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Centre for Asian Studies

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Baltic Alliance for Asian Studies The 4th BAAS Conference

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Vytautas Magnus University
Kaunas, Lithuania

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Program

March 5 (Thursday)

VMU multipurpose building (V. Putvinskio str. 23)

- from 08:15 Registration (at the entrance on the 1st floor)
09:00-09:15 Opening (Room 103)

09:15-10:10 Keynote presentation (Room 103)
 Ajay Dubey (Jawaharlal Nehru University, India)
 *India's Africa Engagement: From Historical Goodwill to
Multidimensional Relations*

10:10-10:30 Coffee break (on the 1st floor)

1st group of parallel sessions

1.1 Identities in the Middle East (Room 103)

- 10:30-12:00 **Ingrida Kleinhofa** (University of Latvia, Latvia)
 *Identities, Values and Affiliations of the Francophone
Lebanese-Born Writer Amin Maalouf: A Unique Case or the
New Normality?*

 Barbora Gediminaitė (Vilnius Academy of Arts / Vilnius
University, Lithuania)
 *Recentered branding of nationalism in the XXIc. Islamic
city-museum. Cairo case.*

 Šarūnas Rinkevičius (Vilnius University, Lithuania)
 *The use of Phoenician motives in identity construction in
Lebanon in the 20th century.*

 Dalia Sabaliauskienė (Vilnius University, Lithuania)
 Ritual politeness among young Tehranis.

1.2 Soka Gakkai: A Japanese Buddhist Movement in Global Perspective (Room 310)

10:30-12:00 **Ryo Chounabayashi** (Soka University, Japan)
*History of the Globalization of Soka Gakkai: Cases in the
USA and Brazil.*

Michele Lamb (University of Roehampton, UK)
*The Acceptance of Soka Gakkai in the UK and Its Current
Situation.*

Massimo Introvigne (Center for Studies on New Religions,
Italy)
Soka Gakkai in Italy: Success and Controversies.

Rosita Šorytė (International Observatory of Religious
Liberty of Refugees, Lithuania)
Soka Gakkai's Global Campaigns for Nuclear Disarmament.

1.3 Exploring the lost historical routes, roots, memories and experiences: India and South East Asia encounters through the Ages (Room 311)

10:30-12:00 **Dr. Lipi Ghosh** (University of Calcutta, India)
*Understanding India-South East Asia Relations:
Perspectives of Overland Physical Connectivities.*

Dr. Suchandra Ghosh (University of Calcutta, India)
*Connecting Eastern sea board of India to Regions of
Southeast Asia: Religion, Trade and Artistic Exchange.*

Dr. Rajsekhar Basu (University of Calcutta, India)
*Looking back at the networks of trade and commerce
between India and Burma in the colonial period: Story of
expectations and missed opportunities, c. 1860-1948.*

12:00-13:30 Lunch break

2nd group of parallel sessions

2.1 Claiming space: Identity, materiality and alterity in Asian societies (Room 103)

13:30-15:30 **Kristina Jonutytė** (Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania)
Place-making and Belonging in Post-Soviet Ulan-Ude.

Kristina Garalytė (Vilnius University, Lithuania)
Beef Politics and Dalit-Bahujan Emancipation in India

Bayaskhalan Chimitdorzhiev (Buryat State University, Russia)
The Balagat state as a Modern Buddhist Theocracy in Inner Asia.

Germanovich Anastasia Andreevna (National Research University Higher School of Economics, Russia)
Confucian modern schools: a new trend or uninterrupted tradition?

Leons Taivāns (University of Latvia, Latvia)
Indonesian Islam Between Secularism and Islamization.

2.2 Linguistics and translation (Room 310)

13:30-15:30 **Kim Hye Ran** (National Research University Higher School of Economics, Russia)
Difficulties of translation of the Korean literary text (extralinguistic and linguistan aspect).

Milda Čepaitytė (Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania)
The comparative analysis of Lithuanian and Korean vowel systems.

Lora Tamošiūnienė (Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania)
Translation of nature scenes in fiction from Korean into Lithuanian.

Mariia Rukodelnikova (Russian State University for the Humanities, Russia)
The language of the Central Asian Huizu: the typology changes and the influence of new social conditions.

2.3 Special session: CrossAsia (Room 311)

13:30-15:30 **Matthias Kaun** (East Asia Department of Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Germany)
The Idea of a European Asia Licensing Initiative

Georgijs Dunajevs (The National Library of Latvia, Latvia)
CrossAsia from a User's Point of View

15:30-15:50 Coffee break (on the 1st floor)

3rd group of parallel sessions

3.1 Cultural Crossroads in the Middle East. The Historical, Cultural and Political Legacy of Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict from the Ancient Near East to the Present Day (roundtable) (Room 310)

15:50-17:50 **Vladimir Sazonov** (University of Tartu/ Estonian Military Academy, Estonia)
The Failure of Intercultural Dialogue in the Middle East – the Impact of War Theology to Contemporary Ideological-Religious Conflicts.

Peeter Espak (University of Tartu, Estonia)
On the Time of Composition of the Hitherto Undated Sumerian Myths.

Holger Mölder (Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia)
The Islamic State, Clash of Civilizations and Their Impact on the Development of Contemporary International Relations.

Dovilė Valaitė (Vilnius University, Lithuania)
The conception of mental disorders in contemporary Islamic world: between tradition and modernity.

Ernestas Jančėnkas (Vilnius University, Lithuania)
The Concept of Nature in Ibn Ḥaldūn's theory of civilisation.

3.2 Japan: history and perceptions (Room 103)

15:50-17:50 **Simona Vasilevskytė** (Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania)
Early Japanese visits to Kaunas: Yasumasa Fukushima.

