Global Asia Initiative Past Events
2016 – Current

Spring 2016

Global Asia: Re-Visioning Area Studies for our Times
March 25, 2016
4pm
Holsti-Anderson Room, Rubenstein Library 153

The Global Asia Initiative at Duke will be inaugurated with a plenary session featuring three prominent Asianists exploring connections, comparisons and convergences between different Asian societies and their links with the world outside. The inaugural event will also mark the signing of an agreement between GAI and the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) as GAI joins the SSRC’s InterAsia Partnership as a Coordinating Partner and a hub for nodal research activities.
Fall 2016

[CCP & GAI Joint Workshop] Non-Dualistic Logic in Nishida Kitarō’s “Logic and Life”
September 22, 2016
12:00-2:00pm
West Duke 204

Main Speaker: Takushi Odagiri (M.D. Tokyo, Ph.D. Stanford).

He is a postdoctoral research fellow for the Global Asia Initiative at Duke University and a visiting faculty member for the Asian & Middle Eastern Studies department.
** The Center for Comparative Philosophy will provide a light lunch for the workshop. The room will open from 12:00 for people to serve themselves and take a seat.

Abstract:

Nishida, Kitarō (1870-1945) is a twentieth-century Japanese philosopher. Influenced by Fichte and Hegel, Nishida’s philosophical work is often compared with Lebensphilosophie [philosophy of life], the intellectual trend that came on the scene around the turn of the 20th century. In this reading workshop, we will read and discuss the first few sections of “Logic and Life” (1936), in which Nishida talks about the origin of logic based on his non-dualism.

The reading “Logic and Life” can be found at: [http://search.library.duke.edu/search?id=DUKE005475145](http://search.library.duke.edu/search?id=DUKE005475145)

Or search “Place and Two Dialectic: Two Essays.”
In his recent study The Rise of Modern Science Explained: A Comparative History the historian of science Floris Cohen offers a new analytical tool in terms of modes of nature-knowledge to explain the emergence of modern science. He argues that three modes of nature-knowledge – realist mathematical, kinetic corpuscular, and fact-finding experimental – combined to make this possible. Cohen traces the roots of the first two modes to traditions of ancient Greek thought in Athens and Alexandria respectively, and the last as spontaneously arising within Renaissance Europe. This allows him to articulate a comparative history which explains why modern science emerged in Europe and not in any one of the other leading civilizations.

This talk proposes that the origins of these modes of nature-knowledge are better traced to the impact of three crucial influences entering Renaissance Europe from outside - the powerful computational techniques of the Indian number system, the Arabic optics of Ibn al-Haytham, and the flow of mechanical technologies from China across the corridor of communication created by the Mongol Empire. Although the impact of Indian numbers, Arabic optics and Chinese technologies on Renaissance Europe is widely appreciated their deep implications for modern science become more evident when we consider how they shaped the modes of natural-knowledge Cohen invokes to explain the rise of modern science. But this also requires us to go beyond the comparative approach within which he confines them toward a connective history that traces the origins of his three modes of nature-knowledge into the wider global context of Renaissance Europe.

The Center for Comparative Philosophy & Global Asia Initiative Joint Reading Workshop
Nishida on Well-Being: Reflections from Medieval Buddhist Philosophy
October 13, 2016
12:00 – 2:00 PM
West Duke 204

Main Speaker: Takushi Odagiri (M.D. Tokyo, Ph.D. Stanford).

He is a postdoctoral research fellow for the Global Asia Initiative at Duke University and a visiting faculty member for the Asian & Middle Eastern Studies department.

Commentator: Bobby Bingle (Ph.D. Student, the Department of Philosophy, Duke University)

** The Center for Comparative Philosophy will provide a light lunch for the workshop. The room will open from 12:00 for people to serve themselves and take a seat.

Nishida, Kitarō (1870-1945) is one of the most influential twentieth-century Japanese philosophers. Influenced by Fichte and Hegel, Nishida’s work is often compared with Lebensphilosophie [philosophy of life], the philosophical trend that arise around the turn of the 20th century. His main works include An Inquiry into the Good (1911), Intuition and Reflection in Self-Consciousness (1917), Place (1926), and The Logic of Place and the Religious Worldview (1945).

