

Asian Studies Lecture Series

The Asian Studies Lecture Series is funded by the kind generosity of Felix Chen. All events are free and open to the public.

FALL 2018

NOV 8, 2018

ASIAN STUDIES AND THE DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY PRESENTS:

In Search of a Home

Partition and the Lahore Collections in India, 1948-1968

by **Aparna Kumar**

Nov. 8th at 5pm

FOSC 152

This presentation explores the impact of the partition of India in 1947 on the development of museological institutions in India and Pakistan. The primary point of departure is the history of the Lahore Museum, whose collections of art and archaeology were dramatically split between India and Pakistan in 1948. Central to this analysis are not only the physical ramifications of this process of division, which saw priceless artworks disassembled and destroyed, but also the ideological relationship that develops between the Lahore Museum and its counterpart in Chandigarh, where 40% of the Lahore collections eventually found refuge in the 1960s. This cross-border connection presents an opportunity to rethink the history of museums in South Asia in terms of homelessness and dispossession.

Aparna Kumar is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of Art History at the University of California, Los Angeles

OCT 4, 2018

ASIAN STUDIES AND THE CLEMENTS DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY PRESENT

A SCOTT-HAWKINS LECTURE:

The Historian's Task in the Anthropocene

Theory and Practice

by **Julia A. Thomas**

Oct. 4th at 5pm

FOSC 152

If "the Anthropocene" suggests a rupture of the Earth System, producing a future which looks nothing like our past, what is the role of historians in this predicament? Julia Adeney Thomas addresses this question in three ways, explaining why many scientists find "the Anthropocene" a compelling concept; showing how this concept challenges the historical discipline; and finally demonstrating how historians, through self-reflection on our practices, might contribute. Using the example of early modern Japan, she proposes a new form of critical history as we move from modernity's promise of freedom and abundance to the more modest goal of sustainability with decency.

Dr. Thomas is Associate Professor in the Department of History at the University of Notre Dame. She specializes in political and environmental questions, the history of Japan, and historiography and theory. She has written or edited five books, including *Japan at Nature's Edge: The Environmental Context of a Global Power* (UHP 2013), *Rethinking Historical Distance* (Palgrave/Macmillan 2013), and *Reconfiguring Modernity: Concepts of Nature in Japanese Political Ideology* (UCP 2001).

SEPT 20, 2018

ASIAN STUDIES PRESENTS:

Who Owns a Story?

Interpretations of the 'Churning of the Ocean of Milk' in South and Southeast Asia

by Vasudha Narayanan

Sept. 20th at 5pm

FOSC 152

Who owns a story? Who gets to determine its meaning? Is it the culture, the geographic area where we find the early versions of the story, the place where it becomes important, or the country that gives it prominence today? Using as an example "the churning of the ocean of milk," a story that is seen in Indian texts composed more than two thousand years ago, I will speak about the many places where it is found in the world and raise questions about the cultural ownership of one story. These issues, I will argue, are applicable to other areas as well, and particularly relevant in times of ownership battles over music and art, and issues of nationalistic pride.

Vasudha Narayanan is Distinguished Professor in the Department of Religion at the University of Florida. She is author or editor of seven books, including *The Life of Hinduism* (with John Stratton Hawley; 2007), *Hinduism* (2009), and *The Vernacular Veda: Revelation, Recitation, and Ritual* (1984).

SPRING 2018

MARCH 21, 2018

ASIAN STUDIES AND JEWISH STUDIES PRESENT:

What Have Hindus To Do With Jews?

Hindu-Jewish Encounters in the Academy and Beyond

by Barbara Holdrege

March 21st at 5pm
Hyer Hall 100

Hindu and Jewish traditions have often been characterized as representing opposite ends of the spectrum of the world's religions. "Polytheistic," iconocentric Hindu traditions, with their panoply of deities enshrined in images, have generally been considered antithetical to "monotheistic," iconoclastic Jewish traditions, with their emphasis on the unity and transcendence of God and abhorrence of image-making practices. Moreover, in contrast to religious traditions that have had longstanding genealogical and historical connections, such as Jewish and Christian traditions or Hindu and Buddhist traditions, Hindu and Jewish communities have generally been deemed to have had little historical contact prior to the modern period. This lecture will challenge both of these assumptions and will consider three kinds of Hindu-Jewish encounters: (1) historical encounters between Indic and Judaic worlds; (2) collaborative scholarly encounters between specialists in South Asia and Judaica; and (3) contemporary interreligious encounters between Hindu and Jewish leaders.

