

Conference Reports

Utopias from Asia

Santiniketan, 16 to 17 November 2011

The international and interdisciplinary Symposium ‘Utopias from Asia’ took place in memoriam of Momoyo Okura, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore’s birth, in the Art Centre of the Santiniketan Society of Visual Art and Design. It was organized by the Institute of Indology, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany, in collaboration with Asiaticum: Society for the Promotion of Studies East and West, the Visva Bharati University, and the Art Centre of the Santiniketan Society of Visual Art and Design, India.

The symposium was opened by the Pro-Vice Chancellor of the Visva Bharati University, Santiniketan, Prof. Dr. Udaya Narayana Singh, who read a welcome address from Prof. Sushanta Duttagupta, the Vice-Chancellor of Visva Bharati University. The inauguration ceremony was moderated by Prof. Dr. Swati Ganguly (Visva Bharati University). Dr. Martin Wälde, the director of the Goethe-Institute Max Mueller Bhavan, Kolkata, delivered an address. Greetings from R. Schmiedchen, the Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany, Kolkata, also from the Directorate-General Cultural Heritage Rhineland-Palatinate, represented by Thomas Metz, the Director-General, and Ingeborg Hoffstadt, administration manager, were read out, as was a message from Andrea Kaiser, chairperson of the German Indian Round Table (GIRT), Frankfurt.

In his opening address, Prof. Dr. Konrad Meisig, director of the Institute of Indology, Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz, and first chairperson of the ASIATICUM, underlined that the symposium was in accordance with the ideas and wishes of the Japanese entrepreneur Mrs. Momoyo Okura, a committed sponsor of the humanities and cultural studies. He mentioned that the Indian poet and Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore stayed for a month as a guest in the house of the Okura family during the second of his five visits to Japan. The present symposium on ‘Utopias from Asia’ was the second in a series of international cultural symposia, the first of which took place from 1 to 2 September 2009 in Mainz, Germany. The papers then given were published under the title *Die Zukunft des Wissens* (i.e. ‘the future of knowledge’) in 2011.

Dr. Martin Kämpchen (Santiniketan) introduced the German-speaking audience to Tagore's lyrics and read from his own translations, some of which have recently been published in Germany on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the poet's birth.

According to Rabindranath Tagore science and art are an inseparable whole. So it was quite in accordance with the Tagorean tradition that on the evening of the first day the Tagore dance drama 'Valmiki Pratibha', arranged by Dr. Amartya Mukherjee, was performed by students of the Visva Bharati University. The script of this play can be found in the Bengali original on the website of the Okura Institute for the Study of Spiritual Culture (<http://okuraken.or.jp/tagore>).

Papers were presented by twelve scholars from India, Japan, Vietnam and Germany: In the first session, chaired by Dr. Martin Kämpchen (Santiniketan), Prof. Dr. Swati Ganguly (Visva Bharati University) spoke on 'The Santiniketan 'ashram' and Visva Bharati: Utopia beyond nationalist frames'. She showed the development of Tagore's ideas on education and their realization in founding a university as an alternative to the British model, illustrating her remarks by historical photographs of the site. In her paper 'The concept of a feminine-self: veiled and unveiled, in Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain's 'Sultana's Dream', 'Padmarag' and 'Abarodhbasini'', Dr. Kasturi Dadhe (Mainz) introduced the audience to the remarkable as well as exceptional life, work and achievements of a Bengal woman writer who lived at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century.

The second session was chaired by Prof. Dr. Swati Ganguly. Dr. habil. Luong Van Ke (Hanoi) gave some insights into development trends in Vietnam in his talk: 'From Utopia to Reality: Some Experiences on Political Transformation in Viet Nam'. Dr. habil. Marcus Stiglegger (Siegen) spoke on 'Kaiju eiga: Utopias and Anti-utopias in Japanese Cinema', illustrating his findings on the genre of 'Kaiju' ('strange beast') movies with examples drawn from classics such as the internationally renowned 'Godzilla' (1954).

The third session, chaired by Dr. Ivo Ritzer (Mainz), began with a lecture by Dr. Sonja Wengoborski (Mainz) on modern Hindi, Singhalese and English literature, entitled 'Exploring the space between the possible and the impossible: 'Observations from contemporary South Asian literature''. As Prof. Masako Sato (Tokyo) was unable to attend personally, her paper on 'Seeking Utopia beyond the Modernization – A Movement in the Asian Structural Change in the 20th Century' was presented by Dr. Kasturi Dadhe, assisted by Prof. Dr. Konrad Meisig. The author narrated how thanks to the dedication of Yoko Okura-Mieli the whole literary oeuvre of Rabindranath Tagore, 160 volumes in Bengali and English, that had been presented to Kunihiko Okura (1882–1971) as a token of gratitude to the Okura family for

the care they gave him during his stay, have recently been digitized and can be accessed online on the above-mentioned website of the Okura Institute for the Study of Spiritual Culture (URL as above). Prof. Dr. Kumkum Bhattacharya (Visva Bharati University) spoke on 'Utopia in praxis', namely the realization of Tagorean ideas and ideals in Santiniketan and neighboring Sriniketan. Dr. Marion Meisig (Mainz) gave a paper on 'Unity of Politics and Nature – The Appearance of the Mythical Beast Qilin in China', which she illustrated by pictures.

