



**University of
Zurich** ^{UZH}

**University Priority Research Program (URPP) Asia and Europe
Department for the Study of Religions
Swiss Society for the Study of Religions**



Concepts of Religion between Asia and Europe

International Symposium, URPP Asia and Europe, University of Zurich
Annual Conference of the Swiss Society for the Study of Religions

Program

November 1–3, 2012

Contents

Welcoming Address	3
Program	5
Conference Outline	8

Abstracts

Part 1: Before Religion	13
Part 2: Negotiating Religion	17
Part 3: Religion defined and delimited	20
Part 4: Religion contested and reclaimed	23

2

URPP Asia and Europe	27
General Information	28

Welcoming Address

Dear conference participants, speakers, discussants and guests!

Welcome in Zurich, and thank you for coming here to enrich our symposium on *Concepts of Religion between Asia and Europe*. As the symposium program shows, the question of religion reaches not only beyond spatial borders, but also transcends and negotiates temporal boundaries. We are living in a time of transition, as our globalized modernity can no longer arrogantly position its scientific rationalism above religious beliefs. Contrary to the expectations and predictions from all political camps, modern states face the challenge of an unprecedented and thoroughly modern empowerment of politically disenfranchised communities based on their faith. The time is thus ripe for a reconsideration of culturally specific concepts of religion and the consequences of their encounters with differing conceptualizations.

The activities of the University of Zurich's *Asia and Europe* research cluster are divided into three thematic fields, each organizing their own conferences and workshops. On particular occasions, however, we invite all three fields to gather around a common, overarching topic. After a 2009 symposium entitled *Varieties of Modernities?*, and another on *Transcultural Bodies & Transboundary Biographies* held in 2010 in Delhi, India, the present symposium is the third event of its kind. It is also a sequel to a conference on the concept of philosophy that was organized by our 'Concepts

3

and Taxonomies' research group in spring 2010, as well as to a series of lectures exploring *Concepts of Religion in Modernity* held in 2011.

A special welcome goes to the members of the Swiss Society for the Study of Religions, which has adopted our symposium both to hold its annual meeting and to discuss new projects in graduate and post-graduate education that should be attractive for a new generation of students and responsive to the challenges of a dynamic, increasingly international and globalized research environment. It is my wish that the *Asia and Europe* program, which in Switzerland has been a forerunner in this regard for many of our disciplines, may be experienced by you as a hospitable as well as stimulating place for academic discussion.

Andrea Riemenschmitter
Professor of Modern Chinese Studies
Academic Director of the URPP Asia and Europe

Program

Thursday, November 1
Museum Rietberg, Park-Villa Rieter

14:00 Opening (Andrea Riemenschneider, Institute of East Asian Studies,
Academic Director URPP Asia and Europe, UZH)

Part 1: Before Religion

5

Chair: Wolfgang Behr (Classical Chinese Studies, UZH)

14:15 Christoph Uehlinger (History of Religions, UZH)

No religion before or without 'religion'? Introducing the conference, with an attempt to investigate ways of locating religion in ancient Western Asia (or the 'Ancient Near East')

15:00 Raji C. Steineck (Japanology, UZH)

Delineating the Buddha-Way: On the semantical field of the 'religious' in Dôgen

15:45 Max Deeg (Buddhist Studies, University of Cardiff, UK)

Chinese religion before and after encounter – reflections on a Chinese semantic and conceptional field *ante et post* Buddhism

16:30 Break

17:00 Angelika Malinar (Indology, UZH)

Before 'religion' in India? Delineating and defining religious pathways in classical Sanskrit texts

17:45 Karénina Kollmar-Paulenz (History of Religions and Central Asian Studies, University of Bern)

Concepts of 'religion' in Asia? The case of the Mongols

19:00 Dinner (by invitation)

Friday, November 2

Museum Rietberg, Park-Villa Rieter

Part 2: Negotiating Religion

Chair: Ulrich Rudolph (Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, UZH)

9:00 James D. Frankel (Department of Religion, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa)

Dīn in between: East-West connections of Islam

9:45 Stefan Reichmuth (Islamic Studies, University of Bochum)

*The concept of Dīn and the Islamic religious sciences in the 18th Century:
The case of Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī (d. 1791)*

10:30 Break

11:00 Vincent Goossaert (Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris)

*The vagaries of religious authority: The Heavenly Master (aka, the 'Taoist
Pope'), 1850-1950*

6

11:45 Jason A. Josephson (Department of Religion, Williams College)

Unreasonable demands: Inventing religion in Japanese diplomacy

12:30 Lunch

13:30 Generalversammlung der SGR / Assemblée générale de la SSSR

Part 3: Religion defined and delimited

Chair: Benedikt Korf (Political Geography, UZH)

14:30 Geoffrey A. Oddie (South Asian History, University of Sydney)

The construction of 'Hinduism' as 'religion'

15:15 Sudipta Kaviraj (Indian Politics and Intellectual History, Columbia University, NY)

The nature of God: Debates in nineteenth century Bengal

16:00 Break

16:30 Christian Lee Novetzke (Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington)

Religion and the end of history in modern India

17:15 Lily Kong (Department of Geography, National University of Singapore)

*Constructing 'religion' in context: The geographical and historical
contingencies of religion*

18:00 Plenary discussion (30')

19:00 Evening: individual arrangements

Saturday, November 3
University, City Campus (SOC 1-106)

Part 4: Religion contested and reclaimed

Chair: Bettina Dennerlein (Islamic and Gender Studies, UZH)