Barbara A. Holdrege is Professor of Religious Studies and Chair of the South Asian Studies Committee at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her publications include *Bhakti and Embodiment: Fashioning Divine Bodies and Devotional Bodies in Kṛṣṇa Bhakti*; *Refiguring the Body: Embodiment in South Asian Religions*; *Veda and Torah: Transcending the Textuality of Scripture*; *Ritual and Power*; and a forthcoming monograph, *The Body and the Self: Hindu Contributions to Theories of Embodiment*.

FALL 2017

OCTOBER 12, 2017

ASIAN STUDIES PRESENTS:

Chinese Pilgrims, Indian Pirs
by Rian Thum

In the standard telling of Chinese and Indian histories, the two societies were closely connected in the first millennium AD, when Chinese pilgrims traveled to India in search of authoritative Buddhist texts. But this connection, which fundamentally reoriented Chinese culture, is supposed to have withered in the centuries after the first millennium, presumably because of Muslim conquests of the Tarim Basin and the Punjab. Indeed the story of Chinese-Indian connection disappears almost entirely from general histories until the 20th century. In this lecture, Rian Thum argues instead that Islamic networks played an important role in maintaining ties between China and India from the 16th century to the present.

Rian Thum is Associate Professor of History, Loyola University of New Orleans. He is author of *The Sacred Routes of Uyghur History* (HUP, 2014) which was awarded the Fairbank prize for East Asian history, the Hsu prize for East Asian Anthropology, and the Central Eurasian Studies Society Book Award. Thum's current book project, *Islamic China*, is a re-examination of Chinese Islam that takes full account of the numerous Persian and Arabic sources that Chinese Muslims have used and written.

TIME: 4-5PM

PLACE: Dedman Life Sciences Building 132

SPRING 2017

MARCH 23, 2017

ASIAN STUDIES PRESENTS:

Gendered Bodies: Women's Visual Art in Contemporary China
by Shuqin Cui

Dr. Cui will discuss her groundbreaking work *Gendered Bodies* (U. of Hawaii Press), introducing the audience to women's visual art in contemporary China by examining how the visual process of gendering reshapes understandings of historiography, sexuality, pain, and space. Through analyzing a selection of artworks and artists—both well- and little-known—she presents a critical review of women's art in contemporary China in relation to art traditions, classical and contemporary.

Dr. Cui is Professor of Asian Studies and Director of Cinema Studies at Bowdoin College. She is the author of *Women Through the Lens: Gender and Nation in a Century of Chinese Cinema* (U. of Hawaii Press) and has published extensively on the subjects of Chinese cinema and visual culture. She is currently editing a volume on women's art in modern China.

TIME: 5-6PM

PLACE: Dedman Life Sciences Building 132

FEB 7, 2017

**ASIAN STUDIES AND WILLIAM P. CLEMENTS CENTER FOR SOUTHWEST STUDIES
PRESENT:**

Asian Journeys and Universal Dilemmas
by William deBuys

In this illustrated talk, William deBuys draws on two extended expeditions in Asian natural areas to discuss aspects of environmental ethics. One expedition explored Nakai-Nam Theun National Protected Area in central Laos in 2011; the other involved a 140-mile journey on foot through Phoksumdo-Shey National Park and adjacent lands in the high Himalayas of Nepal in 2016. The dilemmas to be discussed fall under two main headings: (1) the difficulty in balancing ecological preservation with economic development that benefits local populations and (2) the problem, well known to those who take on the challenge of protecting nature, of maintaining moral commitment in an environment of continuous loss. The latter dilemma should be familiar to anyone sensitive to environmental issues in contemporary America.