Dr. habil. Marcus Stiglegger chaired the last session, which opened with Dr. Ivo Ritzer's 'Ninkyō Eiga: Yakuza, Knights and Utopias of Chivalry in Japanese Cinema', dealing with utopian features in the genre of Japanese chivalrous film, which is characterized by the hero's deep conflict between *giri* (social responsibility) and *ninjo* (personal inclination). With 'Rabindranath Tagore's Utopia Visualized in his Paintings' Prof. Soumik Nandi Majumdar (Visva Bharati University) presented insights into the artist's experiments in painting, an aspect of his œuvre that he excluded from public viewing in favor of his writing. The last paper was presented by Prof. Dr. Konrad Meisig (Mainz), the focus being on four examples of 'Buddhist Utopias' drawn from different time periods as well as geographical regions of Asia.

After a final discussion that highlighted the interdisciplinary character of this conference, Prof. Swaty Ganguly (Visva Bharati University) concluded by expressing her conviction that this symposium was quite in accordance with Tagore's ideas, and that Tagore himself would happily have attended.

Sonja Wengoborski

Cultures of Consumption in Asia and Europe

Heidelberg, 24 to 25 July 2011

"Cultures of Consumption in Asia and Europe" was the title and topic of the summer school organised by the Cluster of Excellence "Asia and Europe in a Global Context" at Heidelberg University from 24 to 29 July 2011. The summer school included over 20 students from a dozen countries, who enjoyed lectures by and discussions with scholars from a range of disciplines including cultural and economic history, the social sciences and anthropology. The aim of the four-day programme was to gain a trans-cultural understanding of cultures of consumption and to explore the ways in

which consumer goods and cultural frameworks of consumption have provided crucial interfaces between Asia and Europe in a global context.

The opening keynote lecture “Why America Spends While the World Saves” was held by Sheldon Garon (Princeton University). He focused on the histories of saving, consumption, and credit in the U. S., modern Europe, Japan, and other Asian countries. He pointed out the differences and similarities of mass consumption and saving between Europe and Japan on the one hand and the U.S. on the other. Adopting a transnational-historical perspective, he argued that the similarities in savings promotion across the globe are the result of the international exchange of knowledge on how to organise prosperous, powerful nations.

In the session “Introducing Novelty Consumables”, Françoise Sabban (Paris) gave a talk entitled “A New Consumption Pattern – Drinking Milk in Shanghai (1845–1945)”. By tracing the consumption of milk in Shanghai from the nineteenth century onwards, she explored the origins of contemporary food practices in China. Before, milk only played a role as a nutritional supplement for the weak and sick but was never produced on a large scale. In the late nineteenth century, cow’s milk was imported to the foreign settlements of big cities such as Shanghai, mainly for consumption by foreigners. Over time, it became a popular product and was consumed mostly by wealthy Chinese people.

In the following lecture, Anjali Roy (IIT Kharagpur) asked the question “Why is Bollywood Making a Song and Dance about Bhangra?”. She showed how Bhangra, a traditional Punjabi harvest rite, became removed from its original cultural context and transformed into national dance music, becoming an important part of modern Bollywood cinema. For Anjali Roy, the contemporary Bollywood film is a metaphor for a globalised India characterised by the ethic of consumption as well as for the image of a new India, selling itself to American consumers.

The morning session of the second day “Gender Images and Consumption” was opened by Mio Wakita (Heidelberg). In her talk “The Locus of Multiple Desires: Women in Yokohama Souvenir Photography”, she investigated images of Japanese women in post-1880 Meiji souvenir photography. She focused on the social and cultural status of female models, the mediality of photography and female visibility. She examined earlier views of women’s status in these photographs as commercial products, consumed by western males, which cater only to the western expectation of and desire for “exotic” Japanese things. In addition, she embedded these images in the context of Japanese visual culture and looked into the making of images of Japanese femininity in Meiji souvenir photography.

Under the title “The Future of a Modern Woman or Man? Gender Images in German Tobacco Advertisements”, Katja Patzel-Mattern (Heidelberg) examined the construction of gender images in German tobacco advertisements, especially between the 1920s and 1930s and the 1950s and 1980s. She stated that while the meanings transported by these images are highly conditioned by the media they equally represent the historical context.

“Global Patterns of Consumption” was the topic of the next session. Joanna Elfving-Hwang (Frankfurt) gave a talk on “Cosmetic Culture and the Practice of Aesthetic Surgery in South Korea”. She addressed the phenomenon of cosmetic surgery in South Korea and showed how decisions to undergo aesthetic surgery are influenced by a number of different, sometimes contradictory, factors, which are implicated in both the prevalence of surgery and the types of surgeries practiced.

