

## “China and Global History” Online Workshop (Sept. 1-3., 2021)

Link to register & program incl. keynote speech abstracts

Link to register to the event:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScKbkuYuSBnNpqzT5bitRHUNZLBtluvUtxE4NJZvIECnMaTA/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScKbkuYuSBnNpqzT5bitRHUNZLBtluvUtxE4NJZvIECnMaTA/viewform?usp=sf_link)

For further questions please contact the organizers: Sabine Hinrichs ([sabine.hinrichs@univie.ac.at](mailto:sabine.hinrichs@univie.ac.at)),  
Sebestyén Hompot ([sebestyen.hompot@univie.ac.at](mailto:sebestyen.hompot@univie.ac.at)), Tanja Kotik ([tanja.kotik@uni-graz.at](mailto:tanja.kotik@uni-graz.at))

---

### 1 September 2021

(All dates and times of the schedule are displayed in Central European Summer Time - CEST / UTC+2)

---

**13:30 - 14:00**    **Opening notes**

**14:00 - 16:35**    **Panel 1: Pre-Modern China’s Global History and Global Historiography**

Chair & commentator: **Univ.-Prof. Dr. Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik (University of Vienna)**

**14:00 - 15:00**    **Keynote**

**Elke Papelitzky, Ph.D. (KU Leuven):** Thinking About the World in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century China

Presenters: (20 min. presentation, 25 min. comment & discussion)

- **Iliia Kolnin (Russian Academy of Sciences), 15:05 - 15:50**  
Imperial China and its Perception of Itself and the Foreign with a Focus on Mainland Southeast Asia during the Yuan-Ming Transition
- **Maxim Korolkov (Heidelberg University / Russian Academy of Sciences), 15:50 - 16:35**  
Networks, Empires, World-Systems: The Dynamics of Early Sinitic Empires, ca. 300 BCE – 300 CE

Coffee break with breakout rooms.

---

17:00 - 20:20 **Panel 2: China's Imperial Histories and Their Impact in the Modern Era**

Chair & commentator: **Prof. Michael Brose (Indiana University)**

17:00 - 18:00 **Keynote**

**Prof. Timothy Brook (University of British Columbia):** Mongols in a Chinese World, Chinese in a Mongol World: Legacies of the Great State

Presenters:

- **Sabine Hinrichs (University of Vienna), 18:05 - 18:50**  
Unquestionably "Chinese"? The Mongol World Empire in Modern Chinese Historiography
- **Sebestyén Hompot (University of Vienna), 18:50 - 19:35**  
The Zheng He Missions in Global History and Their Impact on Chinese Historiography in the Belt & Road Era
- **Rong Wu (Cambridge University), 19:35 - 20:20**  
Drawing From a Global Repertoire: Constitution-Making in Early Republican China, 1912–14

---

**2 September 2021**

---

10:00 - 13:30 **Panel 3: China and Global Economic History of the Modern Era**

Chair & commentator: **Anna Belogurova, Ph.D. (Free University of Berlin)**

10:00 - 11:00 **Keynote**

**Steve Rolf, Ph.D. (University of Sussex):** Back to the Future - China's New State Capitalism and Its Global Implications

Presenters:

- **Tanja Kotik (University of Graz), 11:05 - 11:50**  
Locating the Chinese Enterprise System in the Historical Trajectory of Global Capitalism - A World-Systems Perspective
- **Gus Tsz-Kit Chan (University of Leipzig), 11:50 - 12:35**  
Historical China in a Global Public Sphere: The Lijin Discourse in The Eastern Miscellany 東方雜誌
- **Alice Trinkle (Free University of Berlin), 12:35 - 13:20**  
The Development of Liberal Economic Thinking in China in Exchange With the (Post) Socialist World, 1978 – 2001

Coffee break with breakout rooms.