Writer and conversationist William deBuys received his Ph.D. from The University of Texas at Austin. DeBuys was a Lyndhurst Fellow, a Clements Center Fellow for the Study of Southwestern America at

SMU, and a Guggenheim Fellow. He is the author of seven books which range from memoir and biography to environmental history and studies of place.

TIME: 5-6PM

PLACE: Dedman Life Sciences Building 132

FALL 2016

MARCH 1, 2016

ASIAN STUDIES AND JEWISH STUDIES AT SMU PRESENT:

Blue Like Me: The Art of Siona Benjamin
by Siona Benjamin

Siona Benjamin is a painter originally from Bombay, now living in the US. The artist will discuss her work and how it reflects her background of being brought up Jewish in a predominantly Hindu and Muslim India. In her paintings, she combines the imagery of her past with the role she plays in America today, making a mosaic inspired by Indian miniature painting and Sephardic icons.

TIME: 5:30PM

PLACE: Dedman Life Sciences Building 110

Kosher Indian reception following; RSVP to jewishstudies@smu.edu

FEB 9, 2016

ASIAN STUDIES PRESENTS:

The Good Old Days of a Moderate China are Gone

Lecture by Shuisheng Zhao, Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver

This talk revisits the debate about foreign implications of Chinese nationalism in the context of China's increasingly confrontational and assertive behaviour in recent years. It argues that while the Chinese government made effective efforts to make sure that Chinese foreign policy was not dictated by the emotional nationalistic rhetoric, the good old days of a moderate China are gone as the Chinese

government has become more willing to follow the popular nationalist calls in pursuing its so-called core interests.

TIME: 5:00PM

PLACE: DLSB 110

SPRING 2015

SEPT. 24, 2015

ASIAN STUDIES AND THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES PRESENT:

***Yuppie Yogis and Global Gurus: Selling the Sacred in Pop-Culture India*
by Dr. Andrea Jain, Indiana University-Purdue University**

Dr. Jain will explore the late-twentieth-century popularization of yoga in consumer culture by discussing a wide array of modern yoga types, from Iyengar Yoga to Bikram Yoga. While some trivialize pop-culture yoga by reducing it to the mere commodification of what is perceived as an otherwise ancient, authentic system, Jain argues that this vision oversimplifies the history of yoga and that pop-culture yoga cannot be dismissed, that it has a variety of sacred meanings and functions to many yoga practitioners.

TIME: 5:30PM

PLACE: Dedman Life Sciences Building 132

April 16, 2015

ASIAN STUDIES PRESENTS:

Politics, Poetics, and Gender in Late Qing China: Xue Shaohui (1866-1911) and the Era of Reform

Lecture by Nanxiu Qing, Professor of Chinese Literature, Rice University

Modern Chinese historiography has paid great attention to the late Qing Reform Movement, but mainly on the well-known male historical actors. Until now the Qing women reformers have received almost no consideration. In this talk, Nanxiu Qian will introduce her recent book that examines the late Qing reforms from the perspective of the woman writer Xue Shaohui and her intellectual networks, thus revealing the contributions of active, optimistic, and self-sufficient women reformers.

TIME: 5:00PM

PLACE: Fondren Science 133

Feb. 26, 2015

ASIAN STUDIES PRESENTS:

Marriage, Liberation, and Women's Agency in the Chinese Revolution

Lecture by Xiaoping Cong, Associate Professor of History, University of Houston

Based on recently released and de-classified legal documents and records in local papers, Dr. Cong argues that the marriage reform launched by the Chinese community party in its rural base areas in the 1940s was actually much more successful at improving the position of women in Chinese society than the bulk of existing scholarship on the topic currently suggests. This talk demonstrates how rural women were active agents who not only enjoyed certain autonomy under the patriarchal system, but also managed to carve out a large space for themselves than previously possible by interacting and negotiating with the revolutionary state.

