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Research Training Group (GRK 2833)

East Asian Futures

Visions and Realizations on National, Transregional and Global Scales

Activity Report

2025

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Research Training Group (GRK 2833) East Asian Futures
Activity Report, 2025

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Activity Report

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Preface

In the last year, the world has not become a more peaceful place. Ideas for postwar reconstruction in the zones of war and conflict are still far from tangible. At the same time, “Longing for Tomorrow” is on many people’s minds. Concepts of the future and the evocation of a better tomorrow are visible and audible everywhere, from local communities to the global stage.



Advertisement at Bochum Main Station in August 2025 © RUB, Moll-Murata

The main agenda of the second year of the Research Training Group “East Asian Futures” was fieldwork in East Asia. The members of the first cohort departed for East Asia in September 2024, in search of empirical evidence of future-related thinking. Ten doctoral researchers and four postdocs visited Shanghai and Tianjin, Seoul, Tokyo, Taipei and many other East Asian locations to explore actual moods and atmospheres of future anticipation, and to trace out past visions of the future from libraries and archives. Some researchers faced unexpected situations, like a short declaration of martial law in South Korea, which was lifted after several hours as the civil society

maintained constitutional legality, thereby averting a slide into authoritarianism. This and many other new theoretical insights and practical experiences will be in focus during the Fieldwork Report Workshop, the biggest event to mark the conclusion of the second year for the first cohort. This is also the occasion to welcome the second cohort. Seven new doctoral researchers will join the Research Training Group as of October 1, 2025, and everyone in the group – professors, coordinators and administrators, fellow doctoral researchers and master qualifying students – is excited about the new dynamics that will follow from the group's expansion.

This report serves as an overview of activities since the previous major event in June 2024, the Proposal Workshop. We present the networking events that have taken place since then, including the activities and interactions of the Mercator Fellow Professors, the mentors to our doctoral researchers, who have also reached out to the broader East Asian Studies community at both the Bochum and the Duisburg locations. After the three-day workshop in October 2025, the group will strengthen its contacts with partner institutions during small workshops in East Asia in November. Subsequently, plans will be made for a joint event of the first and second cohort, featuring conceptions of the future in East Asia. We intend to address the general public for this occasion in spring 2026. And while the second cohort will start their structured programme with the seminar "Conceptions of the Future in East Asia: Perspectives on Theories and Methods" in the winter term 2025/26, the first cohort will analyse the materials collected in the fieldwork period, bring structure and cohesion into their argumentation, and formulate their first results. These will be presented in June 2026 in a dedicated Preliminary Results Workshop, while the second cohort will by then have their refined and augmented proposals ready for their own Proposal Workshop. In this manner, the group anticipates becoming a flourishing centre of knowledge production in close cooperation with colleagues, supervisors and mentors from far and near

Bochum and Duisburg in August 2025

The RTG Speaker and Co-Speaker

Christine MOLL-MURATA and Markus TAUBE

References to the future collected during fieldwork in 2025:



Top left: Display of a "Future Sustainability Platform" at Red House Theatre, Taiwan © RUB, Gong

Middle left: Busan City of the Future Museum, South Korea © UDE, Matsuura

Right: Peanut milk advertisement for "drinking to a good future", China © RUB, Rau

Bottom: National Customs advertisement "For the future of this country", Japan © RUB, Wu

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Project outline

Short synopses in English, Chinese, Korean, and Japanese may be found below.

Introduction

The Research Training Group GRK 2833 "East Asian Futures: Visions and Realizations on National, Transregional and Global Scales" (EAF), directed by Prof. Dr. Christine MOLL-MURATA and Prof. Dr. Markus TAUBE, aims to train doctoral researchers about conceptions relating to the future in East Asia. It is based at the **Faculty of East Asian Studies** of Ruhr University Bochum and at the **Institute of East Asian Studies** of the University of Duisburg-Essen, at the two big research centres for East Asian Studies in North-Rhine Westphalia in Germany, joined together in the research initiative **Alliance for Research on East Asia (AREA) Ruhr**.

The programme develops and applies an analytical model of conceptions of the future, complementing research in the humanities (history, linguistics, philology, religious studies) with research in the social sciences (economics, political science, sociology).

Doctoral dissertations in this Research Training Group study and explain how projections and conceptions of the future have emerged, on what premises they are based, and how they have been and continue to be applied to the paradigmatic fields of (1) language, religion, and ideology, (2) self and society, (3) resources and technology, and (4) sovereignty and governance.

Research focuses on the period between 1850 and the present, with recourse to earlier intellectual heritage where necessary. The analyses include projections of the future by East Asian states and polities (China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan) in relation to each other, to Europe, and the world.

The programme opens up a new field of research in East Asian area studies, combining a macro-regional perspective with a focus on the modern and contemporary periods. The support of the German Research Foundation DFG is gratefully acknowledged.

Research

Core Research Idea and Main Topic

The Research Training Group GRK 2833 “East Asian Futures” proposes the study, analysis, and explanation of the **conceptions of future in East Asia**.

Taking a **chronological view**, East Asia has experienced epistemological change through confrontation with Western ideas and political, economic, and military dominance of the West since the mid-nineteenth century. The period before these interactions can be designated as **tradition**, or heritage.

The period between 1850 and 1950 constitutes an era of **transformation**, during which the ideational, political, and economic foundations for global interconnections evolved.

After 1950, new regimes, political systems and ideologies used projections of the future in ways previously unheard of. This tendency of **realization** made the People’s Republic of China, Japan, North and South Korea, and Taiwan coalesce with and compete against each other due to ideological opposition during the Cold War and also against the backdrop of global threats.

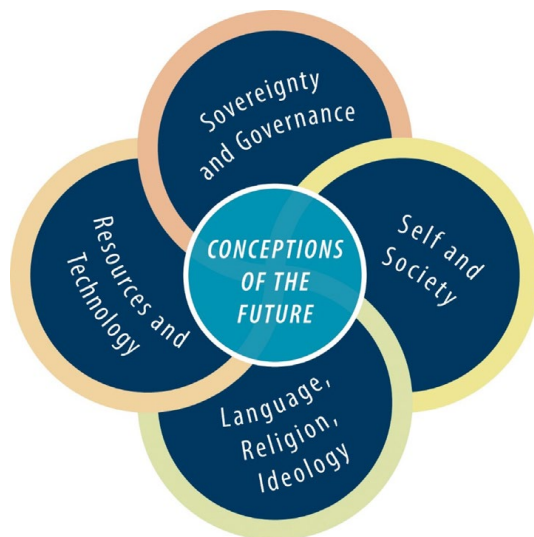
Yet with intensifying **globalization** and the rise of the East Asian economies, a new phase began in the 1980s. This period has lasted until today, even if in view of the recent crises some voices predict the end of this macro-trend.

Geographically, the East Asian perspective taken by our group includes the two large polities China and Japan, with Korea and Taiwan constituting smaller entities with colonial pasts. We will reflect on the projections of the future within East Asian states and polities, and in relation to each other, Europe, and the world.

The innovative potential of the programme lies in the application of an analytical model of approaches to the conceptions of future as a tool that connects the group across the humanities and the social sciences. In all these fields conceptualizations of the future lie at the core of legitimation and self-assertion, from the level of the individual to supra-state entities.

Thematic Areas and Typology of Approaches to the Future

The project covers **four thematic areas**. Starting out from the perspective of the future as a term and notion, our group identified **Language, Religion, and Ideology**, **Self and Society**, **Resources and Technology** and **Sovereignty and Governance** as the fields most relevant for future themes.



Thematic areas of the project

The project applies a typology that was inspired by a model for conceptualizations of the future developed by the contemporary historians GRAF and HERZOG (2016) which we adapted to fit the East Asian context. Graf and Herzog's categories of analysis include the following modes:

The "anticipation of the inevitable" or **future of expectation** appears in the form of religious, philosophical, and ideological outlines, prognoses, and instructions. In pre-twentieth century East Asia, this pertains especially to Confucian and Buddhist thought. The expectation of modernisation according to the Euro-American model emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, socialist concepts based on the premise of an inexorable course of history also belong in this category,

as do responses to globalization that emphasize continuities in East Asian divergences from (neo-)liberal market transformations.

The mode **future of planning** refers to an active attitude towards future concerns, realized or to be realized in politics, economics, science, and technology. In East Asia, the fields in which conceptions of the future of this type occur are phases of socialist planned economies, but also Japan's colonial policies between 1895 and 1945, and thereafter, the 'developmental state' involvement in industrial policy. It also relates to modern state-business connections that combine top-down planning with bottom-up market structures. An example of this mode of planning is to be found in urbanism, where urban planning is often based on utopian concepts of society and technology.

The dystopian **future of risk** relates to the experience of cataclysms, especially of technological warfare. This type of approach to the future aims to cope with the unexpected and guard against the dangerous and undesired by means of scenarios. During the encroachments on China's sovereignty in the first half of the twentieth century, warfare in WWII and the Korean War, the nuclear threat and system competition in the Cold War, and unresolved issues of unification or independence until now, the awareness of risk and a potentially disastrous future has been and is present.

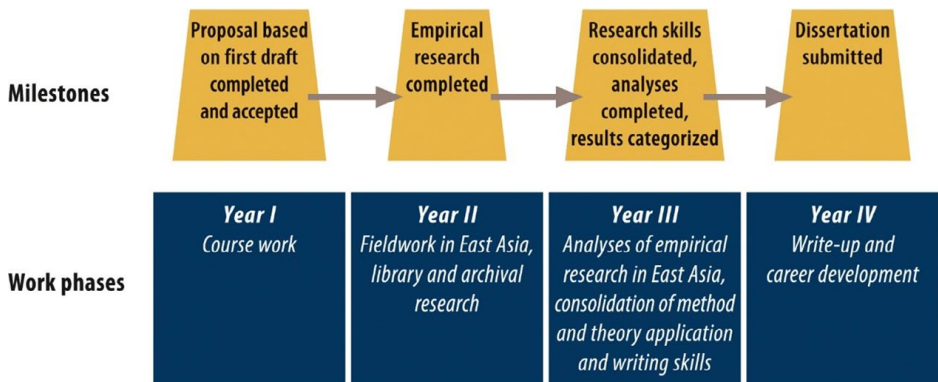
The **future of preservation** represents the notion that natural resources may not be available in unlimited quantities, and that cultural heritage may fall into oblivion. "Future of preservation" reflects the intention to protect the desirable, in the awareness that environmental deterioration might be irreversible, and especially with respect to securing both the ecosphere and cultural heritage in the interest of intergenerational justice. This projection of the future is also relevant for imagining social protection in the face of economic globalization, and for addressing the challenges posed by demographic changes that threaten reproduction in the populations of East Asia.

