



Mahidol University
International College

ICIR 232 Tradition and Modernity in Asia

Course Description & Aims

This course questions the meanings of tradition and modernity in the Asian context. While tradition and modernity are commonly thought of as opposites, this distinction is not so clear. Indeed, it was only when people began to think of themselves as modern that they then considered the ways things had been before to be traditional. Moreover, tradition has been continuously evoked to justify and promote modern projects such as nation-state building or religious reforms. In short, what is often thought of as traditional is actually of modern origins. Students will discuss a range of topics such as the family, religion and urbanism in order to examine the ways in which people apply these concepts to understand the world in which they live.

The meanings of tradition; modernity; living space; identity; nation-building; modernization; in the Asian context. Students will discuss; assess; understand; analyze a range of topics such as the family, religion, identity politics and urbanism.

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Assessment

Active Class Participation	10 %
Presentation of Reading Assignment	20 %
Group Debates	20 %
Case Study Project: (a) Presentation	20 %
(b) Final Essay Paper	30 %

Course Learning Outcomes

At the completion of the course students will be able to:

1. Understand and explain the relationship between tradition and modernity;
2. Analyze the role of tradition in justifying modern projects such as nation-building, cultural commodification, or religious reforms;
3. Critically assess the meanings of tradition and modernity in the Asian context.

Topic No.	Topic
1	Introduction and Course Organization
2	Historical Perspectives on Modernity in Asia
3	Heritage, Identity, Ideology: Invented Traditions and Modern Narratives
4	Conceptualizations: Society, Politics and the State in Asia
5	Stratifications: Authority, Hierarchy, Prestige
6	Spatial Dimensions: The Modern City and the Traditional Village?
7	Midterm Review and Workshop on Case Study Preparation
8	The Family, Gender and Sexuality in Asia
9	Religious Diversity between the Local and the Global
10	Economic Perspectives: Capitalist Modernity and Traditions of Sustainability?
11	Tradition, Culture and Commodification
12	Final Discussion: Future-Making in Post-Modern Asia

Assessment Methods and Criteria

1. Active Class Participation [10 %]. – Students are expected to actively and regularly take part in class discussions. It is important to keep up with the reading materials in order to be able to do so. Core readings are clearly indicated (in **bold** letters) in the detailed lecture schedule at the end of this syllabus, all others are further reading suggestions. Relevant readings will be made available to students electronically and/or in form of a study pack.

2. Presentation of Reading Assignment [20 %]. – Each student enrolled in this course will have to prepare a presentation of one of the core readings (indicated in **bold** letters). The presentation should last no more than 10 minutes. A sign-up sheet for the presentation of readings will be circulated in the first week of classes. The presentations of reading materials must (a) briefly summarize the main arguments of the presented text, (b) point out problematic or questionable sections of the reading, and (c) provide 2-3 questions for further in-class discussion in relation to the presented materials. It is expected that each reading presentation be accompanied by a one-page outline that must be distributed in class; PowerPoint may be used to aid the presentations, although this is not mandatory.

3. Group Debates [20 %]. – At two occasions (during Week 3 and 12), students will be divided into two groups and asked to discuss a given topic from different angles. Groups will be given 30 minutes to develop arguments for their respective positions. Afterwards both groups are discussing the merits and limitations of their contrasting positions with each other. During each group debate, students can accumulate up to 10 points. The level of participation and the quality of contributions to these debates – both during the preparation in small groups and during the open-floor debate – will be assessed based on the frequency and quality of individual contributions, as well as students' ability to engage in team-work.

4. Case Study Project [20 + 30 %]. – A large portion of marks will be awarded to students' case study projects, which consists of a presentation (between Week 8 and 11) and a final essay paper (of 2000-2500 words, due at the end of Week 13). In their final projects, students will have to discuss a course-related topic of their choice in comparative theoretical and/or historical perspective. A list of topic suggestions will be provided in class (during the workshop in Week 3) and the instructor will give advise to students who struggle to narrow-down their interests. Both the presentation and the final essay paper must include the following aspects: (1) a brief introduction of the chosen topic, including a more descriptive section regarding background and context of the case study, (2) an analysis and discussion of relevant aspects of the case study in relation to theories and debates introduced in class, and (3) a critical assessment of the

relationship between tradition and modernity in selected Asian contexts. Presentations and essays need to be clearly structured and argumentative.