Professor Cong is the author of *Teachers' Schools and the Making of the Chinese Modern Nation-State, 1897-1937* (UBC, 2007). This talk is part of her book manuscript *Self-Determination: Marriage, Law, and Gender Construction in Revolutionary China, 1940-1960*.

TIME: 5:00PM

PLACE: Fondren Science 152

FALL 2014

Oct. 28, 2014

ASIAN STUDIES PRESENTS:

The Qur'an in China: Inscriptions, Manuscripts, and Translations

Lecture by Kristian Petersen, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, University of Nebraska

This presentation explores the history of the Qur'an in China. Dr. Petersen offers a brief overview of the history of Muslims in China in order to situate material and textual manifestations of the Qur'an in Chinese society. He concludes with an examination of Chinese Muslims translational choices in the first rendering of the Qur'an in Chinese.

TIME: 4:00PM

PLACE: Fondren Science 158

Oct. 1, 2014

ASIAN STUDIES AND THE CROW COLLECTION OF ASIAN ART PRESENTS:

Visions of the Heart: Hidden Dimensions of God Revealed in the Art of Krishna Devotion

Lecture by Graham M. Schweig, Professor of Religion and Director of Asian Studies, Christopher Newport University

Response by Caron Smith, Ph.D., Curator of the exhibition *Seeing and Believing: Krishna in the Art*

of B.G. Sharma, Crow Collection of Asian Art

Dr. Graham Schweig will explore some of the exquisitely painted images of the late B.G. Sharma that are currently on view at the Crow Collection of Asian Art. Dr. Schweig will show how the secret, personal, and esoteric dimensions of the divine and the divine world are revealed in works of mystic poets and artists.

TIME: 5:30PM

PLACE: McCord Auditorium, Dallas Hall

SPRING 2014

April 16, 2014

ASIAN STUDIES PRESENTS:

The Blossoming Heart: Possession in Medieval Bhakti Poetry

by Dr. Gardner Harris, Shraman South Asian Museum and Learning Center

Time: 5:00PM

Place: Hyer Hall 204

Flier [Here](#).

FEB. 11, 2014

ASIAN STUDIES PRESENTS:

IS BUDDHISM THE MISSING LINK IN THE GLOBAL HISTORY OF MEDICINE?

by Dr. Pierce Salguero, Penn State University

With the flourishing of the Silk Roads in the first centuries C.E., the two relatively independent worlds of Indo-European and East Asian medicine came into sustained conversation for the first time. This moment in history represents one of the most significant and best-documented instances of cross cultural medical exchange in the premodern world, and Buddhism played a surprisingly central role in facilitating this exchange. While many sources of Indo-Sinitic medical exchange are no longer extant, a survey of medieval Chinese Buddhist texts from approximately 150-1000 C.E. finds that Indo-European medical terminology, doctrines, and metaphors were carried to China as part and parcel of the transmission of the philosophies and practices of the religion. These texts reveal that medicine and religion were intimately intertwined in medieval Asia, but they also demonstrate surprising resonances with the globalization of Buddhism in the contemporary period.

Time: 4:00PM

Place: Heroy Hall 153

FALL 2013

OCT. 24, 2013

ASIAN STUDIES PRESENTS:

THE FIRST CHINESE AMERICAN: THE REMARKABLE LIFE OF WONG CHIN FOO

A Lecture and Book Signing by

Scott D. Seligman

Scott D. Seligman is a writer, a historian, a genealogist, a retired corporate executive and a career "China hand." He holds an undergraduate degree in history from Princeton University with distinction in American civilization and a master's degree from Harvard University. Fluent in Mandarin and conversant in Cantonese, he lived in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China for eight years and reads and writes Chinese. He is the author of *Three Tough Chinamen*, *Chinese Business Etiquette*, and *Dealing with the Chinese*, and co-author of the best-selling *The Cultural Revolution Cookbook*, *Chinese at a Glance*, and *Now You're Talking Mandarin Chinese*.

