



Global and Transregional Studies Platform

Georg-August-Universität Göttingen

SSRC InterAsia Visiting Fellow Presentations

Tuesday 20 June

Humboldtallee 32, Room 2.117 (for directions, click [here](#))

RSVP Matthew Fennessy by Monday 19 June (matthew.fennessy@cemis.uni-goettingen.de)

ALL ARE WELCOME

The Inter-Asia Research Group focuses on a wide range of relationships and interconnections between different parts of Asia. Building on the expertise present in the Centre for Modern East Asian Studies, the Centre for Modern Indian Studies and other institutions, the Platform puts particular emphasis on China and India, but other regions, such as South-East Asia and the Middle East, also play an important role. Currently it is the only European member of an international consortium of universities coordinated and funded by the US-based Social Science Research Council (SSRC), whose Inter-Asia program promotes frameworks and concepts for reconceptualizing Asia as a dynamic and interconnected formation. Prof. Srirupa Roy from CeMIS is the speaker of the InterAsia Partnership.

10am

Suma Ikeuchi Return Migration in Global Japan: Discussions Through a Film *In Leila's Room*

Film and discussion: A young Brazilian migrant woman, Leila, runs a make-up salon in her apartment in Toyota, Japan. Most of her clients are, like herself, Brazilians of Japanese descent who have migrated to the land of their ancestors. The film observes how Leila and the people surrounding her perform their identities. The presentation examines the intersection of migration, religion, and nation through a discussion of this visual material.

Trailer: <http://societyforvisualanthropology.org/mediafestival/in-leilas-room/>

Suma Ikeuchi is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Alabama

11am

Eloisa Stuparich The Yoga of Self-rule: Historical Imaginary and Ritual Practice in a Hindu-Baltic Religious Network

Eloisa Stuparich received her PhD in Asian Literature, Religion, and Culture from Cornell University in 2016.

12noon

Lou Antolihao **From Imperialism to Internationalism: Conversion, Transregional Proximitization, and the YMCA in Asia, 1898-1918**

The arrival of the YMCA in Asia at the turn of the 20th-century has coincided with a period of immense political transformation and social upheaval. This crucial period has allowed for the association to pursue its religious and humanitarian missions in an environment that is in dire need of new spiritual and social catalyst. The YMCA in China, Japan, and the Philippines, in particular, are recognized not only for their humanitarian work and for introducing modern sports but also for advancing the ideals of modernity, democracy, and cosmopolitanism that helped change the course of history in the Asian region. However, the same contributions have also been criticized as a form of Western imperialism making the analysis of its ideological standpoint, operational strategy, and long-term legacy interesting for its potential insights on the study of religious developmentalism, Americanization, and globalization.

Using archival data from the Kauts Family YMCA Archives and secondary sources, this paper explores how the YMCA negotiates with various religious, cultural, and political forces in carrying out its mission in Asia. Comparing data from China, Japan, and the Philippines, it argues that YMCA's influence and long-term legacy were influenced by its ability to "convert" its linkage to imperialism into the more inclusive paradigm of internationalism. While pursuing to convert the local population into Christians, the YMCA had also converted itself and had taken on a more Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino identity and outlook. From a Christian institution that stood as a symbol of Western expansionism and domination, the YMCA's work in Asia was generally embraced for its liberal principles and inclusive strategy that puts emphasis on transnational cooperation and community development. However, its embodiment of the spirit of internationalism while very successful in some areas was questioned and criticized in others as various religious, social, and political factors shaped how the YMCA's principle and programs were "converted" into something that is consistent with the respective country's goals of nation-building and social reconstruction.

Lou Antolihao is a Lecturer in the Department of Sociology at the National University of Singapore

1.45pm

Ruma Chopra **CeMIS-inspired questions on slaves and servants in the British Atlantic**

Ruma Chopra is a Professor of History at the San Jose State University.

2.45pm

Ritesh Jaiswal **Press, Politics and Propaganda: Interrogating the impact of Global events on the Burmese commodity flow, the Maistry System and the Indian mobility to Burma (c. 1930-40)**

British annexation of Burma by the late nineteenth century was marked by radical transformation, in India's primordial ties with Burma, not only in the quantification and content of the emigrants but also in the pattern and system of their emigration and employment which now came to be largely informally regulated through networks of Maistry intermediaries. The significance of colonial Burma can be measured by the fact that it emerged as the largest recipient of Indian migrants, accounting approximately 15 million, vis-à-vis any other colony during the century 1830s-1930s.

The advent of British rule and the 'free' flow or more precisely unregulated immigration of Indians created Burmese resentments which had social, cultural and economic overtones, for example, the tensions between Buddhist Barmars and Indian (Chittagonian/Rohingya) Muslims over marriage, religion and occupational competition which continues till the contemporary period; increasing collaboration of Indians with the British administration, police, army, military etc. However these sentiments were subdued by the rising global demand for Burmese rice and lack of complimentary workforce in the urban spaces to the agricultural Burmans. By 1930-40s Burmese antagonism effervesced to more intensified and complex forms. The paper seeks to analyze the repercussions of the world events of 1930s-40s- like Global Depression of 1930, World War II, Japanese occupation of Burma and British re-occupation as well as the role played by the newly constructed political and economic nationalism in Burma, press and propaganda on recasting the relationship between Indian immigrants and natives of Burma, Indian mobility, the Maistry system and the political identity of Burma in the 1930-40s.

Ritesh Jaiswal is a Visiting Global History Fellow, and is pursuing his PhD from the University of Delhi.

Find out more about the platform at www.gts-goettingen.de