Moving beyond the traditional notion that the process of socio-economic integration in the Pacific Ocean during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was driven by Western European nations and the United States, Robert Hellyer (Wake Forrest) presented an alternative view of trade and demand in this area. In his talk “The West, the East and the Insular Middle: Consumption and the Integration of the Pacific, 1750–1880”, he traced the influence of reciprocal consumer demands with a focus on forest and marine products.

The session “Contemporary Shifts in Consumption” was opened by Manpreet Janeja (Cambridge) with a talk on “Eating and Not-Eating in South-Asia (and Beyond)”. She focused on consumption as a mundane practice as illustrated by social anthropological accounts of food and eating in South Asia and beyond. She linked issues of agency, place, hospitality, and ownership to a new field that places food as an “artefact” at the centre of its inquiry, using Bengali, Hindu, and Muslim eating habits in India (Calcutta) and Bangladesh (Dhaka) and school meals in Britain as examples.

Next, Seungsook Moon (Vassar) spoke on “Consumer Culture and Changing Attitudes Toward Hegemonic Masculinity in South Korea”. She explored the interplay between experiences of mandatory military service and consumer culture in shaping the masculinity of South Korean men. The focus was on men in their 20s who have grown up in industrialising and democratising Korea, because this group has developed ideas and practices of masculinity which are significantly different from those of former generations.

In the last session, “Reflecting on Japanese Consumer Culture”, Angus Lockyer (SOAS, London) talked about “Golf Clubbing in Modern Japan”. He asked how we do and how we might think about and study consumption,

pointing to potential avenues that can account not only for the imagined consumers in Europe but those in Asia as well.

By following the “Flow of Beer to East Asia”, Harald Fuess (Heidelberg) explained how German beer found its way to Japan and became one of the world’s most popular beers during the last century. In this process, he argued, imports and foreign-owned companies were gradually replaced, a highly concentrated market structure for beer emerged, a mass market for beer consumption with a high social tolerance for drinking alcoholic beverages was created, and beer markets were enlarged through the inclusion of previously ignored consumer groups, such as women.

The last day of the summer school was reserved for various group activities, organised by Anna Andreeva, David Mervart and Mio Wakita (Heidelberg), to summarize interactively the findings of the previous days. Consumption and consumerism were discussed, focusing on the tension between conceptualisation, cultural settings, agency, meaning, transformation, and concrete case-studies, as well as on their moral, psychological, political and economic vocabularies and languages.

The summer school, organised by Harald Fuess and David Mervart, received very positive feedback from the participants, many of whom were really enthusiastic about the variety of topics discussed. The evening programme, which included a guided tour through the old town of Heidelberg and a visit to the German Packaging Museum, was also greatly appreciated. These informal excursions provided ideal opportunities for social exchange between the participants. The next summer school of the Cluster of Excellence “Asia and Europe in a Global Context” will be held in July 2012.

Tine Trumpp

Frontiers of Knowledge – Health, Environment and the History of Science

Heidelberg, 5 to 7 October 2011

“Frontiers of Knowledge” was the topic of the Annual Conference of the Cluster of Excellence “Asia and Europe in a Global Context” held from 5 to 7 October 2011 at Heidelberg University. The purpose of the conference was to explore the fields of Health, Environment and the History of Science, while challenging the conventional intellectual divisions between Europe and Asia.

In the evening of 5 October, the first keynote speaker, Kaushik Sunder Rajan (Chicago), opened the conference with a lecture on “Property, Rights and the Constitution of Contemporary Indian Biomedicine”. He focused on the contested relationship between intellectual property and the re-institutionalisation of pharmaceutical research in contemporary India. In particular, he traced the case of a patent on the anti-cancer drug Gleevec.

The first podium discussion, chaired by Joachim Friedrich Quack (Heidelberg), took place in the morning of 6 October 2011. It focused on Ancient Medicine. Friedhelm Hoffmann’s (Munich) exploration of Egyptian medical recipes, dating from the second and early first millennia BCE and their relationship to Near Eastern and Greek medical traditions, demonstrated that some basic prescription formulae appear in all these otherwise divergent medical systems. Examining medical stories, medicinal recipes, and amulets from the Hippocratic and Galenic traditions, Ann Ellis Hanson (Yale) showed how earlier medical concepts from Hippocratic texts were appropriated and amended to fit into later medical writings in the Roman and Byzantine Egypt traditions. Continuing the theme of transmission, Vivian Nutton (University College London) dwelt on issues involved in the translation of medical texts and traditions with a focus on the re-contextualisation of Galenic medical writings in the Syriac and Arabic languages.