Didactic Goals

Doctoral researchers will acquire a qualification in East Asian regional studies and in one of the disciplines in the humanities (history, philology, linguistics, religious studies) or the social sciences (sociology, political science, economics) included in the programme, with an emphasis on advanced theories and methodologies.

The central aim of the qualification programme is to develop the specific profile of language- and discipline-based area studies research. This concept is operationalized through the establishment of a specific course programme and methodological training at the RUB, UDE and other institutions in Germany and East Asia. Career development measures complete the programme, to ensure that graduates are well prepared for entering international research careers.

The **curriculum** of the doctoral research programme is designed to run for four years. During their first year, participants will take classes on theories and methods, where they will receive coaching for their specific topics early on. The second year mainly consists of a period of fieldwork (6–12 months) and/or archival/library research. In the third year, the doctoral researchers will analyse and present the first results of their field and archival or library work to a larger academic audience apart from their colleagues and supervisors in the Research Training Group. The final year will focus on the write-up of their dissertations and preparation for career development.



Work phases and milestones of the doctoral research programme

Postdoctoral researchers engage in a similarly structured programme that spans over 5 years and incorporates two short-term fieldwork phases. They also conduct peer teaching of the doctoral researchers, organise joint events with the doctoral researchers, and are offered opportunities to present their research at RUB and UDE events as well as those organised by the Research Training Group itself.

Synopsis in English

Research Training Group (RTG) East Asian Futures: Visions and Realizations on National, Transregional and Global Scales

The RTG “East Asian Futures” provides doctoral researchers with training in concepts about the future in East Asia. It is based at the Faculty of East Asian Studies of the Ruhr University Bochum and at the Institute of East Asian Studies of the University of Duisburg-Essen. These are two big research centres for East Asian Studies in Germany, joined together in the Alliance for Research on East Asia (AREA) Ruhr.

The RTG was launched in October 2023 and to date includes nine doctoral researchers, four postdocs, and four qualifying M.A. students. The programme is funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

Core research ideas

The programme develops and applies an analytical model of conceptions of the future, complementing research in the humanities with research in the social sciences.

Doctoral dissertations study and explain how projections and conceptions of the future have emerged, on what premises they are based, and how they have been and continue to be applied to four paradigmatic fields.

The time focus is on the period between 1850 and the present, with recourse to earlier intellectual heritage. The analyses include projections of the future by the East Asian states and polities, China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, in relation to each other, to Europe, and the world.

Didactic goals

Doctoral researchers of the RTG “East Asian Futures” will acquire a qualification in East Asian regional studies and in one of the disciplines in the humanities (history, philology, linguistics, religious studies) or the social sciences (sociology, political science, economics) included in the programme, with an emphasis on advanced theories and methodologies.

The central aim of the qualification programme is to develop the specific profile of language- and discipline-based area studies research. This concept is operationalized through the establishment of a specific course programme and methodological training at the RUB, UDE and other institutions in Germany and East Asia. Career development measures complete the programme, to ensure that graduates are well prepared for entering international research careers.

Curriculum

Year 1: classes on theories and methods coach graduate researchers for their specific topics early on

Year 2: fieldwork and/or archival/library research

Year 3: analysis and presentation of the first results of fieldwork and archival/library research to a larger academic audience

Year 4: write-up and preparation for career development

A series of milestones, at which doctoral researchers complete specific steps toward the completion of their dissertation, is set up to ensure timely work procedures.

Synopsis in Chinese

“东亚与未来”课题组（RTG）： 国家、跨地区和全球范围的愿景与实践

“东亚与未来”课题组提供与未来观念相关的专题博士课程。它由波鸿鲁尔大学东亚研究学院和杜伊斯堡-埃森大学东亚研究所联合创办。这两所在德国颇具规模的东亚研究中心组成了鲁尔区东亚研究联盟（AREA Ruhr）。

本课题组于 2023 年 10 月正式启动，迄今已有 9 名博士生、4 名博士后和 4 名硕士生参与其中。项目资金来自于德国研究基金会（DFG）。

核心研究理念

本课题组旨在构建并应用与未来概念相关的分析模型，综合人文和社会科学的研究方法。

选题方面，博士论文应能解释未来观念与预测是如何出现的，它们基于什么样的前提假设，以及它们是如何在四个范式领域中运作的。

研究的时间跨度聚焦 1850 年至今，也回溯更早期的知识脉络。分析对象包括东亚国家和政体（中国、日本、韩国和台湾）的未来观念，这些观念之间的关系，以及它们和欧洲还有世界的关系。

教学目标

“东亚与未来”博士生将在东亚区域研究和人文学科（历史学、语文学、语言学、宗教研究）或社会科学（社会学、政治学、经济学）领域进行学术训练（侧重深化理论和方法论）并获得相关资格认证。

本项目的核心目标是培养以语言和学科为基础的区域研究能力。参与机构包括波鸿大学、杜伊斯堡-埃森大学以及在德国和东亚的其他相关研究所。本项目亦注重博士生的职业生涯发展，以期未来具备立足国际学界的能力。

课程设置

“东亚与未来”课程设立了一系列目标里程碑，循序渐进，确保博士生在既定时间内完成论文。

第 1 年：理论和方法课程，协助硕博研究人员尽早开展专题研究

第 2 年：田野工作和档案/图书馆研究阶段

第 3 年：分析并介绍田野研究和档案/图书馆研究的初步成果，将面对除研究培训小组同事和导师外的更多学界人士

第 4 年：撰写论文并为职业发展做准备

Synopsis in Korean

동아시아 미래 연구(RTG): 국가적, 초국가적, 그리고 글로벌 규모의 비전과 실현

"동아시아 미래 연구"는 박사 과정 연구자들이 동아시아 맥락에서의 미래 개념에 관한 이해를 높일 수 있는 기회를 제공합니다. 본 그룹은 보훔 루르대학교 동아시아학부와 뒤스부르크-에센대학교 동아시아 연구소에 기초하고 있습니다. 해당 기관은 독일 내 동아시아 연구의 중요한 거점으로서, 루르 동아시아 연구 연합 (AREA) 으로 소속되어 있습니다.

RTG 는 2023 년 10 월 출범 이후 현재까지 박사과정 연구원 9 인, 박사 후 연구원 4 인, 석사 과정생 4 인으로 구성되어 있습니다. 해당 프로그램은 독일 연구위원회 (DFG)의 지원을 받습니다.

핵심 연구 주제

"동아시아 미래 연구" 프로그램은 미래 개념에 대한 분석 모델을 개발, 적용하며 인문학과 사회과학적 연구를 진행합니다.

해당 프로그램에서 진행되는 박사 학위 논문은 네 가지 패러다임 차원에서의 미래 개념과 예측의 발전과정 그리고 이를 위한 전제조건에 중점을 둔 연구를 진행합니다.

1850 년부터 현재까지의 지적사료를 바탕으로 진행되는 해당 연구들은 중국, 일본, 한국, 대만 등 동아시아 국가와 정체(政體)의 상호간 혹은 유럽 및 세계와의 관계 속에 진행되는 미래 상을 분석합니다.

교육목표

"동아시아 미래"의 박사과정 연구자는 동아시아 지역 연구와 더불어 인문학 (역사학, 문헌학, 언어학, 종교학) 또는 사회과학 (사회학, 정치학, 경제학) 분야 내에서 이론과 방법론을 배우게 됩니다.

프로그램의 핵심 목표는 연구자로서의 언어 및 학문 기반 지역학 연구를 구체적으로 개발하는 것입니다. 이를 위하여 보훔 루르 대학교와 뒤스부르크-에센, 독일 내 기타 연구기관과 동아시아 기관의 프로그램과 방법론적 훈련이 협력 운영되고 있습니다. 또한 진행되는 커리어 개발 프로그램은 박사과정 학생들이 국제 연구자로 발돋움하는데 기여하게 됩니다.

커리큘럼

1 년차: 이론과 방법 수업, 개별 연구 주제에 대한 초기 코칭

2 년차: 현장 조사 및/또는 아카이브/문헌 조사 기간

3 년차: 필드워크 및 문헌연구의 첫번째 결과물을 지도교수와 동료 박사과정생 외의 더 많은 연구자들에게 발표

4 년차: 논문작성 및 커리어 개발

박사 과정 연구자가 학위 취득을 위해 밟게 되는 각각의 단계를 시기별로 조정하여 일련의 이정표를 제공합니다.

Synopsis in Japanese

リサーチトレーニンググループ「東アジアの未来」 国家、地域、グローバルなビジョンとその実現

リサーチトレーニンググループ（RTG）「東アジアの未来」は、東アジアにおける多種多様な未来に関する概念に焦点を当て、博士課程研究生を育成するものです。本プログラムはルール大学ボーフム東アジア学部（RUB）とデュースブルク・エッセン大学東アジア研究所（UDE）を拠点としています。ともにドイツにおける東アジア研究を牽引する研究機関であり、ルール東アジア研究同盟（AREA）の加盟機関でもあります。

RTG は 2023 年 10 月に発足し、現在 9 名の博士研究生、4 名のポスドク、4 名の修士課程の学生を擁しています。このプログラムはドイツ研究振興協会 (DFG) の助成を受けています。

核となる研究アイデア

本プログラムは、「未来」概念を研究の核にすえ、その分析モデルの構築・適用を通して社会科学研究と人文科学研究を相互補完を目指しています。

博士論文では、未来に関する予測や概念がどのように生み出され、どのような前提に基づいているのか、またそれらが 4 つのパラダイム分野にどのように適用され、現在も適用され続けているのかを研究・分析します。

1850 年から現在までの期間に焦点をあて、知的遺産にも言及しつつ、中国、日本、韓国、台湾という東アジアの国家及び政治実体が相互関係、また欧州・世界との関係においていかなる未来を予測してきたか、予測しているのかを分析します。

教育目標

RTG「東アジアの未来」通して、博士課程研究者は東アジア地域研究に精通するだけでなく、人文科学（歴史学、言語学、宗教学）または社会科学（社会学、政治学、経済学）のいずれかの分野の高度な理論・方法論を取得することができます。

このプログラムの主目的は、研究対象地域の言語と専門分野の枠組み双方を基礎とした地域研究を構築することです。このコンセプトは、RUB、UDE、その他ドイツや東アジアの研究機関におけるプログラムや方法論的トレーニングの確立を通じて実践されています。同時に、本プログラムの卒業生が国際的な研究キャリアを築いていくためのキャリア開発プログラムも用意されています。

カリキュラム

1年次：理論と方法についての授業、早い段階から特定のテーマについて博士研究生の指導開始

2年次：フィールドワークおよび／またはアーカイブ・図書館での調査

3年次：フィールドワークとアーカイブ・図書館での調査結果の分析、プログラム内外において調査分析結果の発表

4年次：論文執筆とキャリア形成

博士号取得までのステップを明確化したマイルストーンは、課程終了・学位取得のために必要な事項を逐次・適時行うことができるよう設定されています。

Project activities

On October 9, 2023, the Research Training Group was introduced to the University Alliance Ruhr at the Ruhr University Bochum with an **inaugural event**. The collaborative project of the research association Alliance for Research on East Asia (AREA) Ruhr hosted about 60 guests, among them RUB chancellor Christina Rheinhardt, at the restaurant Beckmanns Hof on the campus of the Ruhr University. After an opening message held by Prof. Dr. Denise MANAHAN-VAUGHAN, Vice-Rector for Structure, Strategy and Planning (RUB), speaker Prof. Dr. Christine MOLL-MURATA and co-speaker Prof. Dr. Markus TAUBE then gave an introduction into the event. The historian Prof. Dr. Rüdiger GRAF from the Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam and the sociologist Dr. Lisa SUCKERT from the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies Cologne outlined the challenges of this approach respectively from a historical and a social science perspective and discussed them with the audience.