Introduction

Topic description: What is the distinction between ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’? After a general introduction into course contents, the weekly schedule and the course requirements, we will discuss a range of conceptualizations of ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’ in relation to Asia as a geographical region.

Expected learning outcomes:

- Students will begin to interrogate general assumptions about the conceptual realm of tradition and modernity and develop a foundational framework of related questions and issues.
- Students will develop an awareness regarding conceptual differences in defining ‘tradition’, ‘modernity’ and ‘Asia’ from a critical perspective.

Activities:

- In a plenary debate students are asked to brainstorm the conceptual meaning and differences of the terms ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’ in order to suggest possible definitions for these terms.
- Students assemble in small groups to compile a list of traditional and modern phenomena in Asia; the lists will be briefly discussed in a plenary session and then kept for follow-up discussions of selected items later in the term.
- Plenary discussion of reading assignments.

Readings:

- **Prasenjit Duara: “Asia Redux: Conceptualizing a Region for our Times”, *The Journal of Asian Studies* 69 (4) [2010]: 963-983.**
- Anthony Giddens: *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press 1991.
- Ashis Nandy: “A New Cosmopolitanism: Toward a Dialogue of Asian Civilizations”, in: Kuan-Hsing Chen: *Trajectories: Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*. London: Routledge, 1998, pp. 142-149.
- H. Wang: “The Politics of Imagining Asia: A Genealogical Analysis”, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 8(1) [2007]: 1-33.

Asian Modernities in Historical Perspective

Topic description: This week, we will discuss the advent of modernity in Asia from a historical comparative perspective. Is it possible to identify particular historical moments that stand for the initiation of a modern age in Asia? We will discuss the connections between modernity and trade, modernization projects of the colonial age, and the formulation of distinct alternative modernities in the context of Asia’s independence movements.

Expected learning outcomes:

- Students will explore and understand some major historical developments in Asia in relation to modernization and modernity.
- Students will develop awareness regarding the complexities of different visions of modernity in Asia in relation to historical trajectories.

Activities:

- Individual presentations of reading assignments, followed by a plenary discussion.

Readings:

- **Selected excerpts from: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised edition. London: Verso, 1991.**
- **Tani Barlow: “Debates over Colonial Modernity in East Asia and Another Alternative,” *Cultural Studies* 26(5) [2012]: 617-644.**
- Terence Chong: *Modernization Trends in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: ISEAS, 2005 [Southeast Asia Background Series No. 9].
 - **Chapter 2: ‘Modernization and Modernity’ (pp. 5-12)**
 - **Chapter 8: ‘Conclusion: Towards a Southeast Asian Modernity?’ (pp. 65-70)**
- Victor T. King: *The Sociology of Southeast Asia: Transformations in a Developing Region*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2008.
 - **Chapter 3: “Modernization and Post-War Social Change” (pp. 37-55)**
- Tani Barlow (ed.): *Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia*. Raleigh: Duke University Press, 1997.
- Barbara Watson Andaya: “Historicising ‘Modernity’ in Southeast Asia”, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 40(4) [1997]: 391-409.

Heritage, Identity, Ideology: Invented Traditions and Modern Narratives

Topic description: Students are introduced to Eric Hobsbawm’s concept of “invented traditions” that will serve as a basic framework for later discussions in this course. Students will explore and understand Hobsbawm’s argument that many ‘traditions’ which “appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented” and critically discuss its implications for the Asian context. A focused group debate in the second session of the week considers Asian martial arts as an example for (re)invented traditions.

Expected learning outcomes:

- Students will explore and understand the concept of ‘inventing traditions’.
- Students will begin to apply the concept of invented traditions to selected issues in Asia.
- Students will explain and critically discuss examples of invented traditions in the Asian context.