---

15:00 - 17:20 **Panel 4: Entangled Global Histories of the 20th Century**

Chair & commentator: **Carles B. Broggi, Ph.D. (Open University of Catalonia)**

Presenters:

- **Morgan Rocks (College of the Holy Cross / University of British Columbia), 15:05 - 15:50**  
The Spain in Chinese Hearts: Communists, Anarchists, the Spanish Civil War, and Global Anti-Fascism
- **Rossella Roncati (Ca' Foscari University of Venice / Heidelberg University), 15:50 - 16:35**  
Chinese-Italian Women's Cooperation During the Early Cold War Era
- **Wang Shangshang (LMU Munich), 16:35 - 17:20**  
Cosmopolitanism and Evolutionary Imaginations in Late Qing and Republican China, 1906-1937

---

**3 September 2021**

---

10:00 - 12:20 **Panel 5: Global Historiography in Modern and Contemporary China**

Chair & commentator: **Polina Rysakova, Ph.D., Ass. Prof. (Saint Petersburg University)**

Presenters:

- **Sebas Ruemke (University of Hamburg / Fudan University), 10:05 - 10:50**  
The Invention of Wei Yuan as the Pioneer of Modern Chinese World/Global History
- **Wu Qihong (Beijing Foreign Studies University), 10:50 - 11:35**  
The View of Interaction and Integration in Wang Tongling's History of Oriental Countries [language of presentation: Chinese]
- **Stephanie Ziehaus (University of Vienna / Palacky University Olomouc), 11:35 - 12:20**  
The Qing Empire Between "Old" Imperialism and New Imperial History

---

15:30 - 18:25 **Panel 6: "Gu wei jin yong?" - Using the Past to Serve the Present?**

Chair & commentator: **Prof. Dr. Axel Schneider (University of Göttingen)**

15:30 - 16:30 **Keynote**

**Dr. Sinkwan Cheng (Duke University):** "Revolution" and Geming Between Cyclical Time and Linear Time: The Critical Differences of the Two Terms' Cultural and Historical Contexts, and China's Alternative Revolutionary Politics

Presenters:

- **Frederik Schmitz (University of Bonn), 16:35 - 17:20**, followed by coffee break  
Usage of Pre-Modern Narratives for Contemporary Great Power Politics
  - **Lucas Brang (University of Cologne), 17:40 - 18:25**  
When National Revanchism Meets Disciplinary Self-Doubt: China's Rise and the Politics of Global Legal History
- 

18:25-18:45    **Concluding remarks**

### KEYNOTE SPEECH ABSTRACTS

Sept. 1st

14:00 - 15:00    **Elke Papelitzky, Ph.D. (KU Leuven):** Thinking About the World in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century China

In the sixteenth and the first few decades of the seventeenth century, a number of Chinese scholars wrote world histories: texts that are monographs claiming to be a comprehensive narration of all of China's neighbours. The last such Ming book was published in 1629 and for the remainder of the seventeenth century, this genre of text is extremely rare. Certainly, writings about the world could also take other forms: they could be part of state publications, being appended to comprehensive gazetteers of China, military treatises, or encyclopaedias. There could also be more specialized texts, focusing only on a subset of countries without claiming to write about the whole world. Some of these texts were also illustrated with maps or images of non-Chinese people. In contrast to the more comprehensive stand-alone books, these diverse types of writing with information about non-Chinese regions continued throughout the seventeenth century, partly influenced by the locality of the authors. In this talk, I will discuss the various forms of writing world history during the late Ming and early Qing periods and explore what it meant to write "world history" at that time for Chinese scholars.

Sept. 1st

17:00 - 18:00    **Prof. Timothy Brook (University of British Columbia):** Mongols in a Chinese World, Chinese in a Mongol World: Legacies of the Great State

The Mongol era was not simply a detour in China's history. It was a formative encounter that has shaped China's international relations and regime formation down to the present. Mongols today live in a Chinese world, but there was a time when Chinese lived in a Mongol world. The current leadership of the PRC is

currently making every attempt to suppress that history. Knowing why might help us understand the PRC's current world orientation and the possible challenge this may pose to the international order.

Sept. 2nd

10:00 - 11:00 **Steve Rolf, Ph.D. (University of Sussex):** Back to the Future - China's New State Capitalism and Its Global Implications

China sits at a crossroads. The futurity of its urban centres and technical advancement and dynamism of its leading economic sectors is the envy of much of the world. At the same time, immense underdevelopment, rural poverty, and labour exploitation continue to exist. These two conditions exist side by side within the country - indeed, they co-constitute one another. Indeed, China's scale, scope, geographical heterogeneity and immense history collectively strain, perhaps to breaking point, the concept of what a nation state is or might be. This keynote lecture reflects on the origin story of contemporary Chinese capitalism, argues for both its embeddedness in the longue duree of global history and its path dependency, while refusing to concede to Chinese exceptionalism. At the core of my argument is that China is not immune to the pressures and dynamics of the global capitalist economy - even if it possesses the powerful and idiosyncratic mechanisms by which to distort, defer and sublimate them. I examine the architecture of the new state capitalism in China, which is in the process of being formed in response to the twin ruptures of 2008 and 2020. I argue that the decisions being taken by state managers today will resonate decades into the future and reshape our understandings of what 'capitalism' might be.