The course work of the first year consisted of the **seminar “Conceptions of the Future in East Asia: Perspectives on Theories and Methods”** in winter term of 2023/2024, with each session being chaired by one of the principal investigators, participating researchers or the projects postdoctoral researchers, and the **seminar “Peer Teaching on Fieldwork, Archival and Library Research”** during the summer term of 2024, hosted once more by the project’s postdoctoral researchers. The participants were introduced to the four thematic research areas the Research Training Group’s scope encompasses and discussed how to incorporate the relevant discourse on East Asian conceptions of future into their own research projects. They also received lectures in methodology and fundamentals of empirical research in preparation for their upcoming fieldwork phase.

On June 10, 2024, a delegation of the College of Liberal Arts of the National Taiwan Normal University visited the Faculty of East Asian Studies, Ruhr University Bochum. The NTNU delegation members were Mercator Fellow Prof. Lin-Chun WU, PhD (NTNU Department of History), Prof. Dr. William Yau-nang NG (NTNU Department of History), Prof. Dr. Hannes BERGTHALLER (NTNU Department of English), Prof. Joan Chiung-huei CHANG, PhD (Associate Dean, NTNU College of Liberal Arts), and Mr. Eric

Chun-Chuan CHANG (NTNU College of Liberal Arts, Office of International Affairs). The partners from both faculties reflected on their cooperation hitherto, and introduced their own research. The Dean of the Faculty of East Asian Studies, Prof. Dr. Katja SCHMIDTPOTT welcomed the guests, and representatives of the RUB International Office Ms. Jonna HAENSEL-NEUMANN and of the Professional School of Education, Dr. Dr. Marie VANDERBEKE explained their respective roles in the existing student exchange programmes and the options for further cooperation.



From left: Pao-wen HUANG (GRK Doctoral Researcher and NTNU Alumna), Ming-Feng WU (GRK Doctoral Researcher and NTNU Alumnus), Prof. Dr. Rüdiger BREUER (RUB), Prof. Lin-Chun WU, PhD, Prof. Dr. Katja SCHMIDTPOTT, Prof. Dr. Christine MOLL-MURATA, Prof. Dr. William Yau-nang NG, Prof. Dr. Hannes BERGTHALLER, Prof. Joan Chiung-huei CHANG, PhD, Dr. Paul FAHR (RUB)

© NTNU, Eric Chang

Two days later, on June 12, 2024, the RUB Rectorate and the Faculty of East Asian Studies welcomed a delegation of the East China Normal University (ECNU), consisting of ECNU Vice Rector Senior Engineer CHENG Jing, Prof. Dr. CHEN Xuechu (ECNU Vice Dean, School of Ecological and Environmental Sciences), Prof. Dr. YANG Haibo (ECNU Director of Office of Science and Technology), Prof. Dr. YU Feng

(ECNU Department of Philosophy), Mr. MENG Yu (ECNU Executive for Global Affairs, International Cooperation & Exchange Division), and Ms. ZHANG Chao (ECNU International Cooperation & Exchange Division). On this occasion, the Memorandum of Understanding between The ECNU Faculty of History and the RUB Faculty of East Asian Studies was renewed and signed by the Prorectors CHENG Jing and Prof. Dr. Kornelia FREITAG. The Memorandum chiefly provides for exchange in the framework of the RTG “East Asian Futures”. During the meeting, options for further cooperation between the two universities were discussed as well.



*From left: Mr. Randolph GALLA (RUB International Office), Prof. Dr. CHEN Xuechu, Prof. Dr. Sebastian BERSICK (RUB, Vice-Dean of the Faculty of East Asian Studies), Prof. Dr. Christine MOLL-MURATA, ECNU Vice Rector Senior Engineer CHENG Jing, RUB Vice Rector Prof. Dr. Kornelia FREITAG, Prof. Dr. YANG Haibo, Prof. Dr. YU Feng, Mr. MENG Yu
© ECNU, Zhang Chao*

Marking the completion of the first year was the RTG’s **Proposal Workshop**, held on June 13–15, 2024 in Duisburg. The doctoral and postdoctoral researchers presented the current state of their research and received valuable individual feedback from attending researchers, among whom were the project’s four Mercator Fellows Prof.



Participants of the Proposal Workshop, June 13, 2024 © RUB, Brasse

Kaori HAYASHI, PhD, Prof. Hyung-Gu LYNN, PhD, Prof. em. Brantly WOMACK, PhD, and Prof. Lin-Chun WU, PhD.

Shortly hereafter, in early September, the doctoral and postdoctoral researchers embarked for their respective fieldwork destinations at the project's partner institutions in China, Taiwan, Korea and Japan. The RTG held **Virtual Fieldwork Retreats** on September 16, 2024 and on February 10, 2025, giving the researchers in the field the opportunity to share how they settled in, what their plans were and, on the occasion of the second retreat, to present the progress made during their fieldwork and how their time abroad has contributed to advancing their research. The doctoral researchers once more received feedback from their respective supervisors and the Mercator Fellows, further enriching their ongoing academic work aimed at deepening the understanding of conceptions relating to the future in East Asia.

With some of the doctoral researchers already having returned to Germany, the RTG hosted an **Exchange Workshop with Sungkyunkwan University (SKKU)**, its South Korean partner institution, on February 3, 2025 in Bochum. SKKU doctoral student



Participants of the exchange workshop, February 3, 2025 © RUB, Wiemann

Yeon-Jin CHOI and master student Do Rhee BAK presented their research alongside the RTG's participating researchers and Qualifying Fellows as well as RUB guest doctoral researcher Shaun YAJIMA (Tokyo/Freiberg), allowing for a fruitful exchange of ideas and suggestions.

After all doctoral researchers completed their fieldwork and had returned safely, the RTG hosted a third retreat titled **"My Colleague's Project"** on July 21 and 22, 2025, where, in an innovative format, participants exchanged ideas and insights with a fellow researcher and were then asked to present their colleague's research to the other attendees. By shifting perspectives, comparing approaches, and reframing their own research through the eyes of a peer, participants were able to gain fresh insights and generated new ideas for their individual work.

In light of the Research Training Group's endeavour to integrate talented researchers into the academic and educational spheres regardless of gender, socioeconomic background, and ethnicity, and to create a research environment of equal opportunities, it encourages its participants to take part in events raising awareness on



Participants of the retreat, July 21, 2025 © RUB, Kortung

equal opportunity issues. On December 14 and 15, 2023, the Research Training Group's first **gender workshop** took place in Düsseldorf, which included a talk by Stephanie SERA, M.A. (UDE) on special features of the German academic system and career support to women researchers at the University of Duisburg-Essen and the Ruhr University Bochum, insights shared by Dr. Maren A. JOCHIMSEN (UDE) into resources in gender research at both universities and perspectives after the PhD, and a podium discussion on gender research in East Asian Futures. On May 21, 2024, researchers and qualifying fellows participated in the RTG-organised **workshop "Discrimination, diversity and inclusiveness: awareness training for academia"**, held online by Prof. Dr. Matteo GARAVOGLIA (Tsinghua University) as part of the academic training and consulting network ImpulsPlus, discussing structural discrimination within their academic context, possible reasons for its emergence as well as how they can participate in nurturing a more inclusive environment. A second gender workshop for the RTG is expected to take place in late 2025.

Apart from activities catered only towards its participants, the Research Training Group also hosts an **online colloquium series** for a general academic audience where

external researchers are invited to hold lectures on their respective fields of research that pertain to East Asian conceptions of future. Since the series started in November 2023, the RTG was able to invite 11 scholars to present their research, with the most recent being doctoral researcher Jonathan YAINISHET (University of Göttingen) who shared insights in the Korean Demilitarized Zone in a talk titled "Parallel Methodology: Approximating Affective Futures in Recalcitrant Landscapes" on June 13, 2025. Next to present their findings will be Prof. Aaron William MOORE (University of Edinburgh), sharing insights on "Planners, Popularisers, and Prognosticators: Envisioning the Future of Warfare in East Asia, 1900–1937". The RTG plans to continue the series in October 2025. Additionally, in cooperation with the Department of Chinese History and the Department of Chinese Language and Literature at the Faculty of East Asian Studies, Ruhr University Bochum, the Research Training Group hosted a lecture by freelance artist, author and lecturer Dr. Heinrich GEIGER, titled "Suchbewegungen. Überlegungen zum Schönen in der Zeit", on May 14, 2025.

Individual activities

This section includes doctoral and postdoctoral researchers, sorted alphabetically.

Dr. Monika ARNOŠTOVÁ (Aff. Postdoctoral Researcher)

Presentations / Panel Chairs

- Presentation on research topic. Proposal Workshop, Research Training Group GRK 2833 “East Asian Futures”, Duisburg, Germany, Jun 13–15, 2024.
- “Role of Gender in Overtime Behaviour of Beijing White-collar Workers and its Implications for Work-life Balance”. AAS-in-Asia Conference 2024 “Global Asias: Latent Histories, Manifest Impacts”, Universitas Gadjja Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, Jul 10, 2024.
- Panel Chair for “Multinational Entanglements”. International Conference of the Young Scholars’ Group of the German Association for Asian Studies (DGA) “Thinking Futures in Asia”, Leipzig University, Germany, May 9–11, 2025.