Activities:

- Individual presentations of reading assignments, followed by a plenary discussion.
- Students will be split into two groups to discuss the (re)invention of Asian martial arts, exploring issues of “authenticity”, “tradition” and “history” in this context. – *Note that students’ participation and performance in this group debate is part of the assessment for this course (10 %).*

Readings:

- **Eric Hobsbawm: “Introduction: Inventing Traditions”, in: Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.): *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 1-14.**
- **Inoue Shun: “The Invention of the Martial Arts: Kano Jigoro and Kodokan Judo”, in: Stephen Vlastos (ed), *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, pp. 163-173.**
- Paul Bowman: “Making Martial Arts History Matter”, *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 33(9) [2016]: 915-933.
- Na Youngll: “The Future of Asian Traditional Martial”, *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 33(9) [2016]: 893-903.

- Xiaoyan Su: “Reconstruction of Tradition: Modernity, Tourism and Shaolin Martial Arts in the Shaolin Scenic Area, China”, *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 33(9) [2016]: 934-950.

Conceptualizations: Society, Politics and the State in Asia

Topic description: This week we discuss socio-political sources of Asian traditions from both a historical and contemporary perspective. Conceptual linkages between traditional kingdoms and modern nation-states will be explored and the (dis)continuities of socio-political organization will be critically discussed. In a focused plenary debate in the second part of the week we will discuss James Scott’s contribution to a reconsideration of the history of hill tribes and indigenous communities in relation to lowland state-building. In this context the concept of ‘alternative modernities’ will be explored and discussed.

Expected learning outcomes:

- Students will understand and explain socio-political sources of tradition and modernity in Asia.
- Students will explore the relationship between traditional polities and modern nation states in Asia.
- Students will explore and discuss the concept of alternative modernity.

Activities:

- Students assemble in small groups to critically discuss selected excerpts of James Scott’s *The Art of Not Being Governed*. Findings and suggestions from the group discussions will then be interrelated and critically discussed in a following plenary debate.
- Individual presentations of reading assignments, followed by a plenary discussion.

Readings:

- Victor T. King: *The Sociology of Southeast Asia: Transformations in a Developing Region*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2008.
 - **Chapter 5: “Social Class, the State and Political Economy” (pp. 197-224)**
- **Selected excerpts from: James C. Scott: *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. Yale University Press, 2009.**
- Donald G. McCloud: *Southeast Asia: Tradition and Modernity in the Contemporary World*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge 2018 [1995].
 - **Chapter 7: “Traditional Values in Western Cloth: The State at Independence”**

Stratifications: Authority, Hierarchy, Prestige

Topic description: On the basis of our conclusions from the structural, socio-political discussions during the previous week, we turn our attention to the micro-level of social interaction to explore and discuss tradition and modernity of social stratification in selected Asian contexts. Supposedly ‘traditional’ understandings of authority, hierarchy and prestige are explored and their historicity is critically questioned. In the second session of this week we will relate issues of authority and prestige to patronage, clientilism and corruption and critically discuss the problematic impact of ‘traditional’ stratification for contemporary social justice.

Expected learning outcomes:

- Students will explore the relationship between structural and micro-level sources of Asian traditions.
- Students will explore and reflect about the connections of traditional and modern forms of authority, hierarchy and prestige.

- Students will critically discuss the impact of traditional social stratification for contemporary social justice.

Activity:

- Students assemble in small groups to discuss the connection between prestige, patronage and corruption. Findings and suggestions from the groups are then related and discussed in a plenary debate.
- Individual presentations of reading assignments, followed by a plenary discussion.

Readings:

- **Bernard S. Cohen: “Representing Authority in Victorian India”, in: Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.): *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 165-210.**
- Victor T. King: *The Sociology of Southeast Asia: Transformations in a Developing Region*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2008.
 - **Chapter 7: “Patronage and Corruption” (pp. 155-177)**
- Roger Kershaw: *Monarchy in South-East Asia: The Faces of Tradition in Transition*. London and New York: Routledge, 2001.

Spatial Dimensions: The Modern City and the Traditional Village?

Topic description: This week we will relate the dichotomy of tradition and modernity to spatial dimensions, discussing rural-urban divides and imaginations of ‘traditional’ villages in contrast to ‘modern’ cities.

Activities:

- Students are asked to compile a comparative list of issues and themes that they associate with Asian villages and cities. These lists will serve as a basis for a plenary debate in relation to the core readings for this week.
- Individual presentations of reading assignments, followed by a plenary discussion.