9:00 Yang Fenggang (Center for Religion and Chinese Society, Purdue University)
The definition of Religion for the social scientific study of Religion in China and beyond

9:45 Katsuhiko Kohara (Comparative Study of Monotheistic Religions, Doshisha University, Kyoto)
Requirements of 'good religion': An inquiry into the effects of the 3/11 disaster on the concept of religion in Japan

10:30 Break

11:00 Volkhard Krech (Center for Religious Studies, University of Bochum)
Where are the boundaries of religion? Considerations on the emergence of a global religious field and on processes of sacralization

7

11:45 Plenary discussion, conclusion

12:30 Lunch

Zusatzprogramm der SGR / Programmes spécial de la SSSR

**13:30 Projektpräsentationen von Doktorierenden und Postdoktorierenden /
Présentations de projets de recherches**

15:30 Doktorat – Doktoratsprogramme – Graduiertenschulen
**Paneldiskussion über neue Entwicklungen und Herausforderungen im
Bereich der akademischen Nachwuchsförderung im Fach Religions-
wissenschaft**

Doctorat – programmes de formation doctorale – École(s) doctorale(s)
**nouvelles orientations de la formation doctorale en Histoire et Sciences des
religions?**

Conference Outline

Scholars agree with common sense that 'religion' (from Latin, *religio*) is a concept of 'Western' (European, Mediterranean, Roman ...) origin; that the concept's semantics (meaning) and pragmatics (function) have a long and complicated history with numerous transformations and adaptations from antiquity to the present; and that the encounter of European colonial powers with non-European civilizations has had a lasting impact on both sides, also regarding the understanding of 'religion', since at least the early modern period.

8

On the one hand, the encounter with customs and worldviews unrelated to formerly known traditions (especially Christianities, Judaism, and Islam) led European travelers, ethnographers and scholars to extend and generalize the concept of 'religion' in an unprecedented way. As a result, 'religion' turned into a *Kollektivsingular* (R. Koselleck) during the early modern period. On the other hand, the concept travelled east with missionaries, traders, administrators and explorers, that is, often invested with considerable institutional prestige. Together with other, taxonomically related notions (belief, divinely ordained law, political legitimacy, economic success, later to be followed by such promise-laden concepts as secularism and modernity), it was gradually adopted and appropriated by non-European elites and their societies, often to become not only part of but in accordance with their own self-understanding.

One epistemic consequence of these processes has been the gradual conceptualization of 'religion' as a globally represented entity and as a distinct sphere (or 'system') of social interaction. Another consequence, the inclusion of religion (religions, religious traditions ...) as a distinct subject matter for scholarly inquiry, has led to the development of Religious Studies as an academic discipline and countless attempts to arrive at a sophisticated definition of 'religion'. Having been isolated conceptually, 'religion' could be classified as a putative universal; at the same time, it could as well become the object of radical criticism. Whereas it had formerly been opposed to 'superstition' (in the sense of false, non-efficacious and idolatrous practice and belief), the concept would since the 19th century become synonymous with 'superstition' for some of its most radical detractors.

To be sure, the concept of 'religion' has undergone critique in academic scholarship as well. Post-colonial theory has criticized its relationship to colonial history, Eurocentricism, Orientalism and Occidentalism alike. Social anthropologists have drawn attention to ambivalent conceptual and institutional genealogies and stressed the inappropriateness of essentialist claims and assumptions regarding 'religion'. Ironically, perhaps, the most radical criticism has probably been raised within the discipline of Religious Studies, where a significant number of scholars have engaged in deconstructing the concept and calling for its exclusion from the language of science. Most academic disciplines, however, continue to use the term, if only as a heuristic tool. Moreover, 'religion' has recently developed into a key concept in both media talk and scholarly discourse for addressing value systems, worldviews and the co-existence of ultimate truth claims in a globalized and culturally pluralized world.

In the context of the *Asia and Europe* research agenda that focuses on processes of exchange and adaptation, revision or rejection of concepts travelling between East and West, the aim of our conference is to look behind the screen of superficial consensus according to which 'religion' (both as a concept and as an object) is an exclusively European invention. This is neither to deny the pertinence of the concept's deconstruction by scholars such as Talal Asad and others, nor to question the concept's objective alliance with Western colonialism and imperialism over centuries, but to refine historical awareness and enhance social-scientific analysis regarding the concept's career in European and Asian social and intellectual history to this day. Moreover, it is time to restore the balance, so to speak, in our understanding of the concept's history and career and to investigate in more detail how Asian societies and their elites have dealt and continue to deal with the intellectual, cultural and institutional challenges posed to them by the 'Western' concept of 'religion'.

The conference program is divided into four parts, which run parallel to the research interests of the URPP's three research fields (Concepts and Taxonomies, Entangled Histories, Norms and Social Order(s), cf. p. 27).

Part 1: Before Religion will ask how the taxonomic field of various Asian languages and cultural traditions was organized before the encounter with the 'Western' concept of 'religion'. Is it possible (or not) to delineate fields of social and cultural concern in which issues of worldview, ritual practice, moral conduct, etc. are semantically clustered in a significant way, possibly distinct from but nevertheless comparable to Western 'religion'? Is it possible (or not) to recognize concepts as well as related practices, norms and orders that might be considered to represent func-

tional equivalents of 'religion', or parts of it? Or is it possible, in turn, to state that certain Asian languages and cultural traditions did (and possibly do) not have any need or use for developing such a comparable concept?