Sept. 3rd

15:30 - 16:30 **Dr. Sinkwan Cheng (Duke University):** Use the Past to Remake the Present or Use Western Learning to Remake China? --Two Interpretations of *Geming* in China's Response to Imperialism in the Early Twentieth Century

Use the Past to Remake the Present or Use Western Learning to Remake China? --Two Interpretations of *Geming* in China's Response to Imperialism in the Early Twentieth Century China's repeated defeats by imperial powers since 1839 forced its intellectuals and statesmen to admit no later than the closing of the 19th century that society and politics must be radically transformed if the country were to survive. The term *geming* which was rarely used before 1900 suddenly burst upon the scene and captured public attention after the failure of the Hundred Days' Reform (1898). According to Jin Guantao and Liu Qingfeng's Database for the Study of Modern Chinese Thought (1830-1930), the use of the term arose dramatically in 1903 and 1906, and reached its highest peak in 1926-27.

While the majority of the educated in China agreed in their diagnosis that drastic surgeries for the country were needed, they nonetheless diverged in the cure they prescribed: to rid China of the Manchurian corruptions and degenerations by returning to the ancient wisdom which had made the country virtuous and strong, versus a complete disavowal of the Chinese tradition in favor of western learning. Not surprisingly, the two positions are also reflected in the struggles between two concepts of *geming*—*geming* as restoration versus revolution in the modern western sense.

Similar to “revolution,” *geming*'s current reference to a “radical break with the past” was preceded by an earlier meaning of “restoration.” The semantic change in each of the two terms arose from its being transposed from a cyclical temporal schema to a linear one. While the cyclical meaning of both reference the motion of the cosmic order and each culture's belief that the ruler received his authorization from respectively either the Edict of Heaven or God's Will, the subsequent linear semantics of both were products of modernity—with the

significant difference that Chinese modernity and the modern Chinese concept of *geming* was not an internal development, but a result of its translation of western modernity. (Nor was the term an internal growth in the Japanese tradition who first borrowed this term from classical Chinese to render the modern western expression “revolution.”)

Precisely because the linear meaning of *geming* was not homegrown, the older cyclical semantics of *geming* reappeared from time to time to engage Chinese modernity. An example is the Guocui intellectuals bypassing the “backward and tyrannical imperial learning” and their return to the pre-Qin classics to help modernize China—a practice which they compared to the rediscovery of the classics and the rebirth of culture in Renaissance Europe.

A more ambiguous way in which the old cyclical meaning of *geming* haunted its linear modern counterpart was its roles in the Communist Revolution.

Note that the change in the semantics of “revolution” in Europe took place in the context where its 18th-century interest in politics was succeeded by its 19th-century preoccupation with history. History in 19th-century Europe was closely tied to revolutions inside the nation-states and imperialist reworlding of the world on the outside. The connection between politics/political philosophy and history/historiography crystallized in an increasing crossing between the historian and the revolutionary—Marx providing perhaps the first primary example. While history consists of the unpredictable outcomes of human action, Marx’s strong belief in human agency to remake society and his concern with human action resulted in his impatience with history (Arendt). In contrast to historians who write in the present about the past, Marx “designed” and “planned” history as a revolutionary, as if he were already in the future looking back on the present as the past.

The ideas that human beings are agents capable of “making” history and that the future would not be a mere repetition of the past were completely alien to Yijing’s notion of *geming*. Yinyang knows no telos, and history is always reversible. However, in order to align Chinese history with world history so as to give the former agency and a voice in the latter, and in order to reinforce the legitimacy of China’s adoption of Marxism, these old elements in the classical Chinese *geming* must be rigorously resisted. Mao thus believed in the need for “perpetual revolution” to prevent the regressive elements of old establishments from overwhelming the wider goals of the Chinese revolution. Unlike Marx’s “permanent revolution” which has the achievement of Socialist society as its limits, Mao’s “perpetual revolution” has none, precisely because yinyang holds that the past will return over and again.

Not surprisingly, historiography being assigned the tasks of connecting the Chinese revolution to world revolution--and establishing the Chinese present “as a key to and a model for the world’s future” (Wang Gungwu)—became the first battleground for the Cultural Revolution (see Wang and Weigelin-Schwiedrzik).