This workshop will discuss Nishida’s ideas of well-being, which is closely related to his philosophy of life and the environment. There are two seemingly contradictory ideas of well-being in his thought, unity and self-negation (or “dialectics”). According to Nishida, although well-being is defined by the unity of experience, it is more fundamentally characterized as self-negation. Drawing upon Medieval Buddhist philosophy, the speaker will discuss these notions in Nishida’s early essay from An Inquiry into the Good (1911), and his late essay Logic and Life (1936).
In this presentation, connections are made between and among a broad array of changes associated with British imperial control in Lower Burma. Not only did the advent of British control lead to well-known changes in political authority and economic structure/orientation, but also to profound environmental and demographic changes, to possible psycho-social reconfigurations, and, perhaps most troubling, to deleterious biometric changes in the Burmese population.

This talk is apart of our Global Asia Initiative Environmental Humanities Series
India-China relations appeared to have entered a period of tensions during the leadership of two assertive leaders, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and China's President Xi Jinping. But the overall trend of expanding interaction in multiple spheres continued to grow. Xi Jinping's signature initiative, One Belt, One Road (OBOR) was critically seen by Indian policy-makers as China's strategic move to expand its influence in Euro-Asia, as a counter to US's 'pivot to Asia' strategy. While OBOR and the US factor, besides competing policies in their neighbourhood and in Indian Ocean, brought new elements in India-China relations, the old irritants remained alive. The boundary dispute, the large trade deficit for India and the Dalai Lama's activities engaged them in negotiations. The broad spectrum of India-China relations was most positive in multilateral and global levels. India joined the China-initiated Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank as a founder member. On climate change and global financial reforms both spoke from the same platform in G-20, IMF and WTO. Even though trade and investment were still on a slow track, their cooperation on several fronts continued to grow despite the new areas of tensions. In this context, I will discuss the options and trends followed by the state and social movements in these two countries. A light lunch will be served.
This conference aims to reflect and analyze aspects of the CR and its influence over the decades in the world beyond China proper or beyond its historical period in China. This two day conference opens with a keynote speaker, an art exhibit on the themes of the Cultural Revolution poster art, and the film premier of Wu Wenguang’s Investigating My Father. The second day includes a list of speakers covering topics from Maoism in Peru’s Shining Path to the effects of the Cultural Revolution on Thailand and India.
Today, appeals to nativism and political mobilization rooted in religious ideals are motivating systemic change and fomenting social upheaval across the world. In this one-day symposium, participants in the two panels will present case studies from Japan, Pakistan, Turkey, and other Asian nations to discuss contentious and frequently under-examined religious dynamics that shape the region today.

Cosponsored by the Global Asia Initiative, Asian/Pacific Studies Institute, North Carolina State University, Duke Islamic Studies Center.
The Center for Comparative Philosophy & Global Asia Initiative Joint Reading Workshop
Aristotle on the Connection Between Virtue and Happiness
November 10, 2016
12:00-2:00 PM
West Duke 204

Main Speaker: Sukaina Hirji (Virginia Tech)

Sukaina Hirji (Princeton PhD) is Assistant Professor in the Philosophy Department at Virginia Tech. Her area of research specialty is ancient philosophy, with a particular focus on Aristotle.

Commentator: Sungwoo Um (Ph.D. Student, the Department of Philosophy, Duke University)

*There will be an informal Coffee Session with the speaker after the talk (2pm at Philosophy Department Lounge). Dr. Hirji will share with students and faculty her experience on the job market last year! You can join us at the coffee session if you cannot make to the talk!

** The Center for Comparative Philosophy will provide a light lunch for the workshop. The room will open from 12:00 for people to serve themselves and take a seat.

Abstract: In this talk, she sketches the structure of Aristotle’s own ethical theory, and suggests why it deserves renewed philosophical attention in its own right. She argues that neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics gets the structure of Aristotle’s ethical theory almost entirely backwards. According to her view, Aristotle's theory gives us a way of understanding the necessary connection between being virtuous and being happy without being vulnerable to the charge of egoism.
Embroided in vicious cross-border sectarian wars, the Middle East dominates daily headline news. Turmoil in the Middle East contrasts starkly with encouraging signs of democratic transition in Southeast Asia even if at times, it seems fragile as in Myanmar. The Philippines and Indonesia have completed their transition and developed relatively open but messy, flawed and highly contested political systems. Thailand’s authoritarian resurgence highlights the threat of democratic reversals. What accounts for these differences? This seminar will discuss three key factors: the impact of a civil society infrastructure or the lack thereof; the importance of coalitions between the military, civil society and the business community; and the significance of properly managing inter-ethnic relations. There are lessons to be learnt from transitions in Southeast Asia, but these have to be are treated with caution and consideration, given the different historical, social, political and economic context in the Middle East. Yet experiences in Southeast Asia and Tunisia demonstrate that transition in the Middle East and North Africa is possible and inevitable. The 2011 Arab revolts were the beginning of a tortuous process of two steps forward, one step backward that could take up to a quarter of a century or more, as in Southeast Asia. The comparison of the two regions provides insights on how the process in the Middle East and North Africa can be moved forward.
The Sacred Grove and the City: Analysis of Preference in India
November 21, 2016
4:30 PM
John Hope Franklin Center, Ahmadieh Family Conference Hall

