu Chakyar.

Notes from Fieldwork

In the Fall semester of 2015, four doctoral students left their desks at the URPP Asia and Europe to do fieldwork abroad. This was an opportunity to ask them to write a personal account of their experiences in the field. What follows are their reports dealing with India (Nina Rageth), Japan (Nathalie Marseglia), Tunesia (Rasmus Brandt), and Taiwan (Urs Weber).

Multi-Sited Fieldwork

The author describes her journey through South India driven by an interest in how religious organizations and Siddha medicine interact with each other.

Nina Rageth

Traveling to Chennai, Madurai, Coimbatore, Salem, Erode, Pothencode; staying at Hotel Ajantha, Tamil Nadu Tourist Home, Lakshmi Bhavan, Murugeshan Homestay, Periyar Bungalow; eating in Annapurna, Durbar Mess, Bazar In, West Salai, Sri Sabari; improving my packing skills, acquiring expert knowledge on reading bus timetables and sharpening my flair for tracking down Xerox shops, quiet reading enclaves and fancy ice-cream parlors; establishing a network of interlocutors, thinking about reciprocity between the observer and the ob-

served, venerating the life of the traveling researcher and simultaneously experiencing the depth of the investigator's loneliness. I am *en route* in South India for four months—generating material for my PhD by undertaking a multi-sited field study.

Multi-sited ethnography

Multi-sited ethnography refers to a mode of ethnographic research which emerged in the 1980s and which has as its seminal text George Marcus' piece "Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography,"[1] published 1995. What characterizes this mode of research is

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1 Marcus, George, "Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography", *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24, 95–117.

that it "defines for itself an object of study that cannot be accounted for ethnographically by remaining focused on a single site of intensive investigation." (96) Marcus speaks of a "mobile ethnography" that "takes unexpected trajectories in tracing a cultural formation across and within multiple sites of activity." (96) Accordingly, multi-site fieldwork becomes an exercise in mapping the terrain of the object of study. And the fieldwork experience is heavily colored by the practices of following and tracing the research object through different settings; an object "that turns out to be contingent and malleable as one traces it." (106) It is noteworthy that settings or sites are not only viewed as referring to bounded, geographical locations even though the spatial de-centeredness is a defining characteristic of the research mode. The multi-sitedness of this approach also lies in its accounting for different

A Siddha medical consultation in a clinic in Erode, Tamil Nadu, December 2015.

practices, actors and narratives. The researcher who applies a multi-sited approach follows the production of the object of her study in "several different locales," (99) and constructs her research object based on different sources, material and perspectives.

The object of my study

Which route am I traveling? I follow the making of traditional Tamil medicine, which is Siddha medicine in the context of religious organizations in the two states Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Religious organizations constitute a single-site so to speak, a bounded framework for my study. Other locales like government institutions, private clinics, medical tourism or public discourses on health are left aside, even though they are relevant for the constitution of the wider medical field in which the research object is situated. Within this single frame I am tracing the production, distribution and popularization of traditional Tamil medicine through multiple sites: Firstly, I am looking at three religious organizations with different histories, organizational structures, resources at hand and agendas. And secondly, I am examining the intersection of the religious organizations and Siddha medicine in different locales: in the manufacturing units where herbs are boiled into thick herbal juices, minerals ground into fine powders and poisonous metals turned into highly-reactive medicine, at the moment of distribution of the medicine in the doctor-patient encounter in consultation rooms, mobile clinics and medical camps, and finally in discursive practices which attribute value and meaning to the medical knowledge and practice as well as the medicinal substances.

Travelling this route confronts me with multifarious situations and involves a broad range of activities, paces, challenges, frustrations and rewards. Multi-site fieldwork is an endeavor that, in my experience, best translates as *viel-seitige Feldforschung*.

Notes from the Kiln

Traditional Japanese ceramics enjoy an outstanding reputation for their refined aesthetics. The production process requires a profound knowledge, but also the so-called "workmanship of risk" to obtain the well-known decorative patterns.

Nathalie Marseglia

It's 8 a.m. on Thursday November 19th. I'm sitting in a cozy café at Imbe Station, slowly sipping my morning coffee out of a *Bizen-yaki* style cup. Two days of heavy rain have passed since my last visit to Imbe, a small pottery village located in a sheltered river valley in the Bizen area of the Okayama prefecture. Among both the Japanese and Western *aficionados* of Japanese ceramics, the region is well known for its natural ash-glazed stoneware called *Bizen-yaki*.