Part 2: Negotiating Religion will examine nodes of encounter and entanglement between Asian and Western concepts and taxonomies relating to 'religion'. Among them, contexts of missionary encounter since the 15th century represent a rather well-investigated area that fueled information into European ethnography and encyclopedism that would eventually gain status as scientific knowledge. We may ask how knowledge about Asian customs, practices and beliefs came to inform and enlarge Western concepts of 'religion', and how Asian elites and societies adopted the Western category but also appropriated it to their own needs and concerns.

10 **Part 3: Religion defined and delimited** will address processes of conceptual narrowing, which followed the aforementioned developments during the 19th century. One may distinguish a unifying, essentializing and normalizing use of 'religion' as a concept referring to an overarching and trans-cultural human reality on the one hand, and the delimitation of specific compounds of tradition as 'religions', on the other. Among the 'religions' so delimited, Western scholarly discourse was eager to establish hierarchies based on acclaimed paradigms of the time, that is, models of evolution, civilizational progress, social complexity, etc. Asian social elites adopted this discourse as well, often in an attempt to inscribe their own tradition(s) among the 'world religions' that since the late 19th century came to be invoked as major actors of modernity. As far as Western and especially European contexts are concerned, the development of normalizing discourses was related to increasing secularization and the critical contestation of religion and religious institutions mentioned above; conceptual histories in Asian contexts may tell different stories which, while having been less studied by historians, merit equal attention. The conference should highlight common trends that can be observed in various colonial contexts and address regional differences wherever apparent.

The re-definition and conceptual delimitation of 'religion' also allowed for the adjective 'religious' to be extended into new spheres of meaning: visual art and music related to any one religion would now be labeled 'religious' (or 'Buddhist', 'Hindu', 'Islamic' ...); particular sets of experience would start to become classified as 'religious'; etc.

Part 4: Religion contested and reclaimed will deal with contemporary discourses on religion in an increasingly polycentric but also globalized world. These discourses

seem to be characterized by both centrifugal and centripetal dynamics: On the one hand, 'religions' are today often perceived as sources and agents of conflict and intolerance; on the other hand, renewed claims are being made, by religious stakeholders and scholars alike, that religion and religions are necessary and beneficial instances for the harmonious development of societies and of humankind as a whole. Former assumptions on secularization and modernity are called into question, while both state bodies and religious agents are actively engaged in defining how and under what conditions religion might be 'good religion', that is, compatible with the requirements of modern, democratic, and pluralistic society. Finally, civil law is claiming increasing power of definition with regard to what may or may not be regarded as recognized religion, and subject to respective constitutional rights.

In European and Asian countries alike, such a 'return of religion' into the public sphere and public discourse is, in various, often interrelated ways, observable to the extent that it has become possible and to some extent even plausible to locate a 'religious question' (quest?) in such different contexts as India, the People's Republic of China, or Japan. The conference should also address these developments and their possible effects on contemporary understandings of the concept of 'religion'.

Christoph Uehlinger (on behalf of the organizers)

Abstracts

Part 1: Before Religion

Chair: Wolfgang Behr (Classical Chinese Studies, UZH)

14:15 Christoph Uehlinger (History of Religions, UZH)

No religion before or without 'religion'? Introducing the conference, with an attempt to investigate ways of locating religion in ancient Western Asia (or the 'Ancient Near East')

The paper will first outline the main issues undergirding the origin of our conference. Among them, the question whether it is possible and even reasonable for scholars to locate religion in societies which either do not have one particular concept of 'religion' or have no direct connection to the history of what may be called the 'Western', European concept of 'religion'. Taking stock of the criticism raised against the concept's eurocentrism, particularly from a post-colonial perspective, I shall take ancient Mesopotamia as one particularly controversial test case: while some scholars have claimed that civilization to be the cradle of religion, others have developed strong arguments "why a history of Mesopotamian religion should not be written" (A. Leo Oppenheim). I shall argue that it remains worthwhile to investigate both alternatives and precedents to the concept of 'religion' developed in ancient Western Asiatic (and other non-European) societies, provided the modern scholar does not retroject his or her assumptions and prejudice onto the data.

Christoph Uehlinger is Professor of History of Religions at the Department for the Study of Religions at the University of Zurich. His research focus is on the contribution of iconography and archaeology to the history of religions in ancient Western Asia, Visible/Material Religion, and theories on religion. He has published monographs and numerous articles on biblical and ancient Near Eastern history and religion, including "Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel" (1998, with O. Keel), and "Könige am Tigris: Medien assyrischer Herrschaft" (with Elena Mango und Joachim Marzahn, 2008), and edited "Images as media: Sources for the cultural history of the Ancient Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean" (2000), "Crafts and Images in Contact: Studies on Eastern Mediterranean art of the first millennium BCE" (2005, with Claudia E. Suter). He is the senior editor of "Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis" and a co-editor of "Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten".

13

15:00 Raji C. Steineck (Japanology, UZH)

Delineating the Buddha-Way: On the semantical field of the ‘religious’ in Dôgen

In this presentation, I want to elucidate how the medieval Japanese Zen Patriarch Dôgen (1200–1253) defines the object of his teaching – which he himself identified as the „Buddha Way“ (*butsudô*) – in distinction to other doctrines and ways of life. To do so, I will trace the relations he builds between *butsudô* and other words and concepts within the broader field of ‘doctrines’ and ‘ways of life’. It is my aim to show firstly that we find an overlap between Dôgen and modern notions of ‘religion’ that may appear surprising in the light of recent criticisms of the concept of religion. Secondly, I want to look at the differences concerning the semantic positioning of the „Buddha Way“ in Dôgen’s writings. Finally, I offer some suggestions on how to evaluate these findings in the context of the debate on the concept of religion.