The second podium discussion was dedicated to the circulation and changing concepts of knowledge, the diverse ways in which knowledge is produced, and how it is shared and appropriated in cultural encounters. Marta Hanson’s (Johns Hopkins University) analysis of the geography of diseases in China from the 1870s to the 1920s showed clearly that certain concepts of knowledge can be visualised and circulated. On the one hand, they help rethink the relationships between the nature of disease and the environmental context. On the other hand, they also act as political images legitimating colonial control. Dissecting the processes of the rapid institutionalisation of science in colonial India, Dhruv Raina (Jawaharlal Nehru University) employed the interpretive frames of “engraftment” and “entanglement” to investigate the varied uses of traditional and modern resources of knowledge in learned communities. Likewise, challenging the standard dichotomies between tradition and modernity, as well as East as opposed to West, Joachim Kurtz (Heidelberg) explored the search for a new epistemological framework in Late Qing China. He presented a case study that focused on the attempts of Chinese philosophers to identify new sources of certainty in the face of the epistemic ruptures which, he argued, continue to shape what we now understand as Chinese modernity.

The afternoon session was divided into five separate panels. The focus of the panel on “Politics, Civil Society and the Environment” was the earth-

quake and subsequent nuclear disaster in north-eastern Japan on 3 March 2011. Itō Kimio (Kyoto) offered a critical perspective on the issues that civil society in Japan is currently facing in the wake of the Fukushima nuclear plant crisis, as well as matters pertaining to the government, media, and nuclear lobby. Focusing on the micro-history of the town of Kaminoseki in Yamaguchi prefecture, Martin Dusingberre (Newcastle/Heidelberg) demonstrated how nuclear politics at the local level came to be dominated by the rhetoric of a “brighter future” in post-war Japan. In contrast to this historical approach, Kerstin Cuhls (Heidelberg) gave an overview of how governmental research organisations in Germany and Japan predict future trends in societal change. All three speakers mapped out possible preventive measures and responses to earthquakes. Following these three papers, Gerrit Jasper Schenk (Darmstadt) discussed how such disasters can be properly assessed and analysed in the context of cultural histories.

The panel “Between Beauty and Health” focused on the visual itineraries of changing bodies in China’s transcultural mediascapes during the 1900s and 2000s. The speakers Liying Sun, Ulrike Buechsel, Xuelei Huang and Barbara Mittler (Heidelberg) illustrated how the changing notions of beauty and health are reflected in the visual sources of twentieth-century Chinese media. These notions were further problematised by the discussants Christiane Brosius, Thomas Maissen, and Katja Patzel-Mattern (Heidelberg), who questioned concepts like cosmopolitanism, liberation, or Baudrillard’s analysis of consumer culture.

The panel “Large Dams” examined cases of contested environmental knowledge of riverscapes, focusing on issues connected with water flows in India and China. Ravi Baghel (Heidelberg) described how rivers in India are seen as national entities and supplies of water to be equally distributed all over the country. Alexander Erlewein (Heidelberg) discussed the changing perceptions of dams and their revaluation in the context of climate change. Miriam Seeger (Heidelberg) explored how competing discursive factions include governmental narratives and exclude perspectives that take into account the interpretation and establishment of environmental knowledge in the case of the Nujiang dams in Southwest China. Continuing this theme, Nirmalya Choudhury (TU Berlin) analysed how public involvement in the planning of large infrastructural projects becomes slippery ground, where a mismatch of expectations reduces the legitimacy of the exercise, even if legality is fulfilled.

Another afternoon panel with a focus on Japanese religions, traced the concepts of space and time in the emerging transcultural cosmologies of pre-modern Japan. While Dominic Steavu (Heidelberg) investigated Chinese cosmological discourses on the human body, Anna Andreeva (Heidelberg)

analysed how mountains were conceptualised as cult centres in the ritual activities of ascetics. Finally, Max Moerman (Barnard/Columbia) demonstrated how Buddhist notions of space shaped early modern debates on astronomy and political geography in the Tokugawa period.

“What Can(not) Be Said in Revolutionary Times” was devoted to the flows of concepts and institutions in a transcultural context. Discussion focused on the borders of and obstacles to the aforementioned flows, as well as their relations to shifts in the meaning of concepts such as despotism, democracy and citizenship. In this context, Pascal Firges (Heidelberg) discussed Istanbul during the French Revolution and Julten Abdelhalim (Heidelberg) reflected on the 2011 Arab Spring in Egypt. In her summary of the presentations, Antje Flüchter (Heidelberg) pointed out that notions pertaining to revolutionary ideology have become globalised to such a degree that comparisons with “authentic” European or Western predecessors have little relevance.

The day concluded with the second keynote lecture by Janet Hunter (London School of Economics), who spoke about the market collapse and confusion that occurred in the aftermath of the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923. The lecture paid close attention to the responses of producers, traders, and consumers to the sudden collapse of infrastructure, dislocation of institutions, and altered patterns of supply and demand.