The Global Asia Initiative Environmental Humanities Series Presents:

David Grace proposes to present findings from his 2016 survey of residents living near four sacred grove sites at various levels of urbanization in India’s National Capital Region and its southern periphery. This research centers on an analysis of preferences for sacred and non-sacred forests given urbanization. Utilizing revealed preference data on actual forest visits in addition to stated preference data on visit choice of hypothetical forests from contingent valuation questions, Grace identifies demand for sacred forests and non-sacred forests. Further, discrete choice tasks allow me to quantify the impact of forest size, quality, temple presence, and extraction level on forest preference. Given these models of preference based on demand, Grace tests hypotheses on the cognitive underpinnings of demand by forest type and characteristic. His findings will contribute to growing discourse on sacred natural sites and their conservation prospects given cultural and environmental change scenarios.
Dr. Yih-Ren Lin from Taipei Medical University in Taiwan will speak about indigenous peoples' traditional ecological knowledge and its struggling existence with Taiwan government's nature conservation policy. He also touches upon the issue of transformative justice and Taiwan's historical truth seeking expressed through Taiwan president's apology to indigenous peoples on 1 August, 2016. The wind-fallen beech incident in 2005 is the case to show Taiwan's indigenous natural history and related local knowledge is undermined by the modern nature conservation government's policy. The current government's policy is much influenced by the early international trend on nature-people dichotomy. Under these circumstances, the indigenous traditional use of natural resources is heavily prohibited by the conservation laws. From the participatory process, Dr. Lin argues the indigenous ecological knowledge that embodies their delicate interaction with the environment materially and metaphysically is a challenge to the nature-people dichotomy of the modern nature conservation policy thinking. This revelation of indigenous truth might be continued by the action of Taiwan president's apology and more hidden indigenous stories will be told to justify the value of indigenous ecological knowledge in terms of nature conservation.
On Jan 22-23, 2017, the Global Asia Initiative at Duke will organize a workshop on the Environmental Humanities in Asia (EHA) program it is initiating at Duke. The format of the workshop will include presenters making 20 minute presentations introducing their work and its significance for an agenda with the EHA. The workshop is designed around the visit of Lin Yih-ren, a Taiwanese scholar who works on Buddhist environmentalism, aboriginal hunting cultures and multi-species relations.

Sunday January 22nd, 2017
12:00 pm: Lunch

12.30 pm -1.30pm
Keynote Speaker: Yih-Ren Lin, Taipei Medical University: ‘Disaster: Administrators, Buddhists and Indigenous resilience’

1.30-3.00 pm: Environmental Justice:
Kalyanakrishnan Sivaramakrishnan, Yale University: Environmental Jurisprudence and Inequality in India

Julia Thomas, University of Notre Dame: The Politics of Periodization: “the Anthropocene” and Asia
Carlos Rojas, Duke University: Imagining locale: Hong Kong protest movements in the age of the Anthropocene

3.15-4.45 pm: Historical Approaches:
Christian Lentz, University of North Carolina: The Labors of Citizenship: Environmental Politics in Postcolonial Vietnam
Meng Yue, University of Toronto: Contested Ways of the “Good Life”

4.45-6.15 pm: Technology and Culture:
Marc Jeuland, Duke University: Preference heterogeneity and adoption of improved cookstoves in northern India
Meena Khandelwal, University of Iowa: In Favor of Awkward Conversations: Universalizing Epistemologies and Deep Meaning
Ralph Litzinger, Duke University and Fan Yang, University of Maryland, Baltimore County: Eco-media Events: Media Materialism as a New Method for Environmental Humanities