14

Raji C. Steineck is Professor of Japanology at the Institute of East Asian Studies, University of Zurich. His main fields of research are Japanese Buddhism and Philosophy and Ethics in modern to contemporary Japan. He published several books, inter alia “Grundstrukturen mystischen Denkens” (2000), “Leib und Herz bei Dôgen: Kommentierte Übersetzungen und theoretische Rekonstruktion” (2003) and “Der Leib in der japanischen Bioethik” (2007), with a forthcoming volume on “Begriff und Bild der Japanischen Philosophie” (ed. with Elena Louisa Lange and Paulus Kaufmann).

15:45 Max Deeg (Buddhist Studies, University of Cardiff)

Chinese religion before and after encounter – reflections on a Chinese semantic and conceptional field *ante et post* Buddhism

The working hypothesis of this paper is that taxonomic fields are shifting, especially in new cultural and social developments, and more specifically when these changes are triggered and fermented by intercultural encounters. ‘Religion’ is not an exception in that its perception expressed by a specific semantic field is changing with the advent of new religious movements in its cultural host-environment. The paper will try to show in the case of the history of religions in China that such an ‘encounter and entanglement’ is not necessarily restricted to the relatively late period of ‘Negotiating Religion’, but that it can already be observed in the pre-modern context of what the conference outline has labelled ‘Before Religion’. The Chinese term *jiao*, with its most neutral meaning of ‘teaching’, has been identified as the closest possible equivalent to the Western term and concept of ‘religion’. The paper will give

an overview of the semantic and conceptual developments of *jiao* and cognate terms like *Dao*, *fa*, etc. It will attempt to show not only *that* but *how* a crucial shift happened when Buddhism as a non-Chinese ‘teaching’ arrived in China. The difference in cultural background, doctrine and organisation led to a widening, but at the same time to a focusing, of inherited terms like *jiao*, *Dao*, *fa* and their applications. It helped to shape a taxonomic field which, although never completely equivalent to the western concept of religion in the sense of its christo-centric discourse(s), gave rise to specific forms of cultural and ideological expressions and practices to which the modern terms Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, etc., can be applied, and which interacted, as it were, in an ‘equivalence of contrast’.

Max Deeg is Professor in Buddhist Studies at Cardiff University where he is Head of Department of Religious Studies & Theology and the Director of the Centre of the History of Religion in Asia (CHRA). He works on Buddhist history, the spread of Buddhism from India to Central Asia and East Asia, but also on other religions in the wider Asian context. Among his publications are “Das Gaoseng-Faxian-zhuan als religionsgeschichtliche Quelle: Der älteste Bericht eines chinesischen buddhistischen Pilgermönchs über seine Reise nach Indien mit Übersetzung des Textes” (2005) and “Das Lotos-Sutra” (2007, second edition 2009).

17:00 Angelika Malinar (Indology, UZH)

Before ‘religion’ in India? Delineating and defining religious pathways in classical Sanskrit texts

The debate on the ‘invention’ of ‘Hinduism’ in the late 18th century had also repercussions for using the term ‘religion’ as its applicability to pre-colonial India became doubtful. Designed as a generic term for either a variety of different doctrines and traditions or as their ‘essence’, the term ‘Hinduism’ was subject to a number of contested definitions. As a result, it came increasingly to be viewed as an artificial construct – in this regard, resembling the academic discourse on defining ‘religion’. One issue in the debate on ‘Hinduism’ is the question in which respects ‘Hinduism’ is at all a ‘religion’. This, in turn, incited a discussion whether ‘religion’ is at all a category that influenced the self-perception of groups and individuals in their social relationships or shaped doctrinal systematisations and the conceptual repertoires in India. Answers were sought at various levels, one of them being the quest for a matching term or semantic equivalent for ‘religion’ in ancient Indian sources.

The paper will firstly address the conceptual framework, which prevented scholars in various fields from detecting and agreeing upon *the* semantic equivalent for the term ‘religion’ in ancient Indian sources. This situation is somewhat remarkable since Indian cultures are otherwise viewed as being to a large extent dominated by

‘religion’. Furthermore, referring to a plurality of ‘religions’ or ‘religious communities’ is generally accepted. Secondly, I shall analyse the levels on which a religious pathway is delineated in texts accepted as ‘authoritative verbal knowledge’ (*āgama*) and explore the terminology used for achieving this purpose. In so doing, I shall put the reasons for doubting the presence of the idea of ‘religion’ in classical Indian sources to the test.

Angelika Malinar is Professor of Indology at the University of Zurich. Her major areas of research are History of Hinduism, Indian Philosophy, Sanskrit Epics and Puranas, and Modern Hindi Literature. She is author of “The Bhagavadgītā: doctrines and contexts” (2007), “Hinduismus” (2009) and co-editor of “Charisma and Canon: Essays in the History of the Indian Subcontinent” and “Brill’s Encyclopedia of Hinduism” (5 vols., 2009–2014).