Aurore Yamagata-Montoya (Mutual Images Research Association (MIRA), France)
“Distinguished guests”: The Iwakura Mission as described in American newspapers during its journey through the US (1872).

Ene Selart (University of Tartu, Estonia)
Taking sides in the distant military conflict: The media perspective of Estonia about the Sino-Japanese war in 1937.

Andrea Revelant (Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy)
Shidehara Diplomacy and Public Discourse in Japan: The Case of Gaikō Jihō in 1929.

18:15~ Opening reception (2nd floor gallery of S. Daukanto str. 28)

March 6 (Friday)

VMU multipurpose building (V. Putvinskio str. 23)

09:00-10:00 Keynote presentation (Room 103)
Märt Läänemets (University of Tartu, Estonia)
Concept of the Humanistic Base Texts. An Approach to Understand and Evaluate the Axial Age's Spiritual Heritage

10:00-10:20 Coffee break (on the 1st floor)

4th group of parallel sessions

4.1 Politics in the Middle East (Room 103)

10:20-12:00 **Javad Keypour** (Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia)
The role of energy factor in EU-Iran political relations: an aftermath of the US withdrawal from JCPOA

Holger Mölder (Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia)
Playing the Cold War in the Middle East – what would be US strategic ambitions in the region?

Salahs Mohameds Šerifs (University of Latvia, Latvia)
The Influence of Sufism on the Sudanese Belt.

Sandra Peets (Tallinn University, Estonia)
The War of Rhetorics: the strategic narratives adopted by Sayyīd Rūḥollah Mūsavī Homeynī and Šaddām Ḥusayn in the Iran-Iraq war.

4.2 China related politics (Room 310)

10:20-12:00 **Konstantinas Andrijauskas** (Vilnius University, Lithuania)
Physical Infrastructure and Chinese “Creation” and “Expansion” of Inner Mongolia.

Chien-Jung Hsu (National Dong Hwa University, Taiwan)
China’s cyber-disinformation warfare against Taiwan.

Ying-kit Chan (Leiden University, Netherlands)
Heeding the Warnings: Deng Huaxi and Zheng Guanying’s Shengshi Weiyan

Jing Guo (University of Tartu, Estonia)
Political Differences between China and the West in the Context of Glocalization

4.3 Shincheonji, a South Korean New Religious Movement: Expansion, Social Activism, and Coronavirus Controversies (Room 311)

10:20-12:00 **Massimo Introvigne** (Centre for Studies on New Religions, Italy)
Shincheonji: An Introduction.

Willy Fautré (Human Rights Without Frontiers, Belgium)
Coercive Change of religion and Deprogramming in South Korea: A Case Study of Shincheonji.

Rosita Šorytė (International Observatory of Religious Liberty of Refugees, Lithuania)
*“Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light”:
Shincheonji as a Global Social Actor.*

12:00-13:30 Lunch break

5th group of parallel sessions

5.1 Political economy: China and Korea (Room 103)

13:30-15:00 **Jusif Seiranov** (Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania)
The impact of large business groups on outward/inward openness of the Korean economy.

Yossi Mann (Bar-Ilan University / IDC Herzeliya, Izrael)
The Impact of China's new oil benchmark on global energy markets. [cancelled]

Eunhee Park (Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania)
Discourses of Stability and Risk: The Cultural History of the Insurance Industry in South Korea from the 1960s to the 1980s.

Vida Mačikėnaitė (International University of Japan, Japan)
The links between Chinese companies and the party-state: a survey of economic elite mobility in China.

5.2 Chinese literature (Room 310)

13:30-15:00 **Agita Baltgalve** (University of Latvia, Latvia)
Anthology of Chinese Classical Literature in Latvian Language.

Tadas Snuiškis (Vilnius University, Lithuania)
Indian Philosophy in China: Was "Daśapadārthī" 勝宗十句義論 authored by a Vaiśeṣika?

Martina Renata Prosperi (Roma Tre University, Italy)
Deviance in and of Contemporary Sinophone Literature: A Selection of Case Studies.

Balys Astrauskas (Vilnius University, Lithuania)
Social Significance of Rural Migrant Workers (Dagong) Poetry of the Pearl River Delta Region, China

5.3 Gender in Asia (Room 311)

13:30-15:00 **Chang Liu** (Heidelberg University, Germany)
What's Madonna Got to Do with Post-Mao Chinese Femininity?

Dr. Sofia M. Rebrey (Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Russia)
Gender Inequality in Advanced Asia: A Cross-Country Socio-Economic Analysis of Axis Institutions.

Kayako Takagi (Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania)
Women's language in education of Japanese language: Focusing on the analysis of textbooks

15:00-15:20 Coffee break (on the 1st floor)

6th group of parallel sessions

6.1 Migration, memory and identity: uncertainty and challenges of belonging of transnational migrants and disadvantaged locals (Room 106)

15:20-17:20 **Ilona Kazlauskaitė** (Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas)
Uncertainty of belonging of international students from Asia in the Western Universities: case of academic migration.

Kuldip Singh (Guru Nanak Dev University, India)
The Illegal Migration from Indian State of Punjab: A View from the Below.

Irma Kondrataitė (Vilnius University, Lithuania)
The role of NGOs in dealing with prostitution in India: case of counter-hegemonic strategies.

Alina Nidagundi (Riga Technical University / University of Latvia, Latvia)
The Concept of Identity in Indian Diasporic Literature.

6.2 Literary heritage of Buddhism: old tenets and new interpretations (Room 310)

15:20-17:20 **Bhikshuni Lozang Trinlae** (University of Tartu, Estonia)
Critically Establishing the Rational Dynamics of Vajrayāna Contemplative Ritual Processes: An Exploratory Qualitative Phenomenological Study with the Drukpa Tradition of Vajrayāna Buddhism.