Monday January 23rd, 2017
9 am Meet and coffee/breakfast rolls/fruit

9.30 am-11.30 am: Spiritual Ecologies:
Robert Weller, Boston University: Religious Change and Disturbed Religious Ecosystems in Jiangsu, China
Chris Coggins, Bard College at Simon’s Rock: Wind-Water Polities: Village Fengshui Forests and Sustainable Citizenship in Southern China
Dan Smyer Yü, Yunnan Minzu University: Eco-geological Terrains of Gods, Humans, and the Earth: An Ethography of Folk Buddhist Environmental Humanities in Amdo
David Grace, Duke University: The Sacred Grove and the City: Analysis of Preferences in India’s National Capital Region

11.30-1.00 pm: Animals and Humans:
Haiyan Lee, Stanford University: “A Convocation of Politic Worms”: The Romance of the Species in the Anthropocene
Jeffrey Nicolaisen, Duke University: Sustainable Citizenship and the Taiwanese Canine: Who is included in the Anthropocene citizenry?
Barbara Ambros, University of North Carolina: Hidy, Hidy, Little Rascal: Raccoons as a Non-native Species and National Identity in Japan

1.00-1.30 pm Lunch

1.30-3.00 pm: Representing Degradation:
William Schaefer, University of Rochester: Photograph Ecologies: Picturing the Anthropocene in China
Melody Jue, The University of California, Santa Barbara: Environmental Media and the Futures of Storytelling
Takushi Odagiri, Duke University: The Binary of the Everyday after the Fukushima Crisis

3.00-3.45: Wrap Up: moderated by Prasenjit Duara

The Center for Comparative Philosophy & Global Asia Initiative Joint Reading Workshop
Daoism Meets Environmental Ethics: Relational Virtue in Zhuangzi and Leopold
February 2, 2017
1:30-3:30 PM
West Duke 204

Main Speaker: Marion Hourdequin (Colorado College)

Marion is Associate Professor and Chair of the Philosophy Department at Colorado College. She is the author of Environmental Ethics: From Theory to Practice (Bloomsbury, 2015) and editor of Restoring Layered Landscapes: History, Ecology, and Culture (Oxford, 2016).

Commentator: Ewan Kingston (Ph.D. Student, the Department of Philosophy, Duke University)

** The Center for Comparative Philosophy will provide a light lunch for the workshop. The room will open from 1:15pm for people to serve themselves and take a seat.

Abstract: This talk explores the concept of relational virtue and its relevance to environmental ethics through discussion of two texts: the Zhuangzi (a classical Daoist text) and Aldo Leopold’s Sand County Almanac. I argue that both texts provide insights into the possibility of conceiving environmental virtue relationally, helping to overcome the dichotomy between “virtue centered” and “value centered” environmental ethics. Leopold and Zhuangzi each emphasize engagement, receptivity, perspective-taking, and the capacity to overcome preconceptions as critical in guiding relations between humans and the broader world. However, Zhuangzi – though not explicitly concerned with the “environment” or “conservation” – pushes further than Leopold in certain respects and provides key insights for ethics in a global context and a time of rapid environmental change.
Abstract: The Chinese Chan Buddhist notion of Uncertainty, or fundamental ambivalence and indeterminacy, serves as the basis for illness leading to anxiety and doubt when not understood and as the basis of wellness when its implications are appreciated and applied. In Chan, the antidote is the same as the ailment. This paper examines various Chan paradigms developed in twelfth century China for expressing Uncertainty, including gongan (kōan) cases, poetry and painting, ox-herding parables, and personal narratives of prominent monks who underwent suffering and redemption through engaging the meaning of indeterminacy.

**This talk is partially supported by the East Asian Religion Research Cluster Funds.**
painting, ox-herding parables, and personal narratives of prominent monks who underwent suffering and redemption through engaging the meaning of indeterminacy.

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Bharatanatyam Performance by Mythili Prakash
March 2, 2017
5:00 pm
Doris Duke Center at Sarah P. Duke Gardens

This performance has limited seating available, so attendees MUST REGISTER; please contact Jennifer Prather at jprather@duke.edu (link sends e-mail).