Although the roots of Bizen pottery production date back to around the 4th century CE, the Momoyama period (1573–1603) is commonly considered the heyday of Bizen pottery making. This was when the characteristic appearance of *yakishime* ceramics (high fired unglazed stoneware) was prized and patronized by leading tea masters. But during the Meiji period (1868–1912), the increasing export market for porcelain wares, along with new modes of production initiated by the Industrial Revolution, made it hard for Bizen potters to make a living with pottery alone, prompting them to take up production of industrial ceramics like sewer pipes and refractory bricks. It was not until the 1930s that the lost ancient techniques and styles of Bizen pottery were revived by Kaneshige Tōyō (1896–1967). In 1956, honored for his efforts, he became the first *Living National Treasure* (officially: *Holder of an Important Intangible Cultural Property)* for *Bizen-yaki*. Since then Japanese society has undergone great changes, and Japanese ceramics have became a field of blurred lines. So the question of *why*, *what* and *how* to preserve, seems much more challenging today than in the days when the *Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties* (1950) was passed. A closer look at the kiln of the present-day holder of *Bizen-yaki*, Isezaki Jun (born 1936), might provide some insight into the craft practices that are meant to be

Night shift, 6th day of firing, Isezaki studio, Imbe, November 10, 2015.

safeguarded by the *Living National Treasures* program.

It is almost 9 o'clock and I am awaiting Akane, Isezaki Kōichirō's wife, to come in any second and pick me up. Today is *kama-dashi*—the kiln opening—at the Isezaki studio. After over two weeks of firing and cooling down, this is the moment when months of skilled labor is finally un-veiled. This photo was taken right after Isezaki Kōichirō (the son of Isezaki Jun and himself a renowned ceramic artist) removed the bricks from the plastered front hole of the kiln with the assistance of the *sensei's* three *deshi* (apprentices). The heat inside is overwhelming and reminds me of a Finnish sauna (the back of the kiln still measures 70° C). Under normal circumstances, they would not open the kiln while the temperature was still so high, but a Japanese film crew was also present, so the day of the opening had to be fixed in advance.

"Workmanship of risk"

The picture shows the first row of pieces or, to be more precise, the pieces that were placed at the very end of the loading. It is a common yet overly romanticized view held by many Western admirers of *Bizen-yaki* (or of *yakishime* ceramic ware in general) that the various decorative patterns, such as the sprinkled sesame seed-like pattern *(goma)* visible on the shoulder parts of the pots and vases on the topmost shelf, occur purely accidentally. Although the flames and the swirling ashes may play a part, the patterns are much more the result of what David Pye (1968) has called the *workmanship of risk;*[1] the skilled craftsmen who depend on their experience and knowledge in an environment where the quality of the result is constantly at risk. Taking another look at the picture, we see that the *workmanship of risk* involves *knowing how* to position each of the roughly 400 hundred pieces in this 10 meter *anagama* (single-chamber) tunnel kiln, while carefully considering the directions and intensity of the flames during the different stages of firing.

Without a profound understanding of the relevant craft practices and techniques, it is hard to grasp the knowledge of skilled craftsmen. What happens, though, when the valuation of craft knowledge becomes institutionalized, as is the case with the *Living National Treasures* program? Three months of fieldwork in Japan have shown that this question has to be seen in light of cultural heritage politics, art institutions, social networks as well as the craftsmen at work.

Kama-dashi, kiln of *Living National Treasure* Isezaki Jun, Imbe, November 19, 2015.

1 Pye, David. *The Nature and Art of Workmanship.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968.

Funerary Practices in Taiwan

In Taiwan, traditional funeral practices are confronted with newer ones that are considered more modern and receive more support from state policies. A foreign researcher interested in these developments should not be puzzled to encounter raised eyebrows.

Urs Weber

It was already late in the evening, but the mourning rituals that took place in a hall inside a public funeral parlor in New Taipei City seemed not yet over. The three Daoist priests chanted as intensively as the hours before, and the musicians played their instruments without any sign of tiredness.

Accompanied by members of the bereaved family, the priests later went outside in front of the hall in order to burn several bundles of paper money. As it turned out, however, the priests' decision was not in accordance with the funeral parlor's effective regulations that prohibited the burning of paper money outside an oven specifically for this purpose. But the priests showed dissatisfaction with the fact that the designated oven has been used for the burning of different kinds of paper money, the one for the deceased, as well as the one for deities, and decided to adhere to their own ritual standards and to light a small fire on a different spot outside on the street.