Andres Herkel (University of Tartu, Estonia)
Psychological Meaning of Nāgārjuna's
Mūlamadhyamakakārikā, X.

Teet Toome (University of Tartu, Estonia)
Karma is the Lotus Sutra.

Märt Läänemets (University of Tartu, Estonia)
Description of levels of spiritual emancipation in the
Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra.

6.3 Japan's foreign policy: State and non-state actors in rethinking the past and looking towards the future of relations in North East Asia (Room 312)

15:20-17:20 **Dr. Olga Barbasiewicz** (Jagiellonian University, Poland)
Heading the new era – remembering the past. Japanese-
Korean relations at the turn of two historical periods.

Dr. Maciej Pletnia (Jagiellonian University, Poland)
Internal pressure – Japan War-Bereaved Families
Association and their influence on Japanese politics of
memory in the international context.

Diana Schnelle (Ruhr University Bochum, Germany)
Shaping Japan's foreign policy in a time of energy
transition: the role of non-state actors.

Dr. Kamila Szczepanska (University of Turku, Finland)
Beyond the trappings of state animosities? Development
cooperation between North East Asian NGOs in the 21st
century.

Polkhova Ekaterina (St Petersburg State University,
Russia)
Russia – Japan cooperation in the Arctic Region.

March 7 (Saturday)

VMU multipurpose building (V. Putvinskio str. 23)

7th group of parallel sessions

7.1 Alternative Religiosities in the European (Post-)Communist and East Asian Countries: Emerging Diversities within (Trans)Formations, Disruptions, Continuation [Part I] (Room 103)

9:30-11:00 **Michael Strmiska** (Orange County Community College (SUNY-Orange), USA)
Eastern Religions in Eastern Europe: Three Cases from Latvia.

Rasa Pranskevičiūtė-Amoson (Vilnius University, Lithuania)
The Hare Krishna Community in the Light of KGB Persecutions: the Case of the Soviet Republic of Lithuania.

Justina Razumaitė (Vilnius University, Lithuania)
Conversion to Christianity in China as a Response to Global and Socio-political Challenges.

7.2 Japanese art (Room 106)

9:30-11:00 **Līga Sakse** (Latvian Academy of Culture, Latvia)
Temporality of Japanese Floral Art: Case of AMKK (Azuma Makoto Kaju Kenkyusho).

Maxime Danesin (Independent researcher, France)
Transculturality in Mangaesque literature and its fantasy branch.

Agnese Haijima (University of Latvia, Latvia)
Contemporary Japanese Gardens and Parks.

Maret Nukke, PhD (Tallinn University, Estonia)
The Enlightenment of Danish Prince: Adapting Shakespeare's Hamlet as a Japanese nō

7.3 Politics of India [I] (Room 310)

9:30-11:00 **Jacek Skup** (Jagiellonian University, Poland)
Whose heroes are they anyway? Leaders of the independence struggle in Narendra Modi's historical politics.

Kuber Nag (University of Tartu, Estonia)
Dalit Literary Activism and Identity Politics in India.

Manish Patel (Aarhus University, Denmark)
The Implication of Two Poems in Mass-protest.

7.4 Environmental issues in East Asia (Room 311)

9:30-11:00 **Katsuhiko Mori** (International Christian University, Japan)
Competition and Cooperation on Environmental Issues in Asia and the Pacific

Hiroshi Ohta (Waseda University, Japan)
"Why is Japan faltering in climate diplomacy: The account from the politics of vested interest and path dependence

Margarita Putniņa (Buddhist Community Riga Drikung Ngaden Choling, Latvia)
Global Society's Environmental and Psychological Interconnectedness: Problems and Solutions.

11:00-11:15 Coffee break (on the 1st floor)

8th group of parallel sessions

8.1 Alternative Religiosities in the European (Post-)Communist and East Asian Countries: Emerging Diversities within (Trans)Formations, Disruptions, Continuation [Part I] (Room 103)

11:15-12:30 **Darima Amogolonova** (Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia)
Constructing new religiosity, contesting secular authorities: Buddhist Traditional Sangha of Russia in Desecularization process.

David W. Kim (Australian National University, Australia)
Cao Đài and Gucheon Sangje: Ethnical Grassroots New Religious Movements in Modern Vietnam and Korea.

Marika Laudere (Daugavpils University, Latvia)
Minority Religions in Latvia: Buddhism.

8.2 Japanese and Chinese art (Room 106)

11:15-12:30 **Zofia Weiss** (Wojciech Weiss Museum Foundation, Poland)
Polish national identity and Japanese art.

Nataša Visočnik (University of Ljubljana, Slovenia)
Collections of Japanese Art in Slovene Museums: Alma Karlin's Hand Fans.

Kristine Milere (Latvian National Museum of Art / Latvian Academy of Culture, Latvia)
Chinese graphic art collection of the Latvian National Museum of Art

8.3 Politics of India [II] (Room 310)

11:15-12:30 **Ranjan Kumar Sahoo** (University of Delhi, India)
A study of the concept of 'Citizenship' and 'Democracy' among the Students and Teachers of the state of Jammu & Kashmir.

Vivek Kumar Shukla (Aarhus University, Denmark)
Changing Language of North Indian Electoral Politics.

Deepika Kashyap (University of Tartu, Estonia)
Politics of Space and Identity in Northeast India: Understanding Nyishi and their Lost Glory.

8.4 Japanese politics and society (Room 311)

11:15-12:30 **Arvydas Kumpis** (Vytautas Magnus University / Klaipėda University, Lithuania)
Personal blogs and the spread of Far-right ideas in Japan: the case of Makoto Sakurai's "Doronpa no hitorigoto".