Research activities

- Research trip to China, including pre-field work discussions with Prof. LIU Tao at Zhejiang University in Hangzhou and a visiting scholar stay at East China Normal University in Shanghai, Sep 2024.
- Fieldwork in Shanghai (qualitative study of over 30 semi-structured interviews with young people under 35 years old living in Shanghai), Sep 2024.
- Expert interviews in Taiwan with Prof. CHANG Chin-fen and Prof. TSAI Ming-Chang from Academia Sinica, Prof. FAN Gang-Hua from Soochow University and Prof. YANG Jingli from National Sun Yat-Sen University, Nov 2024.
- Visiting scholar stay at the German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ) and expert interviews with Prof. Jun IMAI from Sophia University and Prof. Hiroshi ISHIDA from the University of Tokyo, Nov 2024.

Dr. Martin GEHLMANN (Aff. Postdoctoral Researcher)

Presentations

- Presentation on research topic. Proposal Workshop, Research Training Group GRK 2833 "East Asian Futures", Duisburg, Germany, Jun 13–15, 2024.
- "Preserving Korean Confucianism: Confucian Academies as UNESCO World Heritage". Workshop "Preserving Korea's Cultural Heritage – Current Issues, Future Directions" at Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, May 16–17, 2025.
- "Outstanding Universal 'Confucian' Value: The Inscription of Nine South Korean Confucian Academies as World Heritage between China and UNESCO". 32nd Association for Korean Studies in Europe (AKSE) Conference, Edinburgh, United Kingdom, Jun 19–22, 2025.

Research activities

- Research Trip to Sungkyunkwan University (SKKU), Seoul, South Korea, Sep 2024 (Consultations with SKKU faculty members, including Professors HWANG Hoduk and LEE Jiha, archival and material collection at the SKKU Library and additional research libraries, research visit to the Information Center on North Korea, National Library of Korea (Seoul)).
- Preparation of the translation manuscript of *Elementary Learning of the East of the Sea*.
- Project discussions with Professor LEE Woojin (Ruhr University Bochum) on translation methodologies and source materials.

Buyun GONG (Doctoral Researcher)

Presentations

- "Scientific Management in Republican China: How the Future was Made Plannable". Colloquium for doctoral students, Institute for Sociology, Freiburg University, Germany, Feb 29 – Mar 2, 2024.
- Presentation on research topic. Proposal Workshop, Research Training Group GRK 2833 "East Asian Futures", Duisburg, Germany, Jun 13–15, 2024.

- Presentation on research topic & Introduction of the Research Training Group. Faculty of History, East China Normal University, Shanghai, China, Dec 18, 2024.

Funded excursions

- Summer School “Wissenssoziologische Diskursanalyse (WDA)”, conducted by Prof. Dr. Reiner Keller, Augsburg University, Germany, Aug 22–24, 2024.

Dr. Aya HINO (Postdoctoral Researcher)

Publications

- *The Subject Position: Modern Knowledge Formation in Japan as Translational Practices. Inauguraldissertation zur Erlangung der Doktorwürde der Philosophischen Fakultät der Universität Heidelberg.* Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg 2025. DOI: 10.11588/heidok.00036472.

Presentations

- Presentation on research topic. Proposal Workshop, Research Training Group GRK 2833 “East Asian Futures”, Duisburg, Germany, Jun 13–15, 2024.
- “‘Metascience’ of Self-Knowledge and Anthropological Knowledge? A Note on *Kokusai Nihongaku* (International/Global Japanese Studies) from a Historical Perspective”. Mittagsforum, Faculty of East Asian Studies, Ruhr University Bochum, Germany, Jul 3, 2024.
- “On the Limits of Analytical Categories: Japanese Imperial and Colonial Discourses and the Conception of Time and Temporality”. 18th Annual Conference on Asian Studies (ACAS) “Asian Temporalities: Chronologies, Seasons, Tenses”, Department of Asian Studies, Palacký University Olomouc, Czechia, Nov 22–23, 2024.
- “Transgression: A theoretical reflection on the temporality of future imagery of the Japanese Empire”. International Conference of the Young Scholars’ Group of the German Association for Asian Studies (DGA) “Thinking Futures in Asia”, Leipzig University, Germany, May 9–11, 2025.

Pao-wen HUANG (Doctoral Researcher)

Presentations

- Presentation on research topic. Proposal Workshop, Research Training Group GRK 2833 "East Asian Futures", Duisburg, Germany, Jun 13–15, 2024.
- "The Shift in Taiwan's Tariff Reform Model (1960s–1980s) and Its Future Vision". International Conference of the Young Scholars' Group of the German Association for Asian Studies (DGA) "Thinking Futures in Asia", Leipzig University, Germany, May 9–11, 2025.

Funded excursions

- Research excursion to the UK, including a meeting with Prof. Robert Bickers (Department of History, University of Bristol) and visits to the National Maritime Museum, the National Archives, and the tomb of Robert Hart, Jul 29 – Aug 5, 2024.
- Conference "Modern East Asian Reform Movements and Historical Transitions", organised by the Hu Shih Research Group and the Chiang Kai-shek Research Group at the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan, Oct 18, 2024.
- Presentation "Using the 'Database of Neologisms in Modern Chinese' as an Example to Explore Key Issues in the Study of East Asian Conceptual History" by Dr. Christian Schmidt (National Taiwan University) at Archives of the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan, Nov 8, 2024.

Youlim KIM (Aff. Doctoral Researcher)

Presentations

- "The Articulations of Unmarried Mothers in Korean Novels since the 1960s". International Conference "Marginality, inclusion, and gender in Korea: past and present", East Asian Studies Area, University of Málaga, Spain, Mar 12–13, 2024.
- Presentation on research topic. Proposal Workshop, Research Training Group GRK 2833 "East Asian Futures", Duisburg, Germany, Jun 13–15, 2024.
- "Contesting Family Ideology in the South Korean Novels from the 2000s: Projecting new images of families through female characters". Workshop "Representation of

Minoritized Groups in Korean Popular Culture” organized by Assoc. Prof. Barbara WALL and Dr. Younghan CHO, University of Kopenhagen, Denmark, Jun 21–22, 2024.

- “Representation of Unmarried Mothers in Korean Literary Works”. Association for Asian Studies Annual Conference AAS2025 (Panel “Mothers Imagined: Representation of Maternity and Gendered Roles from Pre-modern to Contemporary Literature in Korea and Japan” organized by Youlim KIM and Shiho TAKAI), Columbus (OH), USA, Mar 14–16, 2025.
- “Framing Shifts in Abortion Discourse in South Korea”. International Conference of the Young Scholars’ Group of the German Association for Asian Studies (DGA) “Thinking Futures in Asia”, Leipzig University, Germany, May 9–11, 2025.
- “Projection and Inspiration of the Future Families and Unmarried Mothers: Representations of unmarried mothers in journalism and literature”. 24th International Conference of the CEESOK – AKS “Scholarly Utilization of Archival Collections”, National Archives of Hungary, Budapest, Jun 25–27, 2025.
- “Framing Unmarried Mothers on Screen Through the Lens of Newspapers”. The 12th Korean Screen Culture Conference (KSCC) “New Configurations of Sociality in Korean Screen Culture”, Leiden University, the Netherlands, Jun 30 – Jul 1, 2025.

Eetu LAUSTELA (Doctoral Researcher)

Presentations

- Presentation on research topic. Proposal Workshop, Research Training Group GRK 2833 “East Asian Futures”, Duisburg, Germany, Jun 13–15, 2024.
- “Another Tomorrow: Revisiting State Socialist Past Futures and Their Legacy”. 10th Doctoral Workshop “Why Socialism Matters? Approaches to Research of the Political Idea and the Historical Period”, Juraj Dobrila University of Pula, Croatia, Aug 28–31, 2024.
- “Contemporary North Korean Depictions of the Future and the Concept of ‘Socialist Civilization’”. Korean Political Studies Colloquium, The Association of Korean Political Studies, online, Apr 11, 2025.

- “War with Nature: State Environmentalism and Green Futures in Contemporary North Korea”. AAS-in-Asia Conference 2025 “Reframing Global Asias: Margins, Modernities, and Mobilities”, Association for Asian Studies (AAS) and Social Science Baha, Kathmandu, Nepal, Jun 1–4, 2025.
- “Challenges and Prospects of Researching State-Driven Future Projections: The Case of North Korea”. SEAA-SNU Anthropology 2025 Conference “Shaping Futures: East Asia as Practice”, The Society for East Asian Anthropology (American Anthropological Association) and Seoul National University, Department of Anthropology, Seoul, South Korea, Jul 14–16, 2025.

Kohei MATSUURA (Doctoral Researcher)

Presentations

- Presentation on research topic. Proposal Workshop, Research Training Group GRK 2833 “East Asian Futures”, Duisburg, Germany, Jun 13–15, 2024.

Funded excursions / Fieldwork

- 28th Summer School in Social Science Methods, Workshop “Discourse Theory and Analysis”, conducted by Prof. Véronique Mottier (University of Cambridge / University of Lausanne), Università della Svizzera italiana, Lugano, Switzerland, Aug 12–16, 2024.
- Research trip to Seoul, South Korea (Material collection at Yonsei University Library and Shinwol Music Library, visit to exhibitions “Classic Seoul” and “140 Years of Aria” at the University of Seoul Museum), Nov 2024.
- Research trip to Busan, South Korea (Material collection at the National Assembly Busan Library, and Pusan National University Library; consultation with Prof. Ji Eun SHIN (Pusan National University), Jan 2025.
- Research trip to Busan, Tongyeong, and Seoul, South Korea (Material collection at Busan Metropolitan Library, a Busan-based local citizens’ organization, and the National Library of Korea), May–Jun 2025.

Minkyun PARK (Doctoral Researcher)

Publications

- with Guk-Bo SIM. "Theoretical and Empirical Examination of the Peacebuilding Potential of Pati-Agent" [in Korean], in: *Critical Sociology Association of Korea Conference Proceedings* 8, 2024, pp. 34–38.
- with Guk-Bo SIM. "Pati-Agent: Rethinking the Suffered Being in Apocalypses", in: Samantha GAMEZ & Julia PALMIANO FEDERER (eds.), *Apocalyptic Imaginaries and the Future of Peace: Decolonial and Critical Approaches*. Berlin: Springer (forthcoming).

Presentations

- Presentation on research topic. Proposal Workshop, Research Training Group GRK 2833 "East Asian Futures", Duisburg, Germany, Jun 13–15, 2024.
- "Theoretical and Empirical Examination of the Peacebuilding Potential of Pati-Agent" [in Korean], co-presented with Guk-Bo SIM. 2024 Critical Sociology Conference "Resident Autonomy and a Sustainable Society", Critical Sociological Association of Korea, Jeju National University, South Korea, Oct 18–19, 2024.