It was not the first instance of tension between different institutions involved in mourning and funeral practices. For a few decades now, the Taiwanese state has been creating incentives for the population to choose cremation over ground burial, while discouraging traditional burial practices.

A competitive market

Such tension between state policies and traditional religious practices reveal a fact that turned into a personal experience in the fieldwork: In contemporary Taiwan, issues pertaining to mourning and funerary practices are differentiated into distinct institutions and actors—and this differentiation reached such a degree that one might speak about different "worlds." Not only does the state operate in its own dynamics, and, by issuing various policies in order to solve social problems, creates tension with traditional practices as a by-product. Moreover, commercial funeral enterprises, which specialize in offering different kinds of funeral services and products, constitute a competitive market where, again, the state has intervened from time to time in order to fight corruption and non-transparent pricing.

Doing fieldwork about funerals in Taiwan therefore meant entering not one unified culture, but a rather heterogenous network of differentiated worlds, only loosely connected by its actors' mutual focus on mourning and funerary practice. Entering these distinct worlds turned out to be a challenge, but as a process of engaging in communication with the different actors and organizations in question, it revealed unexpected aspects about the research topic.

Openness and discretion

For example, visiting places like a public cemetery, on the one hand, or a private funeral company, on the other, implied involvement in dissimilar forms of interaction. Not only did the content of the interviews differ, but also the interviewees' expectations about meeting with a researcher from Europe. Whereas the personnel at public cemeteries were open about different modes of burial, even mentioning that—just in case I was interested—their newest offer in natural burials was available to people from other countries, funeral directors at commercial enterprises seemed very busy and rather surprised about my research interest as a foreigner.

The fieldwork involved diverse worlds: the state and its funeral policies; enterprises in the competitive market; and religious rituals. Aside from the content of interviews and observed rituals, the considerable difficulty of getting in touch with these worlds provided additional insight into the research field from a different, unforeseen angle.

A cemetery in Taipei, Taiwan.

On Coffees, Curfews, and Chocolate

We are invited to join the author for a day of research during his stay in Tunis.

Rasmus Brandt

It is 5:58 in the morning. The morning call to prayer must have woken me up. I check my phone and realize that I have still two hours before I have to leave. In the early morning, it is still cold and I tumble towards the bathroom to have a warm shower. I am excited. I am surprised that I slept so well, despite the constant excitement that I felt during the days before these important interviews. Yesterday evening I was still translating possible questions into Arabic; later I realized that this only made "things" more complicated. There is so much written on conducting interviews, shelves full of theories and methods. It seems colleagues and friends can talk about it forever: you get so much advice and tips, but they may contradict each other. I turn off my gas oven, since I will not be at home all day. Why waste it? The city is waking up, while raindrops start to fall on the dusty streets. That is winter. Soon there will be snow in the mountains. I put on my jacket. "You will be freezing all day. Why do you always forget about the winter when you go to North Africa?," I ask myself. I check my bag, passport, recording device, chocolate, and keys. I am ready to leave. I rush through the light rain. It is still early, 7:42. Instead of jumping into a taxi, I go for a coffee. I have never done interviews before. What will it be like? How will they treat me? Am I wasting their time? What if they are not interested in my work, perceiving me as an intruder? I like this café, it has probably the best coffee in Tunis. Strong in taste, but it doesn't leave any bitterness behind, with a light taste of chocolate.

It is 8:00. I get into a taxi, too easy in my opinion. Usually I have to wait lon-

ger, but not this time. My appointment is at 9:00. I wonder how the traffic will be. Within a few minutes, we reach the freeway, and I have to dig deep into my bag to find my questionnaire. I reread it several times, trying not to raise my voice. My eyes are heavy. I close them and fall asleep for about ten minutes, waking up when we pass the airport and get onto Route X, that big freeway that divides the city into two parts. The government named it after Muhammad Bouazzizi, the young man who set himself on fire in December 2010 and ignited the Tunisian Revolution and all the events that unfolded afterwards in North Africa, the Levant and the Arabian Peninsula. However, people still refer to it as route X. I arrive at the National assembly in Bardo at 8:30. The traffic is not so bad at this time of the day, so tomorrow I will be able to sleep a little longer. I go for another coffee. Waiting. Waiting is an important skill, especially in busy places like the assembly. You have to admit to yourself that you are possibly the least important person in the life of a deputy. It is already 9:30 when I receive the call to enter into the assembly. There are two se-

curity checks waiting for me. Security is tense at the moment. Several curfews were imposed in the last three months. Today it will start at 8:00 p.m., which is early. Streets are empty: There is not a single sound to hear, beside the sirens of the police cars patrolling on the streets.