Aya Kimura (Ochanomizu University, Japan)

Museums Acts in Japan and Lithuania: Comparison of National Attitude toward Cultural Institutions.

Uģis Nastevičs (University of Latvia / Latvian Academy of Culture, Latvia)

The Perception of Latvians by Japanese on Twitter.

12:30-14:00 Lunch break

from 14:00 Cultural activity

Abstracts

(in chronological order)

Keynote presentation

Ajay Dubey

(Jawaharlal Nehru University, India)

India's Africa Engagement: From Historical Goodwill to Multidimensional Relations

India has historical links with Africa. There had been migration of people since pre-colonial times between these two regions situated across Indian ocean. Colonial subjugation gave them common experience of exploitation and of their struggles against Western colonial powers. Indian policy of treating decolonization and racial discrimination in Africa as part of its own freedom struggle for independence from 1930 onwards and exemplary Indian support to Africa against apartheid and racial discrimination, gave it a tremendous goodwill in Africa. The cold war period witnessed Indian initiatives of Afro-Asian Resurgence, Non-Alignment and Collective Self Reliance incorporating Africa under South-South Cooperation framework. The advent of globalization led to loosening of traditional powers control on Africa and witnessed a new drive of engagements from Asian countries like China, India, Japan and others under their respective plans like FOCAC, IAFS, TICAD etc. There were new national objectives and new rallying points for India in Africa. India developed new strategies and new arms of engagements for Africa. So did the other Asian powers in Africa. But India built its competitive edge in Africa on its historical goodwill, through old and large latent Indian diaspora in Africa and by adding economic dimension to its Africa policy. India under IAFS with Banjul formula tried to preserve and translate historical goodwill and heritage resource like Indian diaspora into economic and strategic outputs.

The paper would analyze the evolving India's Africa engagements, its current policies and programmes as well as Africa responses.

1.1 Identities in the Middle East

Ingrida Kleinhofa

(University of Latvia, Latvia)

Identities, Values and Affiliations of the Francophone Lebanese-Born Writer Amin Maalouf: A Unique Case or the New Normality?

The inhabitants of our globalized multicultural world often are born and raised in societies with two or more cultures and languages in contact, so they develop the sense of belonging to more than one culture or country, which may be defined as composite identity or a set of identities of the same person. While every person may be considered as a hybrid of some unique set of identity factors, in the case of multicultural upbringing, these factors may be incompatible and lead to internal conflicts. Consequently, the multicultural person faces the tremendous task of harmonizing or at least organizing the contradictory parts of own composite identity in order to understand own affiliations and values and, finally, to choose own allies and enemies. The postcolonial critic G. Spivak argues that in such cases people tend to develop “indefinite” identities which belong “between” the cultures, in particular, if the cultures are little compatible or have warring ideologies. According to H. Bhabha, these people continuously live in the “third space”, namely, on the intercultural negotiation ground. However, the francophone Arab emigration writer Amin Maalouf, who was raised in a community with a complex set of multiple cultural, religious, and political affiliations, himself might be considered a characteristic case of such a multicultural person, presents an alternative view of the “true” identity, discussed at length in his well-known non-fiction *Les Identités meurtrières* (1998) translated into English as *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong* (2000). The present study explores the question of identity of Amin Maalouf as a representative of Lebanese francophone Christian community and compares his view to the existing postcolonial analysis.

Barbora Gediminaitė

(Vilnius Academy of Arts / Vilnius University, Lithuania)

Recentered branding of nationalism in the XXIc. Islamic city-museum. Cairo case

This paper deals with new urbanization projects which are strongly affecting the concept of Islamic city throughout the whole MENA region. Yet, Cairo case is giving opportunity to testify not architecturally uniformed global city vision of Gulf countries, but deep intertwined processes to create *new Cairo* within its multi-layered cultural frame. In this paper I will argue that ongoing space museumization and city museumification processes in Cairo stand for re-considering the national identity in rapid globalization and neoliberal circumstances along with the heritage being a controversial on Islamic-non-Islamic axis tool. Theoretical framework based on decolonization, concepts of selected memory, banal nationalism, contemporary museum and construction of place becomes a supportive structure for the case. The main premise and challenge are to understand the circulation of politics, society and overheritage within one mega city. New urban fabric of Cairo highlights new icons – The Grand Egyptian Museum (estimated opening 2020) and Khufu Plaza, New Capital city to mention a few. Remapping, reshaping cultural capital in Cairo become a strategy to re-icon the iconic country. Presumably, museumization and museumification in Cairo are articulated as gated community where commodified selective nationalism is detached from the Islamic values.

Šarūnas Rinkevičius

(Vilnius University, Lithuania)

The use of Phoenician motives in identity construction in Lebanon in the 20th century

The paper aims to analyze the use of Phoenician motives in the discourse of identity construction in Lebanon in the 20th century. The quest for the national mythology based on narratives of past heroism in Lebanon began with the start of independence aspirations in order to develop national identity for the new state. Usually, this discussion of intellectuals is reflected through the dichotomy between Arabism and Phoenicianism, however, such view on the writings and activity of the intellectuals does not reflect complexity of the discourse. While

such thinkers as Said Akl perceived Phoenicianism as an attempt to revive ancient past motives in order to ideologically distance Lebanese people from the Arab world by claiming Lebanese people to be direct descendants of Phoenician people, some other Phoenicianists, such as Michel Chiha, attempted to combine both Phoenician and Arab motives for creating a single narrative. Moreover, there can also be found attempts of Arab nationalists to combine Phoenician motives with the Arab nationalism. The aim of the paper is to assess these discussions of the intellectuals of the 20th century in Lebanon in order to understand the use of the concept of Phoenicianism as well as the reasons and the ways of the use of Phoenician motives in the discourse of identity construction.