Funded Excursions

- ECPR Methods School, organized by the European Consortium for Political Research, online, Feb 5–9, 2024 & Jul 29 – Aug 2, 2024.

Media Appearances

- Newspaper interview, published as part of Martin KÖLLING: "Präsident Yoon des Amtes enthoben – Warnung vor Bürgerkrieg", in: *Handelsblatt* (online), Apr 4, 2025.

Dr. Qinqin PENG (Doctoral Researcher)

Presentations

- "Decline or Revival? Narratives of 'Change' in Modern Chinese Buddhist Historiography". Mittagsforum, Faculty of East Asian Studies, Ruhr University Bochum, Germany, Jun 5, 2024.

- Presentation on research topic. Proposal Workshop, Research Training Group GRK 2833 “East Asian Futures”, Duisburg, Germany, Jun 13–15, 2024.
- “From Lineage to Evolution: The Writing of Buddhist General History in Modern China”. Conference “Historiography and Hagiography in Buddhism and Beyond”, Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom, Jul 8–10, 2024.
- “The Future of the Past: Temporalities in Taixu’s Historiography”. 18th Annual Conference on Asian Studies (ACAS) “Asian Temporalities: Chronologies, Seasons, Tenses”, Department of Asian Studies, Palacký University Olomouc, Czechia, Nov 22–23, 2024.
- “Buddhist Past, Communist Future: The Writing of Buddhist History by Leftist Historians”. XXth Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies (IABS), Leipzig University, Germany, Aug 10–15, 2025.

Anna-Maria RAU (Aff. Doctoral Researcher)

Presentations

- “Moderne Chinesische Musik und die Nation in der Republik China (1912–1949): Die Diskurse der intellektuellen Musikszene in zeitgenössischen Fachzeitschriften”. 34th annual conference of the German Association for China Studies “Yi/chang – Ab-/Normalität in China”, FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany, Nov 26, 2023.
- Presentation on research topic. Proposal Workshop, Research Training Group GRK 2833 “East Asian Futures”, Duisburg, Germany, Jun 13–15, 2024.
- Ad Hoc Report on the Yue Opera (*yueju*). Symposium of the 27th International CHIME, Meeting in the Field, Chime Foundation, Zhejiang Conservatory of Music, Hangzhou, China, Nov 12, 2024.
- Presentation on research topic & Introduction of the Research Training Group. Faculty of History, East China Normal University, Shanghai, China, Dec 18, 2024.
- “Future Conceptions and Music in Republican China”. International Conference of the Young Scholars’ Group of the German Association for Asian Studies (DGA) “Thinking Futures in Asia”, Leipzig University, Germany, May 9–11, 2025.

- “Future Conceptions for Republican Music; Discussing Music Creation”. 28th CHIME Conference “Digital Futures for Chinese Music”, Chime Foundation, University College Cork, Ireland, Jul 4–8, 2025.

Funded excursions

- Participation in Fieldwork and Symposium of the 27th International CHIME, Meeting in the Field, Chime Foundation, Hangzhou, Jiangshan and Shengzhou, China, Nov 7–12, 2024.

Igor SEVENARD (Doctoral Researcher)

Presentations

- Presentation on research topic. Proposal Workshop, Research Training Group GRK 2833 “East Asian Futures”, Duisburg, Germany, Jun 13–15, 2024.
- Two presentation sessions on the Research Training Group, his research topic and research design and methodology in social science. M.A. International Relations cohort (Prof. Yaohui WANG), Nankai University, Tianjin, China, Mar 31, 2025.

Funded excursions

- Oxford Spring School in Advanced Research Methods, “Qualitative Methods 1: Interviews & Fieldwork” course, conducted by Dr. Marnie Howlett (University of Oxford), University of Oxford, United Kingdom, Apr 8–12, 2024.

Nora WÖLFING (Aff. Doctoral Researcher)

Publications

- “Walking the Earth’s Surface in ‘territory’”, in: *ArtAsiaPacific* (online), May 21, 2024.
- “Rachel Youn’s ‘Pleasure Circuit’”, in: *ArtAsiaPacific* (online), Oct 24, 2024.
- “Von der Brust zur Leinwand”, in: *Science Notes* (online), Dec 19, 2024.
- “The Young Body Talks Back—Healing, Agency, and Community Building in the Art of Charmaine Poh”, in: *Yishu Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art* 22, 2025, pp. 22–35.

Presentations

- “Contested Temporality – How Cao Fei investigates the crossroads of Science Fiction and art by using multitemporal narration”. Harvard Visual China Symposium 2024: Time and Temporality in Chinese Art and Culture, Harvard University, Cambridge (MA), USA, Apr 19, 2024.
- Presentation on research topic. Proposal Workshop, Research Training Group GRK 2833 “East Asian Futures”, Duisburg, Germany, Jun 13–15, 2024.
- “The Hongxia Project – Cao Fei’s multitemporal narration through the lens of ‘Artistic Historiography’”. 18th Annual Conference on Asian Studies (ACAS) “Asian Temporalities: Chronologies, Seasons, Tenses”, Department of Asian Studies, Palacký University Olomouc, Czechia, Nov 22–23, 2024.
- “Imagining the Future through Nature – New Media Art in the Sinophone Region”. International Conference of the Young Scholars’ Group of the German Association for Asian Studies (DGA) “Thinking Futures in Asia”, Leipzig University, Germany, May 9–11, 2025.

Funded Excursions

- Research excursion to the exhibition “Open Space # 14 Lu Yang ‘DOKU The Flow’”, hosted at Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris, Sep 4–5, 2024.
- Research excursion to the Centre Pompidou, the Louvre, and the Musée des Arts Modernes in Paris, Jan 24–26, 2025.
- Research excursion to Bangkok and Hongkong, visiting various museums, archives, and institutions, Mar 20 – Apr 3, 2025.

Ming-Feng WU (Doctoral Researcher)**Presentations**

- Presentation on research topic. Proposal Workshop, Research Training Group GRK 2833 “East Asian Futures”, Duisburg, Germany, Jun 13–15, 2024.
- “Envisioning Future: Modern Chinese Buddhist Intellectuals’ Understanding of Materialism and Emerging Civilization”. 4th ISEAP Conference “Science, Technology, and East Asian Philosophy”, International Society of East Asian Philosophy, Fukuoka University, Japan, Dec 14–15, 2024.

- “Future Through Buddhist Terminology: Modern Chinese Buddhist Discussion on Mundane and Supramundane Dharmas”. XXth Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies (IABS), Leipzig University, Germany, Aug 10–15, 2025.

Funded Excursions / Fieldwork

- Workshop “History and the Secular” at LMU Munich, Chair for Religious Studies, Faculty 10, organized by Jonathan Sheehan, Lorenz Trein & Robert Yelle, Jun 22–23, 2024.
- Japanese-to-Chinese Translation Workshop for the “Yogācāra Buddhist Dictionary”, Fo Guang University, Yilan, Taiwan, Sep 2–7, 2024.
- Lecture “Journey in the Study of Buddhist History” [in Chinese] by Prof. HOU Kun-hung, Department of History, National Taiwan Normal University, Oct 17, 2024.
- Conference “Modern East Asian Reform Movements and Historical Transitions” [in Chinese], organised by the Hu Shih Research Group and the Chiang Kai-shek Research Group at the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan, Oct 18, 2024.
- Presentation “Using the ‘Database of Neologisms in Modern Chinese’ as an Example to Explore Key Issues in the Study of East Asian Conceptual History” by Dr. Christian Schmidt (National Taiwan University) at Archives of the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan, Nov 8, 2024.
- Research stay at the German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ), Tokyo, Japan, Nov 16, 2024 – Jan 12, 2025.
- Conference “Spirit-Writing in Chinese Religion and Society from the Ming-Qing to the Republican Periods”, Kokugakuin University, Tokyo, Japan, Dec 7, 2024.

Fieldwork Results Workshop and Inauguration of Cohort II

LWL Archaeological Museum, Europaplatz 1, 44623 Herne

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

09:30 Opening Message

Prof. Dr. Sebastian BERSICK (Dean of the Faculty of East Asian Studies, RUB)

09:40 Words of Introduction

Prof. Dr. Markus TAUBE, Co-Speaker, University of Duisburg-Essen

Prof. Dr. Christine MOLL-MURATA, Speaker, Ruhr-University Bochum

Panel 1 (Chair: Prof. Dr. Christian SCHWERMANN)

09:50 Buyun GONG, M.A.

Scientific Management in Republican China: How the Future was Made Plannable
(Comments by Prof. Lin-Chun WU, PhD, National Taiwan Normal University)

10:30 Pao-wen HUANG, M.A.

Accounting and Future Anticipation: Customs Policies and Practices in Taiwan, 1850–1990
(Comments by Prof. Lin-Chun WU, PhD)

11:10 Coffee Break

Panel 2 (Chair: Prof. Dr. Hannes MOSLER)

11:25 Eetu LAUSTELA, M.A.

North Korean Depictions of the Future in Text Publications of the Kim Jong-un Era
(Comments by Prof. Hyung-Gu LYNN, PhD, University of British Columbia)

12:05 Minkyun PARK, M.A.

Divided Self, Divided Future: Narrative Contestation and Politics of Foreign Policy
Oscillation with the Case of South Korea's Relations with Japan

(Comments by Prof. Hyung-Gu LYNN, PhD)

12:45 Lunch Break, Poster Exhibition

Panel 3 (Chair: Prof. Dr. Carmen MEINERT)**14:00 Ming-Feng WU, M.A.**

Engaging the Secular: Conceptions of the Future in Modern Chinese Buddhism
(Comments by Prof. Lin-Chun WU, PhD)

14:40 Nora WÖLFING, M.A.

Visions of Futurity in Contemporary Art from the Sinophone Region
(Comments by Prof. em. Brantly WOMACK, PhD)

15:20 Coffee Break

15:35 Igor SEVENARD, M.Sc.

The Genesis of a Global 'Community of Common Destiny' – A Conceptualization of
Chinese Worldmaking (Comments by Prof. em. Brantly WOMACK, PhD, University
of Virginia)

16:15 Concluding discussion of the first day**18:00 Networking / Dinner**

Thursday, October 9, 2025

Panel 4 (Chair: Prof. Dr. Marion EGGERT)

09:30 Anna-Maria RAU, M.A.

Modern Chinese Music and the Nation

(Comments by Prof. em. Brantly WOMACK, PhD)

10:10 Youlim KIM, M.A.