17:45 Karénina Kollmar-Paulenz (History of Religions and Central Asian Studies, University of Bern)

16 Concepts of ‘religion’ in Asia? The case of the Mongols

The spread of Tibetan Buddhism to the Mongolian regions in the late 16th century resulted not only in often violent confrontations between Buddhist monks and indigenous religious specialists (namely, the male and female shamans), but also in a reification process of local practices and concepts effecting a single tradition on the level of discourse. In my paper I try to show how the concept of ‘chos’ respectively ‘šasin’ has come to be formed as both a concept and a practice in early-modern Inner Asia, in the vast regions dominated by the Tibeto-Mongolian form of Buddhism. By analysing the discursive formation of an autonomous field of ‘religion’ in the Mongolian knowledge cultures from the 17th up to the 21st century as well as by tracing its entangled historical configurations in Tibetan, Mongolian and (later) Russian taxonomies, the paper is set in the wider conceptual context of a ‘global history of religion’. This ‘global history’ aims to challenge the European intellectual hegemony over the concept of ‘religion’ in favour of a multi-centred perspective that engages with European and non-European knowledge cultures alike.

Karénina Kollmar-Paulenz is Professor of History of Religions and Central Asian Studies at the Department of Religious Studies, University of Bern. Her main research fields are the cultural history of Inner Asia and method and theory of religion. She published several monographs on Tibetan and Mongolian history. Among the titles are “Kleine Geschichte Tibets” (2006), “Zur Ausdifferenzierung eines autonomen Bereichs Religion in asiatischen Gesellschaften des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts: Das Beispiel der Mongolen” (2007), “Die Mongolen: Von Dschingis Khan bis heute” (2011).

Part 2: Negotiating Religion

Chair: Ulrich Rudolph (Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, UZH)

9:00 James D. Frankel (Department of Religion, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa)
***Dīn* in between: East-West connections of Islam**

While Islam is conventionally grouped by scholars together with Judaism and Christianity as part of a western tradition, the Islamic history and Muslim demographics provides clear evidence that Islam undeniably also has deep roots in the East. This paper grapples with the notion of 'Western religion' and examines how this term conflicts with the Muslim self-conception of Islam connoted by the Arabic word *dīn*. Finally, it offers the possibility of building conceptual, cultural and even socio-political bridges through recognition of Islam's unique position amid the world's religions and civilizations.

17

James D. Frankel is Associate Professor and Undergraduate Advisor at the Department of Religion, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. His fields of research cover the history of Islam in China, the comparative history of ideas and religious and cultural syncretism. He is the author of the monograph "Rectifying God's Name: Liu Zhi's Confucian Translation of Monotheism and Islamic Law".

9:45 Stefan Reichmuth (Oriental and Islamic Studies, University of Bochum)
**The concept of *Dīn* and the Islamic religious sciences in the 18th Century:
The case of Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī (d. 1791)**

Arabic *Dīn*, the central concept of religion in Islam, has a long and complex history, which reflected in its emergence the interreligious context of the Middle East during Late Antiquity. In the course of time, especially after al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) and his influential book *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*, *Dīn* became defined in the framework of an expanding set of theological, exegetical, logical and philological disciplines, all of which claimed to contribute to the concept. By the 18th century, rational and traditionalist forms of knowledge had gradually merged with mystical and even empirical ones in the framework of *Dīn*. The paper discusses the works of Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī (d. 1791), a highly influential author of the 18th century, as a case

of this trend in his treatment of *Dīn* and the religious sciences in his lexicon and his commentary on Ghazālī.

Stefan Reichmuth is Professor of Islamic Studies and Head of Department at the Seminar of Oriental and Islamic Studies at the University of Bochum. His research has been dedicated to Islamic learning and education and to Arabic literature in a transregional perspective, focusing on Sub-Saharan Africa, the Ottoman Empire, and South Asia. Among his publications are “Islamische Bildung und soziale Integration in Ilorin (Nigeria) seit ca. 1800” (1998), “The world of Murtaḡā al-Zabīdī (1732-91): life, networks and writings” (2009), “Humanism and Muslim culture: historical heritage and contemporary challenges” (co-edited with Jörg Rūsen and Aladdin Sarhan, 2012). He is editor-in-chief of the journal “Die Welt des Islams” and was subeditor for Islam and Ottoman history in the “Enzyklopädie der Neuzeit” (concluded in 2012), where he also contributed many articles in Islam in the Early Modern Age.

11:00 Vincent Goossaert (Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris)

The vagaries of religious authority: The Heavenly Master (*aka*, the ‘Taoist Pope’), 1850–1950

18

The Heavenly Master, a title transmitted hereditarily within the Zhang family, had by 1900 been the head of the Daoist ecclesia since the turn of the second millennium, managing the clergy and the gods of some 400M people. Nineteenth century Protestant missionaries dubbed him the ‘Daoist Pope’, with undisguised scorn, maybe unaware of the rich potential for social-scientific comparison between the two figures in terms of the interplay of charisma, religious bureaucracy, ritual leadership and spiritual authority.

In any case, even more than the Pope, the institution of the Heavenly Master was radically challenged by political modernity. The end of the imperial system (in which the Heavenly Master was a prominent official) and the advent of the Republican regime, which took a very dim view of Daoism and its management of local cults and ritual traditions, suddenly transformed the Heavenly Master from an awed figure to the butt of endless jokes in the progressive press. Yet, the Heavenly Master did not simply go away, and endeavored to reinvent his role in the new socio-political system, in a context where ‘religion’ was being debated and reinvented in China. The reinvention, as per 2012, is still going on.

Vincent Goossaert is Professor (Daoism and Chinese religious history) at the EPHE (Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes) and Deputy Director of GSRL (Groupe Sociétés, Religions, Laïcités, EPHE-CNRS). His research deals with the social history of modern Chinese religion, Daoism and the politics of religion in China. Among his many publications are “L’interdit du bœuf en Chine: Agriculture, éthique et sacrifice” (2005), “The Taoists of Peking, 1800–1949: A Social History of Urban Clerics” (2007) and “The Religious Question in Modern China” (with David A. Palmer, 2011).