The third day of the conference opened with a podium discussion on “Seascapes and Shipping” chaired by Harald Fuess (Heidelberg) and Christopher Gerteis (SOAS). In his second conference presentation, Martin Dusing (Newcastle/Heidelberg) traced the maritime routes of a Japanese merchant navy ship, the “Yamashiro-maru”, from Newcastle to Hawaii between 1884 and 1912. Roland Wenzlhuemer (Heidelberg) offered insight into the redaction of ship newspapers and, more generally, life aboard the passenger steamers in the 1890s. His paper investigated transcultural phenomena involved in transit, within port cities or across ocean littorals and other liminal zones. Rolf Wippich (Tokyo/Lucerne) scrutinised 19th century piracy in Chinese territorial waters and the anti-piracy measures taken both by the Chinese authorities and the Western treaty powers in the context of flourishing international trade, the Taiping Rebellion (1852–1864) and the Opium Wars.

The second podium discussion of the day was organised by Cluster scholars Sandra Bärnreuther, Sinjini Mukherjee, and William Sax. It critically engaged with Kaushik Sunder Rajan’s work on the attribution of epistemic shifts to different “techno-scientific regimes” and bio-capital. The sociologist-cum-anthropologist Aditya Bharadwaj (Edinburgh) presented findings from a long-term multi-sited ethnographic study and examined the

notion of “subject mobility” in pursuit of the clinical use of human embryonic stem cells (HESC) in India. This theme was complemented by Sandra Bärnreuther’s (Heidelberg) introduction of her on-going study on in-vitro-fertilisation in India, with particular emphasis on the multi-dimensional notion of “biovalue”. Tsjalling Swierstra (Maastricht) examined the Dutch debate on organ transplants, outlining how new technologies shape old moralities and produce new moral frameworks, but also how moralities influence technological developments.

The afternoon was divided into four sessions. In the first, Sinjini Mukherjee (Heidelberg) focused on the case of family members donating organs for kidney transplants in India. The discussant Kaushik Sunder Rajan presented an elaborate response to all the papers, highlighting the differences between the approaches of Moral Philosophy, Medical Anthropology, and Science and Technology. The panel “The Many Shapes of the World” discussed concurrent regimes of spatial representation in early modern Asia. In their paper “Chinese Sages and Dutch Measures”, Martin Hofmann and David Mervart (Heidelberg) addressed the diversity of spatial regimes in the writings and maps of the Japanese samurai-scholar Nagakubo Sekisui (1717–1801). Monica Juneja (Heidelberg) then explored what she called “capricious reversals” of naturalist vision, by looking at pastiche as an art form. The panel was chaired by Frank Grüner (Heidelberg) and commented by Dhruv Raina.

The panel “Stress” focused on the anthropological, historical and epidemiological approaches to this supposedly modern phenomenon. While Saskia Rohmer (Heidelberg) offered insight into the historical roots of stress as a Western concept, Hasan Ashraf (Heidelberg) examined the genesis of stress as an effect the neoliberal textile production regime had on factory workers in Bangladesh. Finally, Maria Steinisch (Heidelberg) looked at stress in the Bangladeshi garment industry from an epidemiological perspective and Adrian Loerbroks (Heidelberg) presented epidemiological data on the association between stress/mental health and respiratory diseases in Europe and Asia.

The last panel of the conference, “Asymmetrical Translations”, focused on the mind and body in Indian and Western Medicine. William Sax opened this panel with an analysis of the work of Ayurvedic doctors in the Malappuram district of Kerala. Johannes Quack (Heidelberg) presented two case studies from his ethnographic study of mental health care in India. The final day of the conference closed with a talk by Ananda Samir Chopra (Heidelberg) on translations and asymmetries in Ayurvedic nosologies and biomedicine.

Bringing together scholars from all over the world, the Annual Conference “Frontiers of Knowledge” furthered international exchange on health-related, environmental issues, as well as on the history of science. In addition to historical issues, such as reassessments of Ancient Medicine in Asian and European contexts, the conference also traced the development of health- and environment-related conceptions of knowledge across time, highlighting both Asian and European perspectives on, for instance, large environmental projects and their political or social implications. Moreover, talks and discussions on the transcultural aspects of medical technologies raised controversial contemporary issues, such as stem cell research, in-vitro fertilisation, and their impact on modern globalised societies. The 2011 Annual Conference “Frontiers of Knowledge”, chaired by Harald Fuess, was organised by Research Area C “Health and Environment” of the Cluster of Excellence “Asia and Europe in a Global Context” (www.asia-europe.uni-heidelberg.de). The Cluster’s next Annual Conference will take place in October 2012.