Transformation and Construction of Social Discourse on Unmarried Mothers in South Korea (Comments by Prof. Kaori HAYASHI, PhD, University of Tokyo)

10:50 Coffee Break

Panel 5 (Chair: Prof. Dr. Katja SCHMIDTPOTT)

11:10 Dr. Aya HINO (Postdoc)

An Imagined Future, Disappearing Futures: 'Nihon-gaku' and Colonial, Internal, and Imperial Differences within the Japanese Nation-Empire

(Comments by Prof. Dr. Jan SCHMIDT, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven)

11:30 Discussion

11:40 Dr. Martin GEHLMANN (Postdoc)

A Confucian Future for the Country East of the Sea

12:00 Discussion

12:10 Lunch Break, Poster Exhibition

Panel 6 (Chair: Prof. Dr. Dr. Nele NOESSELT)**13:10 Dr. Monika ARNOŠTOVÁ (Postdoc)**

Current State and Future Projections of the Work Environment for Young Professionals in Urban Areas of Mainland China, Taiwan, and Japan

13:30 Discussion

13:40 Dr. Qinqin PENG (Postdoc)

The Concept of 'Change' in Chinese Buddhism and Its Modern Transformation

14:00 Discussion

14:10 Coffee Break

Panel 7 (Chair: Prof. Dr. Markus TAUBE)**14:30 Practical Fieldwork Experience Panel discussion with the audience**

Contributions by ARNOŠTOVÁ, GEHLMANN, GONG, HINO, HUANG, KIM, LAUSTELA, PARK, PENG, RAU, SEVENARD, WÖLFING, WU

16:20 Meeting of the Advisory Board**18:00 Networking / Dinner**

Friday, October 10, 2025

09:30 Words of Welcome from the Rectorate (RUB)

Prof. Dr. Achim VON KEUDELL (Vice-Rector for Structure and Planning, RUB)

10:00 Words of Welcome from the GRK 2833 “East Asian Futures”

Prof. Dr. Christine MOLL-MURATA, Speaker, Ruhr-University Bochum

Prof. Dr. Markus TAUBE, Co-Speaker, University of Duisburg-Essen

10:30 Introduction of Cohort II

11:00 Reception

11:30 Guided Tours through the Main Exhibition of the Museum (approx. 90 minutes)

Researchers & Staff

Doctoral Researchers (Cohort I)

Buyun GONG

Scientific Management in Republican China: How the Future was Made Plannable

Focusing on the history of Taylorism in Republican China from the 1910s to 1940s, this dissertation seeks to understand how the future was made plannable in the workplace and in larger economic and societal contexts by investigating three main areas:

1. Historical conditions. Under which historical conditions was Taylorism introduced and practised in Republican China? To which problems was Taylorism a solution?
2. Emergence of a plannable future. How was the future *made* plannable through scientific management? This question is to be approached with empirical case studies at different levels from work planning over welfare system to macro-economic planning.
3. Sociopolitical Effects. How did Taylorist style of work system shape the temporality of work-place and of worker's body? How did it influence work-related welfare system and labour policies in general?

A central methodological premise underlying the proposed dissertation is a hypothesis of 'doing future'. From a perspective of practice theory, the future is neither an objective 'thing', nor a subjective perception in individuals' minds. Instead, as a lived temporality, it is always enacted in doing. Another premise is that planning practices have constituted prevalent future-making practices since Western modernity. Republican China witnessed a similar temporal shift from an expectable future to a plannable future. On this basis, this dissertation seeks to broaden the analytical focus from future conceptions to heterogeneous future-making practices. It attempts to untangle the discursive, bodily, affective and material dimensions of how the future was made plannable.



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Pao-wen HUANG

Accounting and Future Anticipation: Customs Policies and Practices in Taiwan, 1850–1990

The Chinese maritime customs, established in the latter half of the 19th century, developed a management method containing modern statistical and accounting concepts with the help of foreign experts. This led to an increase in customs revenues, but China did not entirely adopt Western financial management methods. As a result, two different management methods co-existed both in China and Taiwan.



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After the opening of ports in the 1860s, Taiwan gradually gained independence from Fujian Province with the support of tariff revenue and was eventually declared a province in 1885. The cession of Taiwan to Japan by the Qing dynasty in 1895 resulted in the termination of the previous customs system. However, after Taiwan came under the control of the Republic of China in 1945, the customs administration experienced a revival until 1991.

Once a symbol of progress during the Qing Dynasty, it became a vestige of the past during the Republic of China's rule in Taiwan. The differing attitudes of the Kuomintang and the Communist Party towards this institution had direct impact on the different economic and trade development in present-day Taiwan and China.

My research will focus on ideas of future and modernity in fiscal and economic policies influenced by the West and the clash with the traditional Chinese fiscal systems and shed light on the factors that have contributed to the gradual socioeconomic divergence between Taiwan and China.

Youlim KIM (affiliated researcher)

Transformation and Construction of Social Discourse on Unmarried Mothers in South Korea

There has been a pervasive social discourse of stigmatising unmarried mothers in South Korea (Korea, hereafter). Sexual immorality is a prominent stigma that unmarried mothers are accused of and they have had to put great effort to erase the stigma. However, the personal experience of unmarried mothers in South Korea is not merely their individual stories, but the reflected history of colonial, post-colonial, nationalistic and patriarchal society.



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The term *Mihonmo* (unmarried mother) first appeared in print media in the late 60s and early 70s. Since then, the media has consolidated its way of describing unmarried mothers using repetitive language and symbols. Likewise, Korean novels after the Korean War occasionally depicted unmarried mothers; they were sometimes portrayed as poor war widows, indiscriminately sexually active figures, such as *yang-gongju* (western princess), mentally unstable, or disabled women. Various legislative measures from the 1950s also contained many discriminative elements against unmarried mothers and served as a means to restrain their bodies, sexuality, and motherhood.

This study examines articulations on unmarried mothers in the media and literary texts, and legal measures that influenced unwed mothers' legal status from the 60s to understand the development of social discourse on unwed mothers in Korea. Therefore, the interplay of fields of politics, media and literature which forms a dynamic triangular relationship is mainly explored. Moreover, unmarried mothers' projection for the future is analysed in relationship to their societal experience and pursuit of their agency.

This research project proposes that the field of literature tends to generate more liberating and challenging discourse on gendered norms, compared to the media. By delving into unwed mothers' hopes, desires, and aspirations for the future, this study ensures that the voices of unmarried mothers can be empowered by the literature.

Eetu LAUSTELA

North Korean Depictions of the Future in Text Publications of the Kim Jong-un Era

North Korea (officially the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) is stereotypically described as a relic of a bygone era or a state stuck in time. These labels carry ideas about its backwardness economically, but also about its stagnation in terms of ideological development: a Stalinist curiosity. In reality, North Korea has seen major changes both in its economic structure and in its ideology during the first decades of the 21st century. As ideology changes, so change the visions about the future. Promises given about the times ahead are a key factor in ensuring regime legitimacy, and as such have to be adjusted with the changing conditions to remain attractive and believable: this is true in North Korea as much as anywhere else.

This research focuses on the North Korean conceptions of progress and future. My understanding of North Korea highlights its origins as a part of the wider global socialist bloc, with a Marxist worldview that was initially largely inherited from the Soviet Union and China. At the same time, I want to focus on the unique changes that have been built on top of those foundations ever since the 1950s, and especially after the crisis experienced in the 1990s. In other words, I see North Korea as a post-socialist state, both in its economy and its ideology: the original socialist worldview has had a large influence on its development over the years, but it has since gone beyond it.

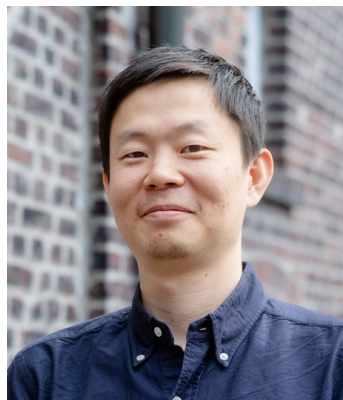


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Kohei MATSUURA

The Future of Cultural Policy in East Asia – the Discourse on Classical Music from a Postcolonial Perspective

Cultural policy has to do with the self-understanding of the people of a region and their regional and national identity. Contrary to its universal image, classical music has been found to be associated with nationality and social class. German music, seen as universal, was linked to German national identity in the 19th and 20th centuries; Vienna's identity as a musical city was constructed in order to demonstrate Austrian cultural hegemony.



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Postcolonial theories analyse the history, process, and impact of European colonialism; this also includes the various counter-reactions of colonized people against colonialism. Their focus is primarily on the effects of European imperialism on forms of perception, including perceptions of the future, and ways of knowing within non-European countries, as an expression of Western domination. Under this imperialism, non-Westerners also take Western perspectives to understand and represent themselves as well as their society. Non-Western artists and authors experience and discursively negotiate art and cultural politics from a Eurocentric point of view. Furthermore, civic political participation in cultural policy is an important topic, not only in East Asia, but globally.

The future of the arts, which have received policy support, is an important example of cultural policy and civic political culture. In fact, far from the image of a dichotomy between "Western" and "traditional", there were historical examples of the fusion of Western and indigenous music that are very suggestive for the future of cultural policy in East Asia. The aim of the proposed dissertation project is therefore to create a basic understanding of the influence of Eurocentric thinking on a global scale and to deepen possibilities of decolonial thinking.

Minkyun PARK

**Divided Self, Divided Future: Narrative
Contestation and Politics of Foreign Policy
Oscillation with the Case of South Korea's
Relations with Japan**

South Korea (Korea) has long been regarded as a shrimp between two whales – China and Japan. Due to its dramatic economic growth, democratization and recent K-pop fever around the globe, it starts to be recognized as a shrimp that turned into a whale. What is puzzling, however, is that it seems to still struggle between China and Japan with regard to its identity, resulting in an insecure shrimp inside.



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South Korea presents a unique case for ontological security perspectives or identity perspective in general. Its modern history is full of identity shifts. Before Japanese colonialism in 1910, it was regarded as a subordinate state under Chinese empire. Then under Japanese colonialism, Korea was branded with colonial identity. During the Cold War, anti-communism was staged by the state as the core of its identity due to the Korean War. My assumption is that identity was rather given or forced to South Korea before its democratization in 1987 either through China, Japan, the U.S. and/or its own dictators. And it was only after 1987 that as a democracy, there has been a rise of politics of Korean Identities and Selves, including perceptions of a self-assertive future. Since democratization there have been often shifts of governments between progressives and conservatives, which hold different views on what it means to be Korean and towards its neighbouring countries – China and Japan. Its enduring problems with these relationships will be analysed in this study with a view of the impact of future perceptions for ontological security and insecurity.