Time: 5:30PM

Place: McCord Auditorium, Dallas Hall

SEPT. 19, 2013

ASIAN STUDIES PRESENTS:

EARTH, WATER, AND POWER: WAR AND ENVIRONMENT IN NORTH CHINA, 1938-1952

by Dr. Micah Muscolino

Dr. Muscolino's area of expertise is the environmental history of late imperial and modern China. He was a member of the School of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, NJ and has received awards from Fulbright (IIE), the Center for Chinese Studies at the National Central Library in Taiwan, and the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation. He is author of *Fishing Wars and Environmental Change in Late Imperial and Modern China* (Harvard University Press, 2009).

Time: 5PM-7PM

Place: Fondren Science 158

PREVIOUS EVENTS

FEB. 28, 2013

ASIAN STUDIES PRESENTS A SCOTT HAWKINS LECTURE:

Women, Sanskrit and Religious Experience: Notes from the 21st Century Field

by Dr. Laurie Patton

Dr. Laurie Patton is the Dean of Trinity College of Arts & Sciences at Duke University. Patton joined Duke in 2011 from Emory, where she was the Charles Howard Candler professor of religions and inaugural director of Emory's Center for Faculty Development and Excellence in the office of the Provost. While at Emory, Patton served as chair of the religion department from 2000-07, founded and co-convened the Religions and the Human Spirit Strategic Plan, and received the Emory Williams Award (Emory's most prestigious honor for teaching) in 2005. Patton is an accomplished scholar and the author or editor of eight books on South Asian history, culture, and religion. In addition, she has translated the classical Sanskrit text, *The Bhagavad Gita*, and has published two books of poetry.

Time: 5:00PM-7:00PM

Place: McCord Auditorium, Dallas Hall

[Flyer with Abstract](#)

MARCH 5, 2013

ASIAN STUDIES PRESENTS:

Delineating the World: Eurasian Exchange of World Geographical Knowledge in the Premodern Era

by Dr. Hyunhee Park

Hyunhee Park is an Assistant Professor in the Department of History at John Jay College. She received her BA in Asian and Western history at Seoul National University in South Korea. She studied in the Department of East Asian Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem where she received her MA. She came to the United States in 2001 and received her PhD from the department of history at Yale University in 2008. Her book *Mapping the Chinese and Islamic Worlds: Cross-Cultural Exchange in Pre-Modern Asia* will be published by Cambridge University Press. This study explores medieval contact and exchange between the Islamic World and China by utilizing geographic and cartographic information. At John Jay College, she teaches courses about Chinese history, global history, and justice in the non-Western tradition.

Time: 5:00pm

Place: Dedman Life Science 132

APRIL 13, 2012

ASIAN STUDIES PRESENTS:

Taiwan's 2012 Presidential Election

by Dr. Peter Hays Gries

Peter Gries is the Harold J. & Ruth Newman Chair in US-China Issues at the University of Oklahoma.

Time: 3-4:30pm

Place: Fondren Science 155

MARCH 26, 2012

ASIAN STUDIES PRESENTS:

Japan's Unmarketable Girl Cool
by Dr. Laura Miller

Laura Miller is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Missouri-St. Louis Center for International Studies, where she the Ei'ichi Shibusawa-Seigo Arai Professor of Japanese Studies Endowed Chair. She has published widely on Japanese popular culture and language, including topics such as the wizard boom, girls' slang, and print club photos.

Dr. Miller is the author of *Beauty Up: Exploring Contemporary Japanese Body Aesthetics* (University of California Press, 2006), and co-editor of *Bad Girls of Japan* (with Jan Bardsley, Palgrave, 2005). She recently completed *Manners and Mischief: Gender, Power, and Etiquette in Japan* (co-edited with Jan Bardsley, University of California Press, 2011).

Time: 7pm

Place: Fondren Science 152

OCTOBER 17, 2011

Asian Studies Program, Departments of History and Religious Studies, and the Tower Center Present a Scott-Hawkins Lecture:

Pakistan Between Democracy and Radicalization
by Dr. Juan Cole

Dr. Juan Cole is the Richard P. Mitchell Collegiate Professor of History at the University of Michigan.

Time: 5:15pm

Place: McCord Auditorium