Dalia Sabaliauskienė

(Vilnius University, Lithuania)

Ritual politeness among young Tehranis

The present paper focuses on the interaction of Tehran youth. Modern concept of Iranian “ritual courtesy” (Beeman 1986, Koutlaki 1997), called ta’ārof in Farsi language, is analysed. Factors such as communication technologies, media and globalisation enable Iranian youth to keep up with nowadays global actualities but also has ensured cavernous generation gap in the society (Arghavan 2017). Young people construct their own cultural worlds which have influence to their communication behaviour. These transformative factors are more visible in Tehran, Iran’s most cosmopolitan city (Ibid). Drawing from interviews and informal conversations with young people in Tehran, ritual courtesy, in some cases, could be mainly associated with ignoring one’s own desires and needs, while paying full attention to the needs of an interlocutor. So, ta’ārof is used relatively less in interaction compared with the previous generation. Due to the fact that Iran has a highly youthful population - the median age is 30 - young people can significantly change society’s face. Attention is paid to the changing notion of ta’ārof which is one of the most important aspects of Iranian-ness (fars. iraniyat) (Katouzian 2010, Koutlaki 2010). In present paper I will analyse the problem of how this traditional behavioural pattern is perceived in modern Tehran culture and what are its main forms of expression.

1.2 Soka Gakkai: A Japanese Buddhist Movement in Global Perspective

Convened by Massimo Introvigne
(Center for Studies on New Religions, Italy)

There is a substantial literature on Soka Gakkai in Japan, including its growth, political activities, changes, and controversies. But much less has been written about how a quintessential Japanese Buddhist movement such as Soka Gakkai became a global reality, with a significant international presence, globalized social campaigns, and a special, perhaps unexpected, success in Italy. The panel will address Soka Gakkai's international expansion as a case study of the globalization of a Japanese Religious movement.

Ryo Chounabayashi

(Soka University, Japan)

History of the Globalization of Soka Gakkai: Cases in the USA and Brazil

Soka Gakkai is a unique Buddhist movement which solely consist in lay members (i.e., there is no professional monk or priest). It proclaims that its members may attain Buddhahood through its recommended daily practices originated by the 13th century Japanese monk, Nichiren. Soka Gakkai started its movement in Japan in 1930, and after 1960s the membership outside Japan rapidly increased, and it now has more than 2 million oversea members.

How have many non-Japanese members been attracted by Soka Gakkai? Two case studies are presented, the USA and Brazil. Briefly introducing how Soka Gakkai expanded and gained significant memberships in these two areas, the following three points will be explained. (1) In the early stage of their movements, the members in both the USA and Brazil attempted to copy what their counterparts in Japan had been doing, but (2) as a consequence, they encountered various problems in each respective area, such as the tension between its members, pressure from society, etc., and (3) in each area the members solved those problems through re-interpreting Soka Gakkai's core ideas in accordance with their cultural and social conditions.

The comparison between the case in the USA and the case in Brazil reveals both (1) some interesting differences between these two areas in their ways of

the re-interpretation of Soka Gakkai's thought, and (2) the core thoughts of Soka Gakkai were shared by the members irrespective of their social backgrounds. Brief comments and discussions on these features of Soka Gakkai will be given in order to understand the nature of Soka Gakkai's thought, both its emphasis on (some sort of) the perfection of each practitioner as a Buddhist and its unique emphasis on the value of social engagement, which distinguishes Soka Gakkai from other Buddhist movements such as Zen Buddhism.

Michele Lamb

(University of Roehampton, United Kingdom)

The Acceptance of Soka Gakkai in the UK and Its Current Situation

The Soka Gakkai (SG) in Japan is a Japanese lay Buddhist movement founded in 1930 which has a worldwide membership comprising around 12 million members in 192 countries and territories. Soka Gakkai-UK (SGI-UK) is an affiliated organization that began in the 1960s with the arrival of mainly female Japanese migrants and now comprises well over 10,000 members. Its highly diverse membership carries out activities in the UK under the banner of 'Buddhism in Action for Peace' which encourages members towards 'active involvement in society on the basis of fundamental respect for the dignity of life'.

The relationship between the Soka Gakkai in Japan and affiliated national organisations is guided by the Buddhist concept of *zuiho-bini*, or 'respecting the traditions, customs, and manners of the place and time, as long as doing so doesn't violate the basic Buddhist precepts of compassion and wisdom'. This has allowed SGI-UK to pursue an approach which aims to gain broad acceptance into mainstream religious, cultural and socio-political activities in Britain, whilst simultaneously navigating any tensions that inevitably arise in a highly socially diverse movement originally developed in the Japanese cultural context. This paper draws on cultural sociology as a theoretical framework to critically examine, through documentary and empirical evidence, the development and acceptance of the Soka Gakkai as a Japanese religious and social movement in the UK, focusing on three areas: 1) acceptance as a member of the UK Buddhist community; 2) acceptance of its contribution to mainstream public activities in peace, culture and education; 3) acceptance as

a contribution to understandings of individual religious practice and life-style in Contemporary Britain.

Massimo Introvigne

(Center for Studies on New Religions, Italy)

Soka Gakkai in Italy: Success and Controversies

Soka Gakkai started operating in Italy in 1961, and was formally established there in 1963, but the first members were expatriate Japanese. The first Italian member joined in 1966. From then on, the growth has been almost unique among Eastern religious movements that came to Western Europe. In 1993, members were 13,000, and they reached 90,000 in 2019. Soka Gakkai attracted the attention of Italian media as among those who joined were well-known soccer stars, actors, and singers. Its activities for peace and against nuclear weapons attracted an even larger audience, despite controversies generated by vocal ex-members. In 2015, Soka Gakkai entered the elite club of religious minorities that signed a Concordat with the Italian government. It was ratified by the Parliament in 2016. The paper explores the reasons of the singular growth of Soka Gakkai in Italy, based both on qualitative interviews and on a survey among a representative sample of Italian members.