There is a scanner next to the door. I put my bag on the conveyor belt. They ask for my passport. I passed through the detector gate, no one seems to care that it made a lot of noise. Suddenly the security service calls me back. "They probably found my power pack," I thought. But no, they ask me to open my bag. I wondered what could be the problem and glanced at the monitor. Well, it looked kind of dangerous. I had to smile. I opened the rear part of my bag and they smiled as well. Five bars of chocolate. Chocolate helps. It was a very busy day yesterday. The political situation in Tunisia just turned bad. Despite all democratic and political process, the government forgot to create jobs. Protests broke out throughout the country. Of course, the time for my interview would be short. But when she saw the chocolate, she just said, "You can come back tomorrow for another interview."

Tunis, 19:13 (about 45 minutes before curfew hours).

News

In August 2015, **Norman Backhaus** (human geography/URPP Asia and Europe) was a visiting fellow at the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur.

Ulrich Brandenburg (Islamic and Middle Eastern studies/URPP Asia and Europe) was awarded an extension of his Forschungs-kredit from the University of Zurich for the completion of his doctoral thesis "Japan and Islam 1890–1914: Between Global Communication and Pan-Asianist Movement" (September 2015 to January 2016). Additionally, he took up a position as a teaching and research assistant at the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies, University of Zurich, starting in February 2016.

Bettina Dennerlein (Islamic and Middle Eastern studies/URPP Asia and Europe) and **Aymon Kreil** (URPP Asia and Europe/Anthropology) received three years' funding from the Swiss National Science Foundation for their reseach project "Locating Trust in Cairo: Security, State, and Neighbourhood Politics," starting in December 2015.

Annuska Derks (social and cultural anthropology/URPP Asia and Europe) received three years' funding from the Swiss National Science Foundation for her reseach project "Spice Chains: Vietnamese Star Anise, Global Markets and the Making of an Indigenous Commodity," starting in April 2016. Furthermore, she was awarded funding from the Swiss Bilateral Research Programme of the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) to carry out the international summer school "Southeast Asia on the Move" in Cambodia (July 2016).

Starting with January 2016, **Amir Hamid** (Islamic and Middle Eastern studies/URPP Asia and Europe) took up a position as a project coordinator of the multilateral research partnership "The Maghreb in Transition: Media, Knowledge, and Power" at the LMU Munich. The research partnership consists of the LMU, three universities in Morocco, and four universities in Tunesia and is funded by the DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst) for two years.

Justyna Jaguścik (Chinese studies/URPP Asia and Europe) was granted the annual award 2015 of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences for her doctoral thesis "Literary Body Discourses: Corporeality, Gender and Class Difference in Contemporary Chinese Women's Poetry and Fiction."

In September 2015, **Aliya Khawari** (political science/URPP Asia and Europe) completed her doctoral thesis "The Political Economy of Microfinance."

Ayaka Löschke (URPP Asia and Europe/ Japanese studies) was awarded a Doc. Mobility grant from the Swiss National Science Foundation for the completion of her doctoral thesis "Advocacy of the Japanese Civil Society after Fukushima: The 'National Network of Parents to Protect Children from Radiation' as a Case Study" (January 2016 to August 2016).

In September 2015, **Linda Maduz** (political science/URPP Asia and Europe) completed her doctoral thesis "Protest during Regime Change: Comparing Three Democratizing Countries in (South-) East Asia, 1985–2005." Additionally, she took up a position as a researcher at the Center for Security Studies, ETH Zurich, starting in February 2016.

Angelika Malinar (Indian studies/URPP Asia and Europe) was awarded a Research Fellowship at the Max-Weber-Center for Advanced Cultural and Social Studies, University of Erfurt, in the fall term 2016.

From February to April 2016, **Katharina Michaelowa** (political economy and development/URPP Asia and Europe) was invited as a JNIAS fellow to the Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Advanced Study, Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Julia Obinger (Japanese studies/URPP Asia and Europe) was awarded an Early Postdoc. Mobility fellowship from the Swiss National Science Foundation for a eighteen-month stay at the SOAS, University of London, and at the University of Tokyo (September 2015 to March 2017) to conduct research on "Political and Ethical Consumption in Japan."