Anna-Maria RAU (affiliated researcher)

Modern Chinese Music and the Nation

In the wake of the Republican Period (1912–1949) the contact with European, or more broadly, Western music began to increase and with its growing presence musicians in the Chinese cultural context began to incorporate and infuse those foreign styles with elements of Chinese culture. This in turn brought up questions about the place of foreign, native and fused forms of music in the Chinese cultural sphere and made room for discussions on new Chinese music.



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Therefore, it is of interest to examine which ideas of political, ideological or artistic nature were expressed in the writings of members within music circles. The regional focus will be on the cities Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong as these were the major cities in which the examined phenomena of music occurred and discourse took place. Examining this should give answers to why this synthesis was created, as well as provide helpful insights to the following questions: Why was it deemed necessary to modernise this area of culture within national music circles and how did they argue in favour of these changes? What were the intentions, how were they realised and how did professional circles respond? Were there any counter currents?

To further discuss and answer these questions a selection of primary sources will be examined. The sources for this study can be divided into four categories, namely newspapers and magazines, texts from and about influential figures, texts from and about institutions of the music industry, and records of music. Especially journals specialised on music allow tracing strands of arguments within the discourse.

Further sources are biographies and collected writings by the discourse's participants. The participants in question were not only notable figures working in the creation and reproduction of music, but also working in distributive and commercial functions in the music industry. Thereby the dissertation will offer new perspectives on the art of sound and meanings attached to it in times of competing political stances.

Igor SEVENARD

The Genesis of a Global “Community of Common Destiny” – A Conceptualization of Chinese Worldmaking

The concept of a ‘Community of Common Destiny’ has emerged in the Chinese discourse and created conceptions of the future as well as worlds of imagination (Vorstellungswelten) as this concept does not yet reflect global reality. Further research on the subject may help elucidate how discourse worlds (Diskurswelten), transnationally networked social actors, and specific contexts in different localities shape conceptions of future and world order. Being deeply integrated within global structures since China’s reform and opening period, China has developed significant discourse power at home and abroad.

This project asks the questions of how Chinese diplomacy has created the concept of a ‘Community with a Shared Future for Mankind’, which purposes it serves, and which developments in meaning this term has seen in China and abroad. The project will argue, that while the ‘Community of Common Destiny’ is a global concept applicable to the whole of humanity, it is of imagination and not of reality. Rather than fixed development paths, it constitutes a rewriting of world order. In particular, the concept of ‘Community of Common Destiny’ has a significant impact on China’s approach towards climate change and its stance on environmental sustainability as well as Global Health through the implementation of the Belt and Road initiative. The project thus aims to investigate the role of the concept in shaping China’s approach to global governance and its interactions with other nations, examining the influence of China’s governance model on other regions.



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Nora WÖLFING (affiliated researcher)

Visions of Futurity in Contemporary Art from the Sinophone Region

Since the 2010s, depictions of the future have been an important part of contemporary art from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the Chinese-speaking diaspora. In the portrayal of the future, the artworks of numerous artists contain comparable narratives and images, with digital techniques frequently used for execution. These artworks visually and narratively

recur to aspects or moments of Chinese history. This dissertation examines the historical references and political entanglements within the works and their positioning in the global art discourse in the context of solo and group exhibitions. Special focus is given to modes of narrativity within the artworks and the exhibitions, as well as different modes of temporality that come to play within the artworks as well as in the exhibition setting.

The growing international interest and reputation of Chinese science fiction literature is a parallel development to the emergence of the body of artworks that chose science fiction narrative modes for their artistic storytelling. The specific interest in history and appeal to traditional visuality constructs multitemporal narration and blurs preconceived "temporal registers" (Assmann 2020), which gives the artworks the potential to broaden the discourse about futurity, the construction of history and linear perception of time. Moreover, the artworks highlight the importance that storytelling and fiction (Wang 2020) have in contemporary China. Here the artworks function as highly volatile vehicles for storytelling within the contemporary *exhibitionism* (Bal 2021) and the exhibitionary complex (Bennett 1994) and positions them at the intersection of presentation of individual articulation and representation of what Jane Chin Davidson referred to as "Staging Chineseness" (Davidson 2020).



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Ming-Feng WU

**Engaging the Secular: Conceptions of the Future
in Modern Chinese Buddhism**

This project aims to contribute to the EAF program's objectives by examining the Confucian-Buddhist debate and modern Chinese Buddhist thought in the context of the conceptions of the future in East Asia. Specifically, this study will explore how the Confucian-Buddhist debate has shaped modern



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Buddhist writing in China, influencing scholars' thinking about self and society, the relationship between Buddhism and modern society, and the interpretation of Buddhist texts. Modern Buddhist writings from the 20th century often feature comparisons between Confucianism and Buddhism, as well as integrations of their respective ideologies. Through these efforts, Buddhists have sought to offer a path towards enlightenment that is applicable to a secular society. Hence, to understand how Buddhist scholars view the relationship between individuals and society in modern times, we must examine the ideological context of the Confucian-Buddhist controversy.

The views about and conceptualizations of the future at personal, national, and global levels will be analysed through the lenses of language, religion, and ideology, and the carriers of future conceptions, including individuals, groups, and larger collectives. Through this research, I aim to contribute to a better understanding of the evolution of ideas of political participation, nationalism, and egalitarianism in East Asia over the twentieth century, and demonstrate how self-identity and social class influenced views of the future and informed the role of Buddhism in shaping the future.

Doctoral Researchers (Cohort II)

Konrad BÖHM

Propagating Chinese Visions of Order: Investigation into the Dissemination of Chinese IR Theories

Seo Yeon HAN

Encounters and Conflicts between Western and Eastern Thoughts on the Korean Peninsula during the 19th and 20th Centuries: Different Visions of the Future by Christian Missionaries, Joseon Literati (Neo-Confucianism, Sirhak), and Commoners (Donghak)

Hirota KOBAYASHI

Utopia – Dystopia. Beneficent and Adverse Visions of the Future in Late Qing and Early Republican China (ca. 1885–1915)

Arne MEYER

China as a new Global Space Power: A Role Analysis in the Context of Global Leadership Competition in the Area of Outer Space

Liliia PEICHEVA (affiliated researcher)

Taking sides or staying neutral: Making sense of China's neutrality in international conflicts

Martyna SZOYA (affiliated researcher)

The People's Republic of China's Weapons of Mass Destruction Non-Proliferation Policy: Analysis and Future Directions

Aman VERMA

"Liberation Space" and Post-Liberation Projections: Korean Intellectuals and Future Visions in the Context of Postcolonial Era (1945–1953)

Lea WALLRAFF

History as a Resource for the Future: Agricultural Reforms and Reception of Antiquities in Late Imperial and Early Republican China

Xiaoyu XIONG

Teaching for the Future: Governance and Autonomy of Teachers in Post-Mao China

Postdoctoral Researchers

Dr. Aya HINO

An Imagined Future, Disappearing Futures: 'Nihon-gaku' and Colonial, Internal, and Imperial Differences within the Japanese Nation-Empire

This postdoctoral research project addresses the attempts to reconstitute a discursive network of colonial, internal, and imperial differences that discursively sustained and legitimated the future of the Japanese empire envisioned by the Japanese political and intellectual elites. More concretely, the project identifies three loci crucial for such attempts, which together constituted a liminal space, or a transformative threshold, to reiterate those differences. The first is the semantic and conceptual shift from 'shukan' (the observing subject) to 'shutai' (the acting subject) we see in the early 20th century, which, as the primary cognitive apparatus, re-enacted the boundaries of 'Japan' and 'Japanese' as the modern subject, as collective self-consciousness, vis-à-vis the internal and external other of the Japanese empire. The second is what I term here as 'the grammar of teikoku (empire)', which offered a discursive disguise for the hierarchised scale of differences established by 'shutai'.

My engagement with 'shutai' and 'the grammar of teikoku' will constitute a conceptual and analytical backdrop for the third and main locus of research, that is the field of knowledge called 'nihon-gaku' (studies of Japan) developed at imperial universities as a site of self-knowledge production and dissemination for the 'Japanese' students and scholars to reiterate the scale of differences, and as a mode of cultural assimilation of colonial subjects into imperial subjects. By critically engaging with these loci, this postdoctoral project seeks to understand contestations and negotiations built into a discursive network of colonial, internal, and imperial differences, and to account for the ways in which a specific future of Japan and East Asia was articulated in a liminal space between epistemology, politics, and cultural production.



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Dr. Monika ARNOŠTOVÁ
(affiliated researcher)

Current State and Future Projections of the Work Environment for Young Professionals in Urban Areas of Mainland China, Taiwan, and Japan



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China, Taiwan and Japan are notoriously known for their culture of long working hours which was widely accepted by millennials and earlier generations but not as enthusiastically welcomed by generation Z or younger millennials. Each of these three regions has specific job market conditions for young professionals and the protest actions and ways of refusal of dire working conditions also vary. This prospective study aims at understanding the nature of protests young people adopt in their bargaining power in shaping the overall working conditions for all young workforce. Due to geographical and cultural vicinity, mainland China, Taiwan, and Japan are expected to demonstrate a certain degree of convergence and divergence. The aim of this research is therefore to identify the shared tendencies toward more healthy work arrangements and to offer predictions on how might these shape the overall working conditions for the whole young workforce in this region.

The youth in mainland China, Taiwan, and Japan feel a certain degree of disillusionment and disenchantment with the rat race that should ensure them a bright future. Interestingly enough, the trend of 'lying flat' seems to be a common denominator that occurs in various forms in all three societies. As the three societies find themselves in different stages of social and economic development, divergencies are also expected to emerge. Overtime culture and striving for material wealth do not seem to appeal to all young workforce anymore and our study could shed more light on what kind of countercultures are emerging among young people as a result, what is their take on work-life balance and what kind of work arrangements they might be willing to adopt. Understanding their attitudes could help us to foresee how their take on work and life could possibly change the future of the working environment in East Asian societies.

Dr. Martin GEHLMANN
(affiliated researcher)

A Confucian Future for the Country East of the Sea

The second half of the 19th century brought enormous changes and new challenges to the Korean peninsula. The Chosŏn state, already beset by numerous domestic issues, faced encroachment by Western imperialist powers and under Japanese pressure was forced to reevaluate its relationship with the Qing empire. Korean Confucian thinkers instinctively looked to the past for solutions on how to deal with the looming problems. However, their understanding of that ideal Confucian past reflected current events and discourse. So, by the end of the 19th century, well-established Confucian concepts and ideas were reinterpreted as values and thought fit to build a modern Confucian nation, able to deal with the challenges of an imperialist world.