Anna Andreeva / Johannes Quack / Dominic Steavu

‘Asianisms’ and Regional Interaction and Integration in Asia

Freiburg, 14.–15. Oktober 2011

Welche Bedeutung hat „Asien“ für Asiaten? Welche Funktionen hat das Konzept „Asien“ im wissenschaftlichen, politischen und populären Diskurs in Asien und im „Westen“? Wie kann man asiatisches und „westliches“ Asienbewusstsein erforschen? Diese Fragen standen im Mittelpunkt der zweitägigen internationalen Konferenz „‘Asianisms’ and Regional Interaction and Integration in Asia (Late 19th Century to Present)“, die am 14. und 15. Oktober 2011 an der Universität Freiburg stattfand. Veranstalter war das von der DFG geförderte Forschungsprojekt „Asianismen im 20. Jahrhundert – Asien als Bezugspunkt der (Neu-)Definition von Räumen, Identitäten und Machtordnungen“, das an der Sinologie der Universität Freiburg (Prof. Nicola Spakowski) und der School of Humanities and Social Sciences der Jacobs University Bremen (Prof. Marc Frey) angesiedelt ist. Im Rahmen der Konferenz trugen 18 Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftler, u. a. aus den USA, Australien und Japan, mit unterschiedlichen disziplinären (Geschichte, Politikwissenschaft, Kunstgeschichte, Anthropologie) und regionalen (u. a. China, Japan, Korea, Indonesien, Indien, Philippinen, Tadschi-

kistan) Schwerpunkten vor. Auf zwei Doktorandenfora konnten Promovierende ihre Projekte vorstellen.

In ihrer Eröffnung erläuterten die Gastgeber Nicola Spakowski und Marc Frey, wie es zur Forschungsagenda „Asianismen“ kam und was im laufenden Projekt unter dem Begriff verstanden wird. Zum einen soll dieser Forschungsansatz dazu beitragen, die traditionelle regionale Zersplitterung der *area studies* zu überwinden, die selbst innerhalb der noch relativ homogenen Ostasienstudien zu beobachten sei. Zum anderen soll die Dichotomie „Asien“ *versus* „Westen“ relativiert werden, indem vor allem asiatische Blicke auf Asien selbst, also asiatische Asien Diskurse, sowie der wissenschaftliche Umgang mit Asien als ein eine Einheit insinuerendes Konzept im Mittelpunkt stehen sollen. In diesem Kontext definierten die Gastgeber Asianismen als diskursive Konstruktionen Asiens als eine Region sowie darauf bezogene politische, ökonomische und soziale Praktiken. Hierbei stehen intra-asiatische Interaktionen im Vordergrund, und Asien selbst – sei es als vages Konzept oder als das nationale Selbst ein- oder ausschließende Andere – fungiert als Hauptreferenz bei Identitätskonstruktionen. Damit umfasst der Begriff weit mehr als der historisch sowie akademisch bislang dominante Begriff des Pan-Asianismus, der oft als Spielart des japanischen Imperialismus begriffen wird. Die Wahl des Begriffs Asianismen im Plural soll auf die teils komplementäre, teils konkurrierende Koexistenz diverser Konzeptionen von Asien und asiatischer Gemeinsamkeit verweisen.

Im ersten Panel zur historischen Perspektive auf Asianismen diskutierte Rebecca Karl (New York), wie historische und gegenwärtige Asien Diskurse in China versuchen, sich von den jeweiligen gegebenen politisch-wirtschaftlichen Kontexten zu emanzipieren. Letztlich würden Asianismen allerdings zu einer „Ideologie der Märkte“, weil es weder historisch noch gegenwärtig gelungen sei, Konzepte des Regionalismus zu entdinglichen, also von ihrer materialistischen Zweckorientierung zu befreien.

Birgit Mersmann (Bremen) illustrierte an Beispielen südkoreanischer Museen, wie Visionen von Asien museal transportiert werden. Dabei spielen Spannungen zwischen Versuchen, Kunst aus Asien global zu verorten, und denen, sie vor allem mit Blickrichtung auf Asien regional zu etablieren, eine besondere Rolle. Diese wirken auch zurück auf die Komplexitäten von nationaler und transkultureller Identitätsbildung im gegenwärtigen Korea, das zwischen den Polen Korea, Asien und globaler Ausrichtung pendelt.

Im folgenden Panel zu nationalen und regionalen Identitäten untersuchte Stefan Hübner (Bremen) Spannungen zwischen nationaler Instrumentalisierung und pan-asiatischer Ausrichtung der frühen Asienspiele. Er zeigte auf, wie Sportfeste einerseits benutzt wurden, um die bestehenden Asym-

metrien zwischen Asien und dem „Westen“ auszugleichen, andererseits aber auch nationalistischem Hegemonialstreben und dem *nation building* dienen.

Judith Schlehe (Freiburg) erläuterte am Beispiel zeitgenössischer Diskurse in Indonesien, wie Selbstdefinitionen zwischen Nation, Region und dem „Westen“ balanciert werden. Sie verwies darauf, dass insbesondere moralisch-religiöse Vorstellungen in Indonesien dazu beitragen, ansonsten negative und inferiore Vergleiche mit „westlichen“ und asiatischen Anderen ins Positive zu verkehren und einen Überlegenheitsdiskurs zu begründen, der wesentlich zur Identität der Indonesier beitrage.