Together with a team of researchers from Jawaharlal Nehru University and the University of Zurich, **Johannes Quack** (social and cultural anthropology/URPP Asia and Europe) received a seed money grant of the Indo-Swiss Joint Research Programme in the Social Sciences, jointly financed by the Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR) and the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) to conduct joint research on the "Dynamics of Well-Being." Furthermore he was awarded funding from the Swiss Bilateral Research Programme of the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) to carry out the research project "Researching Secular and Religious Identities in Tandem." The major aim of the project is to intensify academic exchange between the Department of Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies, University of Zurich, and the Department of Anthropology, Jahangirnagar University (Savar, Bangladesh).

Ulrich Rudolph was accepted as a member of the Milan "Accademia Ambrosiana," Classe di Studi sul Vicino Oriente, in November 2015. Furthermore he was invited for a one-month stay as a scholar in residence to the University of California, Berkeley (academic year 2017–2018).

Fabian Schäfer (Japanese Studies/URPP Asia and Europe) submitted his habilitation "Medium as Mediation: Media and Media Theory in Japan, 1920–2012" to the University of Zurich and successfully completed his habilitation review in December 2015.

Melek Saral (political science/URPP Asia and Europe) was awarded a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship for a two-year stay at the Faculty of Law, SOAS, University of London.

Starting in April 2016, **Serena Tolino** (history/URPP Asia and Europe) accepted a position as a junior professor of Islamic studies at the University of Hamburg.

Marco Vitale (ancient history/URPP Asia and Europe) submitted his habilitation "Das Imperium in Wort und Bild: Römische Darstellungsformen beherrschter Gebiete in Inschriftenmonumenten, Münzprägungen und Literatur" to the University of Zurich and successfully completed his habilitation review in March 2016.

Urs Weber (URPP Asia and Europe/religious studies) was awarded a Doc.CH grant from the Swiss National Science Foundation for his doctoral project "Tradition, Modernity, and Ritual Change: Funerary Practices in Taiwan" (March 2015 to July 2017). From October to December 2015 , he was a visiting student at the Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, Taipei (Taiwan).

Tobias Weiss (URPP Asia and Europe/ Japanese studies) was invited by the Deutsches Institut für Japanstudien (DIJ) in Tokyo for a research stay from September to December 2015. Additionally, he was awarded a Forschungskredit from the University of Zurich for the completion of his doctoral thesis "'Fukushima' in Japan: Media System, Networks and Framing" (January 2016 to December 2016).

In November 2015, **Miriam Wenner** (geography/URPP Asia and Europe) completed her doctoral thesis "Monopolising a Statehood Movement: Gorkhaland between Authoritarian Parties and 'Aware Citizens'." Furthermore she took up a position as a senior teaching and research assistant at the Department of Geography, University of Zurich, starting in October 2015.

Sandro Zanetti (comparative literature/ URPP Asia and Europe) received three years' funding from the Swiss National Science Foundation for his reseach project "Dada Generation after 1945: Avantgardism and Modernity in Postwar Literature," starting in November 2015.

Events 2016

February 19–20, 2016, Conference

Transgression and Encounters with the Terrible in Buddhist and Śaiva Tantras
1st Zurich International Conference on Indian Literature and Philosophy (ZICILP)
Location: Room RAA E-29, Rämistrasse 59, 8001 Zurich
Organizers: Prof. Dr. Angelika Malinar, Dr. Olga Serbaeva
A cooperation between the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies – Indian Studies and the URPP Asia and Europe

February 19–20, 2016, Conference

Putting the House of Wisdom in Order: The Fourth Islamic Century and the Impulse to Classify, Arrange and Inventory
Location: Room RAA E-08, Rämistrasse 59, 8001 Zurich
Convenors: Prof. Dr. Ulrich Rudolph, Dr. Letizia Osti (Università degli Studi di Milano), Dr. James Weaver
A cooperation between the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies – Islamic Studies, the URPP Asia and Europe, and the Università degli Studi di Milano

March 2, 2016, 14:00–15:45, Guest Lecture

The State of the Individual: Probing the Moral World of India's National Biometric Identification Project
Dr. Vijayanka Nair, New York University
Location: Room AND 3.06, Andreasstrasse 15, 8050 Zürich
A cooperation between the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology and the URPP Asia and Europe

March 9, 2016, 19:00, Movie Screening

Tell the Prime Minister
Documentary (Japan 2015) by Eiji Oguma
Location: Room RAA G-01, Rämistrasse 59, 8001 Zurich
A cooperation between the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies – Japanese Studies and the URPP Asia and Europe