11:45 Jason A. Josephson (Department of Religion, Williams College)

Unreasonable demands: Inventing religion in Japanese diplomacy

When Japanese translators encountered the term 'religion' in the mid-nineteenth century they had no idea what it meant. No word then existed in the Japanese language that corresponded to the English term or covered anything close to the same range of meanings. Yet, following a series of treaties with Western powers in the period from 1853 to 1872, the Japanese state was pressured into guaranteeing freedom of 'religion', which required formulating of this new category conceptually and linguistically. This paper traces early attempts to formulate a legal meaning of religion and analyzes the challenges faced by the Japanese government's official translators in interpreting the term 'religion' in the treaties of the period. This study of the diplomatic process will show how 'religion' was produced not as a straightforward reflection of Western dominance, though admittedly certainly responsive to its imperatives, but instead as a transnational product of contested asymmetries of power.

19

Jason A. Josephson is Assistant Professor of Religion in the Department of Religion, Williams College, Williams-town. He works on the history of religion and science in Japan with a focus on the Edo-Meiji eras (1600–1912). Another field of research is the history of the study of religion in Western Europe from the 18th century to the present. His most recent publication is his book "The Invention of Religion in Japan" (2012).

Part 3: Religion defined and delimited

Chair: Benedikt Korf (Political Geography, UZH)

14:30 Geoffrey A. Oddie (South Asian History, University of Sydney)

India: Construction of Hinduism as 'religion'

20

The focus of this paper is on the emergence of the term 'Hindooism' or 'Hinduism' and the use and implications of the concept from the eighteenth century up to the present day. It begins with what has been called 'the idea of religion and religions in the Age of Enlightenment' when religions were envisaged as self-contained objective systems that, like scientific objects, could be compared and evaluated. One of the major categories in religion was 'Paganism' or 'Heathenism', general concepts which became less and less satisfactory in an age of discovery when European explorers and others began to perceive all kinds of differences between, for example, beliefs and practices in India compared with those of China or the South Sea Islands. In India the search for a suitable and more specific terminology produced terms relating to the Hindoo or [Indian] people such as 'Hindoo idolatry' or 'the Hindoo system', expressions which were ultimately abbreviated as 'Hindooism'.

The paper explores the introduction and use of the term by Charles Grant and the Baptist missionaries and its adoption and use by Rammohan Roy and other Indian leaders in elite society. 'Hinduism' was now ranked with other religions in a global and comparative system. Furthermore, the term proved to be a useful weapon, not only in the hands of missionaries and colonizers, but for purposes of propaganda and as a method of attracting followers among Indians themselves. Our commentary will, among other things, focus on the increasing use of the term for personal, political and communal purposes during the period of British rule. However, even then, the use of the term was still largely confined to the Western educated elites, and the paper will also explore some of the reasons why its usage has become increasingly widespread, and also controversial, among many ordinary people in India today.

Geoffrey Oddie is Honorary Associate at the History Department at the University of Sydney. His research covers South Asian history, Hinduism and Christianity. He is the author of the monographs "Hindu and Christian

in South-East India” (1991), “Popular Religion, Elites and Reform: Hook-Swinging and Its Prohibition in Colonial India, 1800–1894” (1995), “Missionaries, Rebellion and Proto-Nationalism: James Long of Bengal” (1999) and “Imagined Hinduism: British Protestant Missionary Constructions of Hinduism, 1793–1900” (2006).

15:15 Sudipta Kaviraj (Indian Politics and Intellectual History, Columbia University, NY)
The nature of God: Debates in nineteenth century Bengal

Sudipta Kaviraj is Professor of Indian Politics and Intellectual History at the Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies at Columbia University. His field of expertise is Indian social and political thought in the 19th and 20th centuries and modern Indian literature and cultural production. Sudipta Kaviraj’s books include “Civil Society: History and Possibilities” (co-edited with Sunil Khilnani, 2001) and “The Imaginary Institution of India” (2010).

16:30 Christian Lee Novetzke (Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington)
Religion and the end of history in modern India

21

Modern Western nation-states have been founded upon and emboldened by the idea that their historical trajectory up to the present and into the future unfolds along a rational, yet somehow divinely inspired, pathway to ‘the end of history’. This argument, in the Western context, from Hegel to Marx to Kojève to Fukuyama, has presented the transformation (or elimination) of a religiously construed divine eschatology into a secular and rational realization of the ideal of human freedom in the form of the modern nation-state.

This paper engages the ‘end of history’ arguments of the Hegelian and post-Hegelian political-philosophical stream of Western thought in the context of India’s emergent modern democratic and secular state. I will explore the ‘teleological’ and ‘eschatological’ or salvation propositions inherent in the ideas of key figures of contemporary Indian political modernity. How has this pervasive and influential notion played out in the context of colonial or other kinds of political emancipation? Is there an ‘end of history’ notion in the ideas of some of India’s founding voices that interpreted human freedom as political freedom? Is there a ‘definition’ of religion that can have equal valence across ‘traditions’, and especially across the ‘First’ and ‘Third’ worlds, and that eschews the common symbol-system and ritual paradigm of ‘religion’, investigating instead religion as a consistently political subject that proposes salvation and freedom? The figures I engage in this paper may include Savarkar, Gandhi, Nehru, and Ambedkar.