Rosita Šorytė

(International Observatory of Religious Liberty of Refugees, Lithuania)

Soka Gakkai's Global Campaigns for Nuclear Disarmament

Soka Gakkai developed in Japan in the aftermath of the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and few causes are dearest to its members than the campaign for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. To promote this aim, Soka Gakkai has developed strategic alliances with United Nations agencies, NGOs, and world leaders of all faiths. Yet, the campaign's roots are in Soka Gakkai's Buddhist ethos. The paper investigates the relevance of Soka Gakkai's European and world activities in the field of nuclear disarmament, and how these campaigns are not peripheral, but central to the movement's efforts to create a new civilization based on values derived from Japanese Nichiren Buddhism.

1.3 Exploring the lost historical routes, roots, memories and experiences: India and South East Asia encounters through the Ages

Convened by Rajsekhar Basu
(University of Calcutta, India)

The theme of the panel deals with the efforts to unearth connectivities between two apparently demarcated regions of Asia, disparate in terms of economic size, population figures and ethnicity. Those are South and South East Asia. However, this differentiation is often made on the basis of crude geographical analysis and the political cartography that became much too popular since the era of decolonisation. The two regions despite the differences often based on geographical location were not really separate, but were linked through river systems and overland routes, connecting people and civilizations, interspersed with migration of men and capital. This sort of cooperation was prevalent in the centuries before the ASEAN experiment was initiated by the proponents of the South East Asian nations. Nonetheless, the long phases of interaction between these two regions have often been ignored by nationalist minded scholars, who prioritise more on the nation's boundaries overlooking the long phase of human interaction. The panelists would be exploring the history of these interactions that are embedded within the entire discourse on Silk Road as well as Bay of Bengal, migration patterns from India to South East Asia and the literary representations including travelogues, which transcended the tropes of strange and bizareness, often conditioned by culturalist monologues and nationalist stereotypes. It will discuss the aspects of geographical as well as cultural connectedness with special reference to India and mainland South East Asia

Lipi Ghosh

(University of Calcutta, India)

Understanding India-South East Asia Relations: Perspectives of Overland Physical Connectivities.

Inter-Asian linkages and connectivity are important subjects for modern day study. While we talk of inter Asian linkages, we move beyond national borders, and transcend many political boundaries. While we talk of India-

South East Asia connectivity, we take into consideration two dimensions, i.e, land and maritime connectivities. My this paper takes up India- Myanmar- Thailand overland geographical connectivities in historical and contemporary contexts.

In this India South East Asia relations, North East India and Myanmar are significant factors. Northeast India stands as the bridge of connectivity between India Myanmar& Thailand. In the annals of Indian foreign policy, Northeast India has always remained a strategic linking point and used to be referred as the frontier between India and its neighbours. Ethnically, this region is distinct from the rest of India and has strong ethnic and cultural ties with South East Asia. During the British rule in India, this region acted an eastern buffer zone for India between Burma and China. During the cold war years, New Delhi's lack of any definite East Asia policy made this region totally isolated in its economic and foreign policy domain. This situation has been drastically altered in the context of New Global Order, following India's proclamation of its Look East and Act East policies. Presently, this region can be considered as a Gateway to Southeast Asia, on account of its geo-strategic and economic importance

While I talk of India- South East Overland connectivities, I bring into consideration the following aspects:

- (1) The issue of historical cross border linkages and geographical routes transmitting culture either from India to Myanmar and Thailand or vice versa
- (2) The contexts of modern day overland linkages.

Suchandra Ghosh

(University of Calcutta, India)

Connecting Eastern sea board of India to Regions of Southeast Asia: Religion, Trade and Artistic Exchange.

The immense possibilities of cultural transactions among communities along with exchanges of commercial commodities, where ritual requirements complement economic needs are valid areas of enquiry. Thailand and Myanmar were involved in a network of communications from very early times. In fact as neighbouring countries, Thailand and Myanmar not only

share a long border but also have a profoundly interrelated history. This network was much strengthened in and around the southern part of both the countries near the Isthmus of Kra. The lineage of communication could be traced to linguistic commonalty and of course Buddhism and Brahmanism. Both the religion in turn linked the region with the eastern sea board of India. The East-West Corridor is a conceptual tool for identifying common cultural processes across mainland Southeast Asia. The choice of the region is from northern east-west corridor to southern east-west corridor. On the Myanmar side we have Thaton and Mawlamyne in the north and Dawei in the south, which are major points of connectivity with Thailand. That lower Myanmar was a recipient of religious practices from Pala India and point of transfer of these practices eastward is testified by a Pali chant preserved in Thailand, the verse on the eight great sites (atthamahathana), that is the eight sites related to Buddha. The Isthmus of Kra located to the south of the study area would also be a part of our larger study to understand the historical and cultural processes. Moreover there was exchange of ideas, rituals and technology which fostered a sense of community. It continued to be a coveted zone from early first millennium CE to early second millennium CE for the monarchs, merchants and monks. The linkage was to a certain extent guided by political consideration. The synergies of maritime, riverine and overland interchange between lower Myanmar, Thailand and India in the past cannot be lost sight of. We shall view the connected history from a few perspectives like religion, potentiality of the region for trade and artistic exchanges.

Rajsekhar Basu

(University of Calcutta, India).

Looking back at the networks of trade and commerce between India and Burma in the colonial period: Story of expectations and missed opportunities, c. 1860-1948.