March 17, 2016, 16:00–18:00, Guest Lecture

The Historical Models for Violent Solutions in Maoist China and After
Prof. Dr. Barend Ter Haar, Shaw Professor of Chinese, University of Oxford
Location: Room RAA G-15, Rämistrasse 59, 8001 Zurich
A cooperation between the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies – Chinese Studies and the URPP Asia and Europe

March 18–19, 2016, International Workshop

Feminism and Theory in the Arab World
Location: Room RAA G-01, Rämistrasse 59, 8001 Zurich
Organizers: Prof. Dr. Bettina Dennerlein, Dr. Yasmine Berriane
A cooperation between the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies – Chair of Gender Studies and Islamic Studies, the URPP Asia and Europe, and the Swiss Society for Gender Studies (SGGF/SSEG)

March 18, 2016, 17:15–19:00, Panel Discussion

Women's and Gender Studies in Arab and Swiss Universities
Location: Room RAA G-01, Rämistrasse 59, 8001 Zurich
With Prof. Dr. Hoda Elsadda (Cairo University), Prof. Dr. Amel Grami (Manouba University, Tunis), Prof. Dr. Marylène Lieber (University of Geneva), Prof. Dr. Fatema Sadiqi (University of Fez), Prof. em. Dr. Regina Wecker (University of Basel).
Chair: Prof. Dr. Bettina Dennerlein
A cooperation between the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies – Chair of Gender Studies and Islamic Studies, the URPP Asia and Europe, and the Swiss Society for Gender Studies (SGGF/SSEG)

March 18–19, 2016, International Conference

Katagami in the West
Locations: Room KOL F-118, Rämistrasse 71, 8006 Zurich (Friday) and Room KO2 F-152, Karl Schmid-Strasse 4, 8006 Zurich (Saturday)
Convenor: Prof. Dr. Hans B. Thomsen
A cooperation between the Department of Art History, Section for East Asian Art History, and the URPP Asia and Europe

March 23, 2016, 16:15–18:00, Guest Lecture

Death, Merit and Nation: Eye Donation Practices among Theravada Buddhists in Contemporary Sri Lanka
Prof. Dr. Robert Simpson, Durham University
Location: Room AND 3.46, Andreasstrasse 15, 8050 Zürich
A cooperation between the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, the URPP Asia and Europe, and the Department of Geography

April 21, 2016, 16:15–17:45, Guest Lecture

Von guten und von schlechten Träumen: Zum Traummotiv in der buddhistischen Literatur des japanischen Mittelalters
Prof. Dr. Jörg Quenzer, University of Hamburg
Location: Room RAA G-15, Rämistrasse 59, 8001 Zurich
A cooperation between the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies – Japanese Studies and the URPP Asia and Europe

May 10–11, 2016, Workshop

Methodological and Ethical Challenges in Qualitative Research Projects
Locations: Room RAA E-29, Rämistrasse 59, 8001 Zurich (Tuesday) and Main Building, Room KOL G-217, Rämistrasse 71, 8001 Zurich (Wednesday)
Convenors: Prof. Dr. Dorothea Lüddeckens, Nina Rageth
A cooperation between the Institute of Religious Studies and the URPP Asia and Europe

May 20–21, 2016, Conference

Deceased and Bereaved! Continuity and Innovation in Death Rituals
Location: Room RAA G-01, Rämistrasse 59, 8001 Zurich
Convenors: Prof. Dr. Dorothea Lüddeckens, Philipp Hetmanczyk, Lilo Ruther
A cooperation between the Institute of Religious Studies and the URPP Asia and Europe

September 2016, 15–17, Conference

Die Macht der Symbole: Die Alhambra in einem globalen Kontext
Location: University of Zurich
Convenors: Prof. Dr. Francine Giese, Dr. Ariane Varela Braga
A cooperation between the Department of Art History and the URPP Asia and Europe

October 2016, 6–8, Annual Conference of the URPP Asia and Europe

Human : Non-Human—Bodies, Things, and Matter across Asia and Europe
Location: University of Zurich
Organizers: Prof. Dr. Bettina Dennerlein, Prof. Dr. Angelika Malinar, Prof. Dr. Andrea Riemenschnitter

November 24–26, 2016, International Workshop

——山是山—— … a Mountain is a Mountain is …: Vision and Visuality in Buddhism and Beyond
Location: University of Zurich
Organizers: Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Behr, Polina Lukicheva, Dr. Rafael Suter
A cooperation between the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies – Chinese Studies and the URPP Asia and Europe