Christian Lee Novetzke is Associate Professor in the South Asia Studies Program, the Comparative Religion Program, and the International Studies Program at the Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington. His research interests cover a wide range of topics related to religion, history, and culture in South Asia, the study of religion in general, and intersection of religion and historiography. His recent book, "Religion and Public Memory" (2008), won the American Academy of Religion's award for "The Best First Book in the History of Religions".

17:15 Lily Kong (Department of Geography, National University of Singapore)
Constructing 'religion' in context: The geographical and historical contingencies of religion

22

Religion is not an a priori category. It is geographically and historically contingent. In this paper, I use the example of Singapore to demonstrate how the state seeks to shape the sublime, through policy, legal, institutional, and discursive strategies. For example, religion in the public sphere in Singapore is constructed variously as a moral compass, tourist attraction, charitable organization, space-consumer, and potential threat to public order. It is not to be a tool for questioning social justice nor a mobiliser of public action. Concomitantly, multireligiosity is variously constructed as equal absence of religion in certain public domains (e.g. media) and 'equal treatment' of all religious groups (though with many exceptions as to render this potentially problematic e.g. the designation of religious days as public holidays, the designation of space for religious worship, the prohibition of official recognition for certain groups). In explaining some of the rationale for the management of religion in Singapore, the state calls on the geographical and historical contingencies that confront the city-state. The fractures in the logics of constructing religion create a fragile condition.

Lily Kong is Professor at the Department of Geography at the National University of Singapore where she is also Vice-President (University and Global Relations) and Vice-Provost (Academic Personnel). Her research interests include geographies of religion, constructions of 'nation' and national identity, and cultural policy and industry. Among her latest publications are "Conserving the Past, Creating the Future: Urban Heritage in Singapore" (2011) and "Religion and Place: Landscape, Politics and Piety" (co-edited with Peter Hopkins and Elizabeth Olson, 2012).

Part 4: Religion contested and reclaimed

Chair: Bettina Dennerlein (Islamic and Gender Studies, UZH)

9:00 Yang Fenggang (Center for Religion and Chinese Society, Purdue University)
The definition of religion for the social scientific study of religion in China and beyond

The definition of religion has a troubled history in China in the last century or so. Around the time when the first republic was established in Asia in 1912, many Chinese intellectuals denied the existence of religion in Chinese culture, whereas others strove to establish Confucianism as the state religion of China. Under Communist rule since 1949, only five religions have been allowed, and Confucianism is not one of them, yet in the twenty-first century some intellectuals have renewed their efforts to revive Confucianism and establish it as the state religion to replace the failing Communist orthodoxy. Taking a detached position from the ideology-laden debates, I have tried to define religion for the social scientific study. This definition, appropriated from previous scholarship and refined with a classification scheme that covers folk religion, civil religion and atheism, may help us better explain the dynamics of change in the political economy of religion in Chinese society, which has been increasingly integrated into the globalizing world.

23

Yang Fenggang is Professor of Sociology and Director of the Center on Religion and Chinese Society at the Department of Religious Studies at Purdue University, Indiana, USA. His research focuses on religious change in China and immigrant religions in the United States. He is the author of "Religion in China: Survival and Revival under Communist Rule" (2012) and "Chinese Christians in America: Conversion, Assimilation, and Adhesive Identities" (1999), and the co-editor of "Confucianism and Spiritual Traditions in Modern China and Beyond" (with Joseph Tamney, 2011) and "State, Market, and Religions in Chinese Societies" (with Joseph Tamney, 2005). He has received two distinguished article awards, "The Red, Black, and Gray Markets of Religion in China" and "Transformations in New Immigrant Religions and Their Global Implications"(with Helen Rose Ebaugh).

9:45 Katsuhiko Kohara (Comparative Study of Monotheistic Religions, Doshisha University, Kyoto)

Requirements of 'good religion': An inquiry into the effects of the 3/11 disaster on the concept of religion in Japan

In modern times, Japanese religious policy concentrated on separating religion and ethics (morality) under the premise of the separation of religion and the state, and on spreading the idea of national morality that was founded thereon. Religions such as Buddhism and most Christian denominations were recognized as 'good religions' as long as they were compatible with the Emperor-centric national morality, and these faiths were allowed to be practiced only within the framework of said national policy. On the other hand, some Christian denominations and newly emerging religions that were not obedient to the national morality were labeled 'evil religions' and suppressed. It was the national authority that drew a dividing line between 'good' and 'evil' religions.

24

Since the end of World War II, the Japanese government has maintained a relatively tolerant stance toward religious organizations, partly because of the failure of the prewar religious policy. As a result, freedom of faith is now widely guaranteed in Japanese society. On the negative side, however, such a stance has resulted in the upsurge of religious corporations and the emergence of 'cults,' the best known of which is the Aum Shinrikyo that attacked the Tokyo subway system with sarin gas in 1995. Since this incident, religions have been generally considered 'evil' in Japanese society, and the presence of religions, especially in the public realm, has been unwelcomed.

However, the Great East Japan Earthquake that occurred on March 11, 2011 caused the Japanese public opinion of religions to change. In the wake of the earthquake, many religious organizations extended support to people affected by the disaster and offered altruistic service, which, in many cases, was received favorably. Consequently, light was shed on the new aspect of religions: their ability to bring public benefits. If we take a more in-depth look, however, we may say that many of these religions are trying to be 'perceived' as 'good religions' by demonstrating their ability to serve public interest, which is considered to be one of the requirements of a 'good religion'. What, then, is the fundamental difference between the religions that complied with the public (national) interest of Japanese society in prewar days and those that have been serving public interest since the 3/11 disaster?