One example of such an attempt to shape a Korean-centred Confucian tradition for the development of a Korean Confucian nation state can be found in the *Continued Elementary Learning of East of the Sea*, edited by Pak Chaehyŏng (1838–1900) in 1884. Pak's work provides valuable insights into the understanding of Confucianism and Korea's place in its tradition in the late 19th century, as well as a quite particular and never realized concept for a Korean Confucian future. This research project analyses the historical context of Confucianism in Korea and its evolution over time, and it will contribute to ongoing discussions of the present and future of Confucianism in Korea by looking at its historical potential to adapt to modern challenges.



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Dr. Qinqin PENG (affiliated researcher)

The Concept of “Change” in Chinese Buddhism and Its Modern Transformation

In premodern Chinese thought, change — “bian” — is understood as the fundamental state of the world and the inescapable situation of life. It has long been a central theme in Chinese philosophy, historiography, and religious writings. Rather than positing an external source for motion and order, Chinese cosmology interprets dynamic organization as implicit in the very nature of beings; it is one facet of the status of individualized things and is also embedded in the relationship between the patterns of nature and specifically human values.



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On the one hand, the changes caused by modernity, such as industrialization, urbanization, globalization, and secularization, began to reshape China at both institutional and conceptual levels. On the other hand, modernity is also loaded with new theories, which are mostly universal, linear, normative, and secular, to explain and control change. New intellectual tools, such as science, became powerful, if not dominant, in dealing with changes.

The concept of change is deeply linked with people's idea of time and their understanding of the past, the present, and the future. In particular, the future, due to its unknowable and unpredictable nature, often maintained a religious orientation. The Buddhist community's imagination, judgment, and understanding of the future is an example that contributes to a further reflection on how a sustained manner of coping with negative changes has taken shape between secular forces and religious beliefs in early twentieth century China.

Principal Investigators

Speaker and Co-speaker



Speaker Prof. Dr. Christine MOLL-MURATA (right) and Co-speaker Prof. Dr. Markus Taube (left)
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Speaker Prof. Dr. Christine MOLL-MURATA holds the chair of the History of China at the Faculty of East Asian Studies, Ruhr University Bochum. She specialises in the socioeconomic history of China, especially from the Song dynasty to the Republic, as well as the history of Taiwan.

Co-speaker Prof. Dr. Markus TAUBE (co-speaker) holds the Chair of East Asian Economic Studies / China at the Institute of East Asian Studies and the Mercator School of Management, Faculty of Business Administration, University of Duisburg-Essen. He specialises in institutional economics (state-business nexus, industrial policy, informal networks), institutional transfers and policy.

Participating Researchers

Prof. Dr. Marion EGGERT

Chair Korean Studies (Korean Language and Culture), Faculty of East Asian Studies, Ruhr University Bochum

Prof. Dr. Carmen MEINERT

Chair Central Asian Religions, Center for Religious Studies (CERES) and Faculty of East Asian Studies, Ruhr University Bochum

Prof. Dr. Hannes MOSLER

Professor for Social Science of East Asia – Korean Society and Politics, Institute of East Asian Studies and Institute of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Duisburg-Essen

Prof. Dr. Dr. Nele NOESSELT

Professor for Political Science with a special focus on East Asia / China, Institute of East Asian Studies and Institute of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Duisburg-Essen

Prof. Dr. Katja SCHMIDTPOTT

Chair Japanese History, Faculty of East Asian Studies, Ruhr University Bochum

Prof. Dr. Christian SCHWERMANN

Chair Chinese Language and Literature, Faculty of East Asian Studies, Ruhr University Bochum

Prof. Karen A. SHIRE, PhD

Chair Comparative Sociology and Japanese Society, Institute of East Asian Studies and Institute of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, and Director, Essen College for Gender Research, University of Duisburg-Essen

Mercator Fellows

Prof. Kaori HAYASHI, PhD

University of Tokyo, Japan

Kaori HAYASHI holds the position of Professor of Media and Journalism Studies at the Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Information Studies of the University of Tokyo. Since 2021, she is Executive Vice President of the University of Tokyo in charge of diversity and global affairs, as well as Director of the B'AI Global Forum. Prior to her academic career, she worked as the Tokyo correspondent for Reuters, and is a contributor and columnist for a variety of media including Asahi Shimbun.



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She specialises in media and journalism studies and in international comparative research on the digitalization of media and the transformation of journalism. Furthermore, her research includes the status of women in journalism, the representation of women in media, and gender justice in the world of media. More recently, her research interests turned towards the just use of AI for the future of digital society.

Her publications include *Media fushin. Nani ga towarete iru no ka* (Tokyo: Iwanami shinsho 2017). Among her recent English publications are "The Silent Public in a Liberal State: Challenges for Japan's Journalism in the Age of the Internet" in the edited volume *The Crisis of Liberal Internationalism. Japan and the World Order*, edited by Yoichi Funabashi and G. John Ikenberry, Brookings Institution Press 2020, and "Gendered power relations in the digital age: An analysis of Japanese women's media choice and use within a global context", published in 2023 in *Feminist Media Studies*.

As Mercator Fellow, she participated in the RTG's Proposal Workshop in June 2024 and the second Virtual Field Retreat in February 2025. Furthermore, she held two workshops in August 2024 at RUB and UDE, respectively, giving presentations "Japanese Media in an Age of Digitization" and providing feedback to the attending doctoral researchers and Qualifying Fellows.

Prof. Hyung-Gu LYNN, PhD

University of British Columbia, Canada

Hyung-Gu LYNN has largely lived and worked in Canada, South Korea, Japan, and the United States during his career. He teaches as the AECL/KEPCO Chair in Korean research in the Department of Asian Studies, the University of British Columbia, in Vancouver, Canada, and was the Editor-in-Chief of the multi-disciplinary journal *Pacific Affairs* from



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2008 to 2023. Receiving his PhD from Harvard University, he held positions at Hitotsubashi University and Hanyang University before assuming his current position, and has been a visiting scholar at Kyushu University and Seoul National University.

His areas of expertise are Korean and Japanese research, in particular colonialism, migration, popular culture, politics, international relations, and business history.

Among his publications is his monograph *Bipolar Orders: The Two Koreas Since 1989*, which was published in English by Zed Books (London 2007) and in Italian by EDT (Roma 2009). He also edited the 4 volumes of *Critical Readings on the Colonial Period of Korea, 1910–1945* (Leiden: Brill 2012).

During his visit as Mercator Fellow in 2024, he gave three public lectures — on Aesthetics in Webtoons and on Mukbang culture at Ruhr University Bochum on June 17 and 18, and on Korean popular music at University of Duisburg-Essen on June 20 — and participated in the RTG's Proposal Workshop in June, 2024, where he provided feedback to the researchers presenting their projects.

Prof. em. Brantly WOMACK, PhD

University of Virginia, USA

Brantly WOMACK is Senior Faculty Fellow at the Miller Center of University of Virginia and Professor of Foreign Affairs emeritus of UVA's Department of Politics. From February to April 2023, he taught in Beijing as Boeing Visiting Faculty Chair in International Relations of Schwarzman College, in Tsinghua University.



© Womack

His book, *Recentring Pacific Asia: Regional China and World Order*, was published by Cambridge University Press in August 2023. Previous books include *Asymmetry and International Relationships* (Cambridge 2016), *China Among Unequals: Asymmetric International Relationships in Asia* (World Scientific Press 2010), and *China and Vietnam: The Politics of Asymmetry* (Cambridge 2006).

He co-edited with Yuk Wah Chan *Borderlands in East and Southeast Asia* (Routledge 2017), with Hao Yufan *Rethinking the Triangle: Washington, Beijing, Taipei* (University of Macau Press and World Scientific Press, 2016), edited *China's Rise in Historical Perspective* (Rowman and Littlefield 2010) and *Contemporary Chinese Politics in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge 1991).

Professor WOMACK has visited all thirty-one Chinese provinces, and in 2011 he was given the China Friendship Award for his work with Chinese universities.

As a Mercator Fellow, he sat on a public roundtable discussion on "China in a World of Acute Crises" held by AREA Ruhr in Duisburg on June 5, 2024, and visited a seminar within the module "State and Society in China" held by participating researcher Prof. Dr. Dr. Nele NOESSELT (UDE) on the same day. He also took part in the project's Proposal Workshop in June 2024 and the second Virtual Field Retreat in February 2025, providing his research expertise and guidance to the RTG's doctoral students.

Prof. Lin-Chun WU, PhD

National Taiwan Normal University, Taiwan

Lin-Chun WU is currently a professor of history at Taiwan Normal University. Her primary interest is modern China history and the postwar Taiwan-U.S. relations. She has been a visiting scholar in Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University and a Fulbright Scholar at the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies, Harvard University.



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Her newly published book *Meiguo ren weijing de Zhongguo meng: Qiye, jishu yu guanxi wang* (America's Unfinished China Dream: Business, Technology and Networks), Taipei: Lian Jing, 2020, won the 10th Academia Sinica Scholarly Monograph Award in Humanities and Social Sciences. Other published books include *Kuaguo jiaozhi xia de diguo mingyun: Jindai shi* (The Fate of Empires under the Intertwining of Nations: Late Qing), Taipei: Lian Jing, 2024; *Meiguo da qiye yu jindai Zhongguo de guoji hua* (American Big Business and China's Internationalization), Taipei: Lian Jing, 2012; *Meifu shiyou gongsi zai Zhongguo, 1870–1933* (Standard Oil Company in China, 1870–1933), Xinbei: Dao Xiang, 2001 (revised simplified version, 2017); *Lishi jiaoxue lilun yu shiwu* (Theory and Practice of Teaching History), Taipei: Wu-Nan, 2003; and *Meiguo yu Zhongguo zhengzhi: Yi nanbei fenlie zhengju wei zhongxin de tantao, 1917–1928* (American and Chinese Politics: A Study Centered on the North-South Division, 1917–1928), Taipei: Dong Da, 1996.

Her articles in English have appeared in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, the *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* and others.

While visiting the RTG in her capacity as Mercator Fellow in 2024, Prof. WU gave two presentations at Ruhr University Bochum on June 4 and 5 concerning the Taiwan Collection of Materials on Modern Chinese and Taiwanese History and the inter-war relations between China and the United States. She also participated in the RTG's Proposal Workshop in June 2024 and the second Virtual Fieldwork Retreat in February 2025.

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