Tim Epkenhans (Freiburg) lenkte den Fokus auf die „virtuelle“ Region Zentralasien, die mehr noch als andere Regionen in Asien ein relativ junger und umstrittener geographischer Begriff sei. Am Beispiel Tadschikistans zeigte Epkenhans, wie sehr nationale Emanzipations- und Herrschaftsdiskurse, die auf die Unterdrückung in der Sowjetunion zurückgeführt werden können, die Ausbildung etwaiger regionaler Identitäten überlagern.

Das letzte Panel des ersten Tages stellte die Rolle des „Westens“ bzw. „westliche“ Partizipation an Vorstellungen von Asien in den Vordergrund. Tani Barlow (Houston) untersuchte anhand US-amerikanischer Missionarsliteratur, wie vom späten 19. Jahrhundert an protestantische Missionarinnen aus Europa und den USA zu dort vorherrschenden Asienbildern beitrugen. Deren Sichtweisen auf die jeweilige Gesellschaft verbanden Vorstellungen von „Asien“ vor allem mit kulturellen und sozialen Praktiken, die oftmals besonders Frauen unterdrückten.

Fabio Lanza (Tucson/Hong Kong) stellte das Projekt des Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars von 1968 bis 1978 vor und zeigte auf, wie das Konzept eines „America’s Asia“ in dieser Zeit dabei half, orientalistische und imperialistische Tendenzen im amerikanischen Asienbild in Frage zu stellen und die Rahmenbedingungen für eine wissenschaftliche Beschäftigung mit Asien und Asiaten im gespannten politischen Kontext der chinesischen Kulturrevolution und des Vietnamkrieges in den Vereinigten Staaten nachhaltig zu verändern.

Zum Abschluss des ersten Tages zeigte Nicola Spakowski (Freiburg) auf, wie eng derzeit im „Westen“ grassierende Vorstellungen von einem „asiatischen Jahrhundert“ an Visionen von Wirtschaftswachstum und Geschäftschancen geknüpft sind. Historische Rückbezüge dienten hierbei vor allem dazu, die angenommene Renaissance Asiens als Rückkehr zur global-historischen Normalität zu begründen. Diese Rhetorik jedoch reflektiere mitnichten die Realität eines innerlich zerrütteten und gleichzeitig transnational über geopolitisch-kontinentale Grenzen hinweg verbundenen Asien.

Der zweite Tag der Konferenz begann mit einem Panel zu „Pan-Asianism and Asian Regionalism“. Zunächst stellte Carolien Stolte (Leiden) die Akti-

vitäten des Asiatic Labour Congress vor. Der 1934 in Colombo und 1937 in Tokyo abgehaltene Kongress, der maßgeblich von Indern und Japanern getragen wurde, konnte zwar die Ausbeutung asiatischer Arbeiter öffentlichkeitswirksam anklagen und ein Erwachen Asiens postulieren, jedoch keine international verbindlichen Entscheidungen treffen. Der Zweite Japanisch-Chinesische Krieg (1937–1945), der die indischen Delegierten zu einer starken Kritik an Japan veranlasste, bedeutete das Ende des Asiatic Labour Congress.

Jürgen Rüländ (Freiburg) wiederum stellte die Haltung mehrerer indonesischer Akteursgruppen zu dem sich ändernden Charakter der Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) vor. Die 2005 getroffene Entscheidung für eine Charta, die einer stärkeren regionalen Integration Vorschub leisten sollte, bedeute demzufolge eine gewisse Herausforderung für die in ihren Außenpolitikvorstellungen meist national orientierten Akteure. Deren Debatte um die Themenfelder Sicherheit, Recht/Demokratie und Wohlstand/soziale Gerechtigkeit illustriert allerdings, wie externe Normen zu Regionalismus mit den gegebenen indonesischen Vorstellungen in Einklang gebracht werden konnten.

Den ersten Teil des Doktorandenpanels eröffnete Takashi Saikawa (Heidelberg) mit seinem Vortrag zu japanischen und chinesischen Intellektuellen in dem den Völkerbund beratenden „International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation“. Obwohl eine Zusammenarbeit mit den europäischen Partnern angestrebt wurde, diente die Betonung der eigenen Kultur jeweils auch dazu, die Idee eines europäisch geprägten Universalismus anzufechten. Letztlich hätten sich (Gegen-)Konzepte wie das einer „asiatischen“ Kultur allerdings als problematisch erwiesen, da japanische und chinesische Vorstellungen sich oftmals als inkompatibel herausgestellt hätten.

Im Anschluss diskutierte Sven Matthiessen (Sheffield/Sendai) mehrere japanische Organisationen, die während des japanischen Kaiserreichs an der Verstärkung der politischen und kulturellen Beziehungen mit den Philippinen interessiert waren. Während einige davon eine Südexpansion rein utilitaristisch betrachtet hätten, hätten andere den eher idealistischen, aber fehlgeschlagenen Versuch unternommen, die Philippinen in ihrem Unabhängigkeitskampf gegen die USA (1899–1902) zu unterstützen. Ähnliche Muster fänden sich auch im Zweiten Weltkrieg in Form der durch die japanischen Besatzer angeordneten „Philippinisierung“ von Klerus und Lehrerschaft.