Expected learning outcomes:

- Students will compare and contrast different perspectives towards the urban-rural divide in Asia.
- Students will develop a critical and differentiated understanding of the concept of ‘imagined’ and ‘contested’ traditions.
- Students will critically discuss different perceptions of ‘modern’ urbanism.

Readings:

- **Irwin Scheiner: “The Japanese Village: Imagined, Real, Contested”, in: Stephen Vlastos (ed): *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, pp. 67-78.**
- Victor T. King: *The Sociology of Southeast Asia: Transformations in a Developing Region*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2008.
 - **Chapter 10: “Transformations in Urban Worlds” (pp. 225-246)**

Midterm Review and Workshop

Topic description: During the midterm-review week, materials of the first part of the course will be comprehensively reviewed, followed by a workshop on case study preparation in the second session of the week. The workshop will introduce students to potential case study topics for their individual term projects and assist them in allocating relevant materials. The assessment

criteria for the presentation and the final essay paper will be introduced and discussed and practical suggestions will be given to students in regard to their case study preparation.

Expected learning outcomes:

- Students will review and understand aspects of tradition and modernity that have been introduced and discussed in the first half of the term.
- Students will compare and interrelate foundational concepts and issues from the first half of term.
- Students will develop ideas regarding their case study projects and start conceptualizing arguments.
- Students will gain a clear understanding of assessment criteria used by the instructor in this course.

Activities:

- Plenary review session in a Q & A format in order to entrench and embed issues, themes and arguments from the first half of term
- Interactive workshop to assist students' case study preparation.

The Family, Gender and Sexuality in Asia

Topic description: This week we will explore and critically discuss a range of imaginations of the Asian family, including kinship structures, the concept of clans, and issues of gender and sexuality. Particular attention will be given to the (changing?) role of women in Asian societies, including the (re)invention of female domestic roles in East Asia in contrast to similar (re)inventions of gender parity in some Southeast Asian societies.

Expected learning outcomes:

- Students will understand and critically assess different concepts of the family in Asia.
- Students will explore and understand issues relating to gender (dis)parity in a comparative historical perspective.
- Students will develop a critical and differentiated understanding of processes of modern (re)invention and (re)imagination of family traditions and issues of gender and sexuality in Asia.

Particularly for those students presenting during the week:

- Students will gain experience in presenting their own work and ideas to their peers and the course instructor.
- Students will demonstrate their understanding of relevant materials and topics discussed in class.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge gained during the course to case study materials and critically reflect about the transferability of ideas.

Activities:

- Students assemble in small groups to discuss their own imaginations of gender roles in Asia and relate them to the core readings. The groups' findings and suggestions are then comparatively discussed in a plenary debate.
- Individual presentations of reading assignments, followed by a plenary discussion.
- Student case study presentations, followed by a plenary discussion.

Readings:

- **Jordan Sand: "At Home in the Meiji Period: Inventing Japanese Domesticity", in: Stephen Vlastos (ed), *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, pp. 191-208.**

- **Chie Ikeya:** “The ‘Traditional’ High Status of Women in Burma: A Historical Reconsideration”, *Journal of Burma Studies* 10 [2005/2006]: 51-81.
- Victor T. King: *The Sociology of Southeast Asia: Transformations in a Developing Region*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2008.
 - Chapter 9: “Transformations in the World of Work: Gender Issues” (pp. 197-224)
- C. Tang, W. T. Au, Y. P. Chung and H. Y. Ngo: “Breaking the Patriarchal Paradigm: Chinese Women in Hong Kong”, in: Louise Edwards and Mina Roces (eds.): *Women in Asia: Tradition, Modernity and Globalisation*, St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 2000, pp. 188-207.
- Bhassorn Limanonda: “Exploring Women’s Status in Contemporary Thailand”, in: Louise Edwards and Mina Roces (eds.): *Women in Asia: Tradition, Modernity and Globalisation*, St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 2000, pp. 247-264.
- M. B. Mills: “Attack of the Widow Ghosts: Gender, Death, and Modernity in Northeast Thailand”, in A. Ong & M. Peletz (eds.): *Bewitching Women, Pious Men: Gender and Body Politics in Southeast Asia*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995, pp. 244-273.
- J. Robertson: *Takarazuka: Sexual Politics and Popular Culture in Modern Japan*. Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 1998.