As part of the launch of the Duke India Initiative, dynamic dancer and choreographer Mythili Prakash will give a performance of Bharatanatyam dancing. Mythili Prakash is at Duke as part of a residency which includes workshops and choreographing a piece for Duke student dancers for presentation at the Duke Dance Department's mainstage concert, ChoreoLab, at 7:30 p.m. on April 14-15 in Reynolds Industries Theater. +++ Raised in Los Angeles, California, Mythili began dancing at an early age and launched her performing career at the age of eight. She has toured her own solo productions in the United Kingdom, France, Singapore, the United States and Mexico and was featured on NBC's Superstars of Dance. She has also acted, cast in the award-winning film Life of Pi, directed by Ang Lee, as the wife of Pi.
Ba Jin (1904-2005) is one of the most celebrated authors of twentieth century China. Most widely known for his novel Family (first serialized in 1931), Ba Jin was an anarchist inspired by Kropotkin and Bakunin who corresponded with such prominent international figures as Emma Goldman (1869-1940), Alexander Berkman (1870-1936), and Bartolomeo Vanzetti (1883-1927). This lecture examines the earliest period of Ba Jin’s output, from 1929-33, in light of his anarchist commitments. Attention to the martyrologies of Japanese, Italian-American, and Russian revolutionaries Ba Jin wrote in this period reveal the way in which his short stories and novels combined letters and memoir into ostensible fiction.

Burton-Rose argues that Ba Jin's internationalist anarchist vision was predicated on continual return to a small repertoire of emotions that he conceived of as universal, and seek to unify the early stage of his oeuvre through the appeal to common humanity underlying his fiction and non-fiction.

Daniel Burton-Rose is a Post-Doctoral Teaching Fellow at the North Carolina State University and a participant in the collaborative project "Accounting for Uncertainty: Prediction And Planning in Asia's History" organized by the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science and Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg.
Previous hydro-economic work has argued that the degree of interdependence in the Ganges Basin has often been overstated, and that the primary benefit of investments in large dams in Nepal is for power production. Yet planning for such projects continues to be impeded by a public narrative that says that downstream irrigators should pay for the water supply and flood control they would provide. In addition, the local hydro-politics of dams are complicated, because costs incurred by populations living near these projects are often highly concentrated, while the benefits of increased power production are dispersed over large areas and populations. In this talk, Marc Jeuland will describe an ongoing project that aims to better explore local perceptions and preferences for hydropower projects, and to understand how a perspective focused on local tradeoffs relates to the public narrative surrounding such projects.
Following a century of violent anti-religious campaigns, China is now filled with new temples, churches and mosques—as well as cults, sects and politicians trying to harness religion for their own ends. Driving this explosion of faith is uncertainty—over what it means to be Chinese, and how to live an ethical life in a country that discarded traditional morality a century ago and is still searching for new guideposts.

Ian Johnson is a Pulitzer-Prize winning writer focusing on society, religion, and history. He works out of Beijing and Berlin, where he also teaches and advises academic journals and think tanks. Johnson has spent over half of the past thirty years in the Greater China region, working as a newspaper correspondent in China from 1994 to 1996 with Baltimore's The Sun and from 1997 to 2001 with The Wall Street Journal, where he covered macro economics, China's WTO accession and social issues. In 2009, Johnson returned to China, where he writes features and essays for The New York Times, The New York Review of Books, The New Yorker, National Geographic, and other publications. He teaches undergraduates at The Beijing Center for Chinese Studies, and also runs a fellowship program there. In addition, he formally advises a variety of academic journals and think tanks on China, such as the Journal of Asian Studies, the Berlin-based think tank Merics, and New York University's Center for Religion and Media.

Territorial conflicts among sovereign states, whether on land or sea, have been endemic since the appearance of the very idea of sovereignty in Europe. Yet as Thongchai Winnichakul and others have revealed, the very idea of a sovereign ‘geobody’ in Asia is not much more than a century old. So how are historical materials and events that do not speak to the modern notion of sovereignty utilized to make sovereignty claims? To what extent is the mobilization around historical identities the more important factor? How rapidly can these identities change? How do states and other players negotiate between relatively recent international laws, identity mobilization and assertions of raw power?

Arnulf Becker Lorca, Brown University: Non-Western, Asian, Chinese: Plural International Legal Cultures & the Meaning of Sovereignty
Franck Billé, University of California - Berkeley: Sea as Land: New Deployments of the Logomap in East Asia

Jeffrey Winters, Northwestern University: Becoming Indonesia and Indonesian

Afternoon Session: 1:00 pm - 3:30 pm
THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

Tansen Sen, Baruch College, City University of New York: The Zheng He Expeditions and Geopolitics of the South China Sea

William Hurst, Northwestern University: Great Power Politics in the South China Sea

William Callahan, London School of Economics: Maps, Sovereignty and Space in the South China Sea

Professor Callahan will also show his 15 minute film, "Mearsheimer vs. Nye on the Rise of China"

Wrap-up Dialogue and Discussion: 3:45 pm - 4:30 pm
Ted C Fishman and Prasenjit Duara