Im zweiten Teil des Doktorandenforums betonte zunächst Silke Martini (Konstanz), dass gegenwärtige Diskurse eines „aufstrebenden Asiens“ keineswegs eine Gegenwarterscheingung darstellten, sondern in unterschiedlichen Formen bereits in der Zwischenkriegszeit aufgekommen seien. Ungeachtet der durch „westlichen“ Imperialismus und Kolonialismus ent-

standenen ungleichen Beziehungen seien zahlreiche asiatische und „westliche“ Intellektuelle nicht bereit gewesen, die „westliche“ Vormachtsposition zu akzeptieren.

Daraufhin erläuterte Stefani Jürries (Freiburg) die Darstellung von China und Asien in chinesischen Geschichtsbüchern vom Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts bis 1949. In diesen stand China stärker im Mittelpunkt als zum Beispiel in akademischen Publikationen, wobei kulturelle Wurzeln und Traditionen weniger bedeutsam waren. Die Bücher hätten demzufolge primär dazu gedient, die nationale chinesische Identität zu stärken.

Als letzten Beitrag des Doktorandenforums präsentierte Mikko Huotari (Freiburg) die äußerst schwierige, aber in den letzten Jahren zunehmende finanzielle Kooperation im Rahmen von ASEAN+3. Verursacht durch die asiatische Finanzkrise 1997/1998, führten die Institutionalisierungsversuche zur Vereinbarung von Swap-Agreements im Rahmen der Chiang-Mai-Initiative (2000). Die globale Finanzkrise führte zu einem weiteren Institutionalisierungsschub durch die Multilateralisierung der Chiang-Mai-Initiative (2010), die jedoch stark von japanisch-chinesischen Rivalitäten geprägt war.

Im abschließenden Panel der Konferenz zu „The Asia of Civil Society“ ging Torsten Weber (Freiburg) auf die Instrumentalisierung einer vorgeblichen asianistischen Vergangenheit in gegenwärtigen politisch-intellektuellen Diskursen in Japan und China ein. Im Falle des Diskurses von Politikern (*top-down*) lasse sich die Tendenz beobachten, die moderne Geschichte auszublenken und sich auf eine entfernte „goldene Vergangenheit“ Asiens zu beziehen. Der Diskurs von Akademikern (*bottom-up*) sehe dagegen die Beschäftigung vor allem mit der modernen Geschichte als Chance, Nationalismus und Rivalität zu überwinden.

Anschließend wies Tessa Morris-Suzuki (Canberra) auf die wenig auffälligen, aber trotzdem existenten „asianistischen“ zivilgesellschaftlichen Gruppierungen in Japan hin. Diese hätten eigentlich keine voll entwickelte Organisationsstruktur und damit nur einen geringen Einfluss auf die Politik. Oftmals seien sie auch nur von beschränkter Lebensdauer. Viele Mitglieder bildeten allerdings nach einer Trennung neue Gruppen, weshalb bereits eine Anzahl von fein gesponnenen, transnationalen Verflechtungen mit den umliegenden Ländern bestehe. Diese Art von Asianismus basiere unter anderem auf alternativen Formen von Entwicklungshilfe, Feminismus und der Geschichte der „kleinen Leute“.

In ihren Abschlusskommentaren stellten Marc Frey (Bremen) und Paul Kratoska (Singapur) konzeptionelle Probleme in den Vordergrund. Bei zentralen Konzepten wie zum Beispiel „Region“, „Nationalstaat“ oder „Souveränität“ handele es sich de facto um „westliche“ Ideen, welche sich nur bedingt auf historische asiatische Kontexte übertragen ließen. Zudem hoben

sie hervor, dass im 20. Jahrhundert für viele asiatische Länder *nation building* im Vordergrund gestanden habe. Auch habe kein einzelner Staat über einen längeren Zeitraum die Position eines asiatischen Hegemons eingenommen, was die Bedeutung von wie auch immer gearteten stabilen Visionen von „Asien“ als Einheit geschmälert habe. Asianismen hätten dennoch, nationalen Interessen zwar untergeordnet, eine „imaginierte Gemeinschaft“ geschaffen, die Vorstellungen von asiatischer Gemeinsamkeit als Instrumente der Selbstbehauptung und Befreiung nutzte. Heute stünden Asianismen häufig in engem Bezug zur „Suche nach nützlichen Vergangenheiten“, die nicht nur dazu dienten, nationale, regionale und globale Geschichte zu erklären, sondern oftmals auch die politische Gegenwart oder Zukunftsvisionen zu legitimieren. – Ein Tagungsband befindet sich in Vorbereitung.

Stefan Hübner / Torsten Weber