Religious Diversity between the Local and the Global

Topic description: A distinctive feature of the dichotomy of ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’ has often been related to the difference of local and global visions of religion and piety. During this week we are going to discuss the distinction of world religions vis-à-vis traditional religiosity in Asia, including issues of localization/inculturation of world religions in selected contexts. The resurgence of purified ‘global’ forms of Islam, Buddhism and Christianity in many regions of Asia will be critically assessed and related to modernity’s project of nation building.

Expected learning outcomes:

- Students will explore different visions of ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ religiosity in Asia .
- Students will develop a systematic and differentiated understanding of the interrelationship of religion and nation building.
- Students will critically discuss processes of inculturation/localization of world religions in contrast to movements of purification and modernization.

Particularly for those students presenting during the week:

- Students will gain experience in presenting their own work and ideas to their peers and the course instructor.
- Students will demonstrate their understanding of relevant materials and topics discussed in class.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge gained during the course to case study materials and critically reflect about the transferability of ideas.

Activities:

- Individual presentations of reading assignments, followed by a plenary discussion.
- Student case study presentations, followed by a plenary discussion.

Readings:

- **Robert Hefner:** “Religious Resurgence in Contemporary Asia: Southeast Asian Perspectives on Capitalism, the State, and the New Piety”, *The Journal of Asian Studies* 69(4): 1031-1047.
- Thomas Gibson: *Islamic Narrative and Authority in Southeast Asia: From the 16th to the 21st Century*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

- Chapter 8: “Revolutionary Islam and the Nation-State, 1900–1965” (pp. 161-182)
- **Chapter 9: “Official Islam and the Developmental State, 1965–2004” (pp. 183-206)**
- **Laurel Kendall: “Korean Shamans and the Definition of ‘Religion’: A View from the Grass Roots,” in: Jacob K. Olupona (ed.), *Beyond Primitivism: Indigenous Religious Traditions and Modernity*, New York and London: Routledge, 2004, pp. 245-255.**
- Juliane Schober: “The Theravāda Buddhist Engagement with Modernity in Southeast Asia: Whither the Social Paradigm of the Galactic Polity?”, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 26 (2) [1995]: 307-325.
- Gerhard Hoffstaedter: *Modern Muslim Identities: Negotiating Religion and Ethnicity in Malaysia*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2011.
- Chanasai Tiengtrakul: “Religion, Modernity, and the State in South and Southeast Asia”, *Reviews in Anthropology* 36 (1) [2007]: 27-41.

Economic Perspectives: Capitalist Modernity and Traditions of Sustainability?

Topic description: Having discussed issues of state and society, as well as religion and the family as realms of sociality we now turn our attention to economic aspects of tradition and modernity in Asia. Before engaging with issues of cultural commoditization and heritage tourism in the next week, now we initiate a discussion on circulation and networks of sustainability in Asia, in contrast to capitalist modernity. One of the leading questions for this week regards the authenticity of ‘traditional’ sustainability claims in Asia.

Expected learning outcomes:

- Students will explore, relate and discuss issues of capitalist modernity vis-à-vis traditions of sustainability in Asia
- Students will critically question ‘traditional’ claims of economic (and ecological) sustainability in Asia

Particularly for those students presenting during the week:

- Students will gain experience in presenting their own work and ideas to their peers and the course instructor.
- Students will demonstrate their understanding of relevant materials and topics discussed in class.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge gained during the course to case study materials and critically reflect about the transferability of ideas.

Activities:

- Individual presentations of reading assignments, followed by a plenary discussion.
- Student case study presentations, followed by a plenary discussion.

Readings:

- **Andrew E. Barshay: “‘Doubly Cruel’: Marxism and the Presence of the Past in Japanese Capitalism”, in: Stephen Vlastos (ed), *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, pp. 243-261.**
- Prasenjit Duara: *The Crisis of Global Modernity: Asian Traditions and a Sustainable Future*. Cambridge University Press, 2014.
 - **Chapter 7: “Regions of Circulation and Networks of Sustainability in Asia” (pp. 239-278)**

Tradition, Culture and Commodification

Topic description: Towards the end of term we will shift our attention to issues of cultural commodification and commoditization by exploring some of the ways in which Asian traditions have been reimagined as cultural heritage sites in relation to UNESCO World Heritage criteria and in order to serve a growing industry of heritage tourism. Case studies from Cambodia and Indonesia will be the focus of our attention and serve as examples for wider processes of heritage making in Asia's 'cultural landscapes'.