The paper looks into the trading networks which evolved out of the incorporation of Burma into the British Empire, thereby opening up the possibilities of overland and sea trade involving a wide range of commodities, including the transportation of humans. In the succeeding decades, the trading arrangements proved to be of great significance to the British presence in the

North East, because of the geographical proximity and similarities in terms of cultural traditions. The trade through Assam assumed a great deal of significance and there was always a competition in terms of production of petroleum and kerosene between the Digboi oil fields and the Burma Shell oil fields in Burma. However, there was also trade through the Bay of Bengal, which primarily catered to British India's continuous demand for rice and lentils, particularly in the late nineteenth century, when food shortages plagued the empire's claim of improvement. Interestingly, in this entire story of trade, the narrative on human migration is often left out, because most historians are in a state of doubt, when it comes to recognising the entire idea of commodification of human labour. In this presentation, it is this aspect of assisted and unassisted human migration particularly from the Telugu speaking districts of the Madras Presidency which would be discussed in details, alongside the clandestine cooly trade which connected Assam, Burma and Yunan, defying the colonial state's attempt to stop the illegal human trafficking through strict surveillance. The Indian involvement in Burma proved to be vital, because their labour opened the prospects of increased rice cultivation and that of the big business of the rice mills, which lay along the railway tracks connecting the northern and southern parts of Burma. These interesting connectivities were lost in the late 1930s, when the Japanese onslaught in South East Asia looked imminent and the labour repatriation involved the colonial bureaucracy and the nationalist elites of both the regions in a tussle. The growth of anti Indian feelings, as borne out in the memorandums of the local Tamil organisations in Burma proved beyond doubt that decolonisation of South Asia posed a strict challenge to the increasing possibilities of intra Asian trade, which in the future led to the inability on the part of the Government of India to take advantages of regional economic cooperation systems.

2.1 Claiming space: Identity, materiality and alterity in Asian societies

Convened by Kristina Jonutyte (Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania)

The panel attempts to bring together current research of Asia in humanities and social sciences, focusing on a theme that resonates across the continent. Be it in the public space of multi-ethnic Siberian cities, in pilgrimage sites in the Himalayas, or in student activist movements in South Asia, defining and transforming spaces seems key in negotiating identity, belonging and politics. Importantly, too, such efforts of community-making through spatial and discursive means often take shape against a perceived “other”, and can be exclusive, based on ideas and practices of difference. The current panel aims to employ recent theoretical perspectives in the study of materiality, place and space, and belonging in order to shed light on current processes in identity, community, and politics in Asia.

Kristina Jonutyte

(Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania)

Place-making and Belonging in Post-Soviet Ulan-Ude

Over the last three decades, the city of Ulan-Ude (Buryatia, Russian Federation) in Siberia has undergone significant changes in terms of not only its cityscape, but also the ways in which it has been experienced and interpreted. In this multi-ethnic region, up until the late Soviet period the rural/urban divide also went across ethnic lines: Buryats mostly led a rural life while Russians inhabited the city. As Buryat urban migration rapidly increased in the later Soviet period and thereafter, many Buryats experienced Ulan-Ude as a hostile and acutely Russian environment. In the post-Soviet period, however, Ulan-Ude has largely become a multi-ethnic "contested city" (Low 1999) with its burgeoning Buddhist temples, Buryat-style monuments and architecture, public rituals and celebrations, and "ethnic" businesses. As Buryats are looking ahead to the potential futures in the fast-changing city, they are also revisiting its past by offering competing interpretations of the region's colonial history. This paper, based on thirteen months ethnographic fieldwork in Ulan-Ude in

2015-2016 and 2019, will explore various practices and discourses of place-making in a multi-ethnic post-Soviet urban environment. It will particularly focus on the ongoing indigenisation of the urban environment, looking at the construction of space as forming of certain kinds of collectivities in a multi-ethnic region and beyond.

Kristina Garalytė

(Vilnius University, Lithuania)

Beef Politics and Dalit-Bahujan Emancipation in India

A contentious and highly sensitive topic with regard to the Hindu culture, beef has also been central issue in the debates about the subordination and liberation of former-untouchables. This paper traces the historical evolution and contemporary representation of beef as a symbol of the anti-caste struggle starting with B. R. Ambedkar and culminating with the ideas of Kancha Ilaiah and the recent beef festival initiatives by the Dalit-Bahujan students on Hyderabad university campuses. The paper will discuss the semantics of beef as constructed by different ideologues and actors of the Dalit-Bahujan movement. It will also seek to evaluate mobilizing potential of the symbol of beef and to highlight emerging challenges within and without the movement while employing beef as a symbol of Dalit-Bahujan emancipation.

Bayaskhalan Chimitdorzhiev

(Buryat State University, Russia)

The Balagat state as a Modern Buddhist Theocracy in Inner Asia

The paper analyzes the emergence of the Balagat state and the formation of Buddhist political ideas in the territory of modern Buryatia. It is based on an analysis of historical documents related to the Balagat state as well as documents of the Soviet period that respond to this movement. The Balagat state is a short-lived and repeated attempt in 1919 and the 1920s to establish a small-scale Buddhist theocracy in the Baikal region. The analysis demonstrates that the Balagat theocracy was an attempt to combine Buddhism with modern concepts of republicanism and representation. As such, it might have been an

alternative to the formation of Buryat statehood, comparable with, for example, the Buddhist Theocracy of Bogdo Gegen VIII in Mongolia and the Dalai Lama XIII in Tibet. The paper explores the convergence of Buddhism and Western political ideas, which can become the basis for creating a new type of state power.

Germanovich Anastasia Andreevna

(National Research University Higher School of Economics, Russia)

Confucian modern schools: a new trend or uninterrupted tradition?