In other regards, it is obvious that the 3/11 disaster prompted a change in the concept of religion. Another change brought by the disaster is the growing prevalence of religious discourse that emphasizes harmony with nature. This discourse

criticizes modern technologies, which have been used by Western countries to control nature, and it sometimes denounces nuclear technology as a technology of monotheistic characteristics. Simply put, the 3/11 disaster triggered the naturalization (deanthropocentrization) of the concept of 'religion'.

The emphasis on the public functions of religions and post-anthropocentrism can be taken as an antithesis to Western secularism (the separation of religion and the state) and the Western view of nature. Seen from the other side, however, it is evident that this discourse cannot be established without the intervention of the Western concept of religion.

Katsuhoro Kohara from Doshisha University is Professor of Systematic Theology, Religious Ethics and Comparative Study of Monotheistic Religions at the Doshisha School of Theology. His research focuses on relationships between monotheistic and Japanese/Asian religions and religious conflicts. His books include “神のドラマトゥルギー—自然・宗教・歴史・身体を舞台として” (“The Dramaturgy of God: Focusing on Nature, Religion, History, and Body as the Stage”, 2002) and “宗教のポリティクス—日本社会と一神教世界の邂逅” (“Politics of Religion: The Encounter of the Japanese Society and the Monotheistic World”, 2010).

11:00 Volkhard Krech (Center for Religious Studies, University of Bochum)

Where are the boundaries of religion? Considerations on the emergence of a global religious field and on processes of sacralization

While some scholars of religious studies claim that religion is indistinguishable from culture in general, there is some empirical evidence for the assumption that religion has an internal dynamic of its own while simultaneously relating to other societal spheres. The paper argues for identifying and analyzing constituents and boundaries of regional religious fields as well as of an emerging global religious field. Agents who are related to each other through negotiations concerning religious convictions and practices constitute the religious field, whereas its boundaries are established through interactions between religion and other societal fields such as politics, law, economics, arts, and medicine. In addition, it is important to consider the distinction between self-referential religion and processes of sacralization in which non-religious issues are charged with religious elements. Thus, academic research can avoid an inflationary concept of religion and at the same time is able to observe the blurred shapes of the religious.

Volkhard Krech is Professor of Religious Studies and Director of the Käte Hamburger Kolleg and the Center for Religious Studies (CERES) at the University of Bochum. Volkhard Krech does research on religious pluralism and globalization, theories of religion, and theories of the history of religion. He is the author of the books “Wis-

senschaft und Religion: Studien zur Geschichte der Religionsforschung in Deutschland 1871 bis 1933" (2002) and "Wo bleibt die Religion? Zur Ambivalenz des Religiösen in der modernen Gesellschaft" (2011).

11:45 Plenary discussion, conclusion

Lucian Hölscher is respondent to our conference.

Lucian Hölscher is Professor of Modern History and Theory of History at the University of Bochum and is engaged in the Käte Hamburger Kolleg at the Center for Religious Studies at the University of Bochum. Lucian Hölscher is interested in theories of history and methodology of the humanities and Begriffsgeschichte. Among the many books he published on those topics are "Geschichte der protestantischen Frömmigkeit, Bd. 1: Von der Reformation bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg" (2005) and "Semantik der Leere: Grenzfragen der Geschichtswissenschaft" (2009).

26

URPP Asia and Europe

The University Research Priority Program (URPP) Asia and Europe of Zurich University explores exchanges and encounters that have taken and continue to take place between Asia and Europe in the areas of culture, law, religion and society. The URPP Asia and Europe brings together various disciplines and faculties of the University of Zurich to create an expert and comprehensive interdisciplinary research structure. It promotes research by young graduate and post-graduate scholars within a structured and interdisciplinary research environment.

Within its research structure, the URPP Asia and Europe focuses on three thematically differentiated research fields. 27

Research Field 1: Concepts and Taxonomies reflects on a precise terminology that is vital for conceptualizing and studying phenomena such as identity constructions, exchanges and encounters between various cultural spaces in Europe and in Asia. One of its major goals is to contribute to the understanding of basic concepts, especially their taxonomical status and position, translational equivalents and correlates, as well as their use as heuristic instruments.

Research Field 2: Entangled Histories explores how the processes of cultural exchange and the constructions of cultural boundaries between Asia and Europe are shaped by agents and embedded in particular temporal and spatial contexts. The research field highlights the dynamics of exchange and constructions of cultural differences. Entangled histories are studied primarily with regard to historical, institutional, and geographical interactions, as well as media representations (literature, film, and art), and the history of knowledge.

Research Field 3: Norms and Social Order(s) is devoted to the study of the social and political negotiations that take place when norms and ideas about social and political order circulate across and between different places and social contexts, including, but not limited to, questions of economic and political interdependencies, the transnationalization of law, the interaction of individuals, local communities, national and international organizations, as well as global discourses on statehood and development.

General Information

Venues

November 1–2

Museum Rietberg
Park-Villa Rieter
Gablerstrasse 15
8002 Zurich

November 3

University of Zurich, City Campus
Room SOC 1-106
Rämistrasse 69
8001 Zurich

Organizers

URPP Asia and Europe and Department for the Study of Religions, University of Zurich

Contact

URPP Asia and Europe
Wiesenstrasse 7/9
CH-8008 Zurich
Phone: +41 44 634 49 83
E-Mail: philipp.hetmanczyk@uzh.ch
www.asienundeuropa.uzh.ch

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