Expected learning outcomes:

- Students will explore and understand processes of heritage making and cultural commoditization in Asia.
- Students will discuss the connections between Asian traditions, UNESCO World Heritage criteria and cultural tourism.
- Students will critically discuss questions of authenticity in relation to Asian traditions and heritage sites.

Particularly for those students presenting during the week:

- Students will gain experience in presenting their own work and ideas to their peers and the course instructor.
- Students will demonstrate their understanding of relevant materials and topics discussed in class.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge gained during the course to case study materials and critically reflect about the transferability of ideas.

Activities:

- Individual presentations of reading assignments, followed by a plenary discussion.
- Student case study presentations, followed by a plenary discussion.

Readings:

- **Kathleen M. Adams: "Generating Theory, Tourism, and 'World Heritage' in Indonesia: Ethical Quandaries for Anthropologists in an Era of Tourist Mania", *Napa Bulletin* 23 [2005]: 45-59**
- Tim Winter: *Post-Conflict Heritage, Postcolonial Tourism: Culture, Politics and Development at Angkor*. London and New York: Routledge, 2007.
 - Chapter 2: "'Lost Civilization' to Free-market Commerce: The Modern Social Life of Angkor" (pp. 25-46)
 - **Chapter 7: "Conclusion – in (the) Place of Modernity Appears the Illusion of History" (pp. 139-149)**
- Tim Winter: *Heritage and Nationalism: An Unbreachable Couple?* Penrith: Institute for Culture and Society, University of Western Sydney, 2012 [ICS Occasional Paper Series, Vol. 3 No. 4]
- Eric J. Heikilla and Philippe Peycam: "Economic Development in the Shadow of Angkor Wat: Meaning, Legitimation, and Myth", *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 29 (3) [2010]: 294-309.
- Bernard Sellato: "Sultans' Palaces and Museums in Indonesian Borneo: National Policies, Political Decentralization, Cultural Depatrimonization, Identity Relocalization, 1950-2010", *Archipel* 89 [2015]: 125-160.
- Sallie Yea: "On and Off the Ethnic Tourism Map in Southeast Asia: The Case of Iban Longhouse Tourism, Sarawak, Malaysia", *Tourism Geographies* 4 (2) [2002]: 173-194.

Final Discussion: Future-Making in Post-Modern Asia?

Topic description: The final discussion of this course looks into possible dimensions of Asian future(s). We will discuss a range of future scenarios and visions of ‘preferred’ (or ‘normative’) futures in the Asian context. The focus of discussion will accommodate the students’ own visions of the future in relation to Asian traditions and – alternative? – modernities.

Expected learning outcomes:

- Students will explore and understand the concept of ‘preferred’ futures and interrelate this to the Asian context.
- Students will demonstrate a critical understanding of relevant materials, concepts and case studies discussed throughout the term.
- Students will critically discuss Asian future(s) and relate their own visions and ideas to the debate.

Activities:

- Individual presentations of reading assignments, followed by a plenary discussion.
- Students will be split into two groups to discuss issues of future-making in relation to tradition and modernity in Asia. Beyond the assigned readings, the brainstorming-list of ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’ phenomena from the first week of term will serve as a basis of discussion: One group of students is supposed to allocate and utilize ‘traditions’ – real or imagined – in their vision for Asian future(s), whereas the other group of students is supposed to promote an Asian modernity model for their vision of a ‘preferred’ future. – *Note that students’ participation and performance in this group debate is part of the assessment for this course (10 %).*

Readings:

- Victor T. King: *The Sociology of Southeast Asia: Transformations in a Developing Region*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2008.
 - **Chapter 11: “Conclusions: Modernity, Globalization and the Future” (pp. 246-255)**
- J. O’Connor: “Shanghai Modern: Replaying Futures Past”, *Culture Unbound* 4 (2012): 15-34.