The proposed presentation is intended to investigate Confucian heritage in the current educational systems of Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, precisely focusing on modern Confucian schools. Today, the Chinese government has critically reappraised its educational traditions, which can be seen from the promotion of the “Chinese National Spirit” through different layers of education, starting from the increased popularity of Confucian private schools in the country, and ending with governmental support of “国学” (“national learning”). However, it is unclear what particular Confucian concepts and traditions are behind the ideas and curriculum of these “孝谦学堂” (“Schools of wisdom and humbleness”), if there are any. The general question is: do Confucian modern schools have any links with the traditional Confucian education?

This paper, being historical-educational research and drawing on historical scientific methods, is largely confined to interpretive process and is based on critical approach and the hermeneutics methodology. Moreover, it is based on the perspective that the past, the future and the present of the educational theory and practice are intertwined. This way, it allows: 1) to make a clear distinction between Confucian pedagogical ideas and practices and non-Confucian in the school curricula and educational activities, 2) to establish succession links between modern Confucian ideas and those from the past.

The results show that today, these schools successfully inherited several elements of traditional Confucian education, such as: 1) Confucian virtues being taught at “moral education” classes and via their own teaching materials and schoolbooks; 2) Confucian canon is the part of the syllabus; 3) classes of

martial art “wushu” and archery as the part of physical training; 4) traditional teaching and learning practices; 5) Confucius worshipping ceremonies etc. However, Confucian education, is mainly transmitted through supplemental modules, and is combined with up-to-date curricula.

Leons Taivāns

(University of Latvia, Latvia. Professor)

Indonesian Islam Between Secularism and Islamization

Indonesia contains the largest Muslim population of all countries in the world. The points of scholars differ in respect of the current trends within dynamics of faith and political conduct of the population. The obvious Islamization of the archipelago goes hand in hand with the diminishing popularity of the Muslim political parties. The point of this author is that the answer can be found in the definition of the divided religious mind of Indonesians. They are belonging to the two world views – the Islam and secular mind simultaneously where religion occupies the “ethical compartment” of the mind, while the “secular compartment” is dominating when the political choice is to be made. Recent General elections in Indonesia (2019) showed the growing popularity of secular parties and their leaders. Besides there are certain religious differences inside the Muslim community. The current number of Muslim inhabitants is estimated to be around 207 million individuals, most of whom adhere to Sunni Islam. This large number indicates that Indonesia contains a clear Muslim majority population. Despite the Muslim majority, the country does not constitute a Muslim or Islamic country based on Islamic law because of various levels of Islamization in the country.

2.2 Linguistics and translation

Kim Hye Ran

(National Research University Higher School of Economics, Russia)

Difficulties of translation of the Korean literary text (extralinguistic and linguistan aspect)

This article is devoted to the analysis of the difficulties of translating Korean literary text in the linguistic-cultural and extralinguistic aspects. The article discusses the history of the translation of literary Korean text and the main trends in the modern theory of literary translation, which are closely related to korean culture. Particular attention is paid to 2 Korean poems that were written in 1920 and 1957 respectively. The unique Korean culture is reflected in these poems, through artistic expression. The use of cultural- specific terms.

Milda Čepaitytė

(Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania)

The comparative analysis of Lithuanian and Korean vowel systems

The aim of this research is to analyse and compare the main phonetic features of Lithuanian and Korean vowels and make a comparative analysis of vowels systems. This research is valuable because it can help students, who are studying foreign languages, better understand how to pronounce the vowels of each language correctly. The used empirical material in this research are students' voice recordings which were analysed using a computer program called „PRAAT“. While doing this research it turned out that vowels of both languages can be classified according to lips (round/unround vowels), according to place (front/back vowels) and according to tongue (high/mid/low vowels).

Vowel quadrilateral charts showed vowel positions. In these charts, the position of each vowel can be seen and compared. Comparing each chart of vowels, it is seen how different locations of vowels are, when they are pronounced by Lithuanians and by Koreans respectively. Also, in this research, a statistical analysis was done, as it is necessary to clarify if the difference between

Lithuanian and Korean pronunciation of vowels is statistically significant or not. This proved that Lithuanian students who are studying Korean language are pronouncing Korean vowels quite correctly and are even able to learn new pronunciation of sounds like [ʌ] and [u] which do not exist in Lithuanian language.

Lora Tamošiūnienė

(Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania)

Translation of nature scenes in fiction from Korean into Lithuanian

Translation strategies well known to many theories of translation often do not provide recipes for the transformation of the “world vision“ represented by a foreign language and reflective of a foreign culture and nature. Comparison of translations into different languages may be revelatory of the problems the translators may encounter when translating nature from one language into another, yet balancing on intangibility of the original “world vision“. The strategies the translators are applying are also worth while reviewing, however, though legitimate in translation theory they may not be universally applicable. The translations into Lithuanian of “Vegetarė” by Han Kang published by „Vaga“, 2017; „Prašau, pasirūpink mama“ by Shin Kyung-sook published by „Baltos lankos“, 2019, „Ri Džinė“ by Shin Kyung-sook published by „Balto“, 2019 all three works translated by Martynas Šiaučiūnas-Kačinskas are all appearing recently but undergoing editing and publishing process by different publishing houses in Lithuania. The weight of the literary texts and their chronology of translations and publications in Lithuania may be symptomatic of an emerging tradition of creating Korean “world vision“ in Lithuanian literary translation texts. The study will review the “mental equivalence of the texts“ to the translations of the above works appearing in other languages with the special focus on nature scenes and will try to compare the strategies of translating nature imagery by measuring the salience of the nature imagery as introduced in Langacker’s cognitive grammar terminology and identified through immediate, maximal or intermediate expression of the concept.

Mariia Rukodelnikova

(Russian State University for the Humanities, Russia)

The language of the Central Asian Huizu: the typology changes and the influence of new social conditions

Compact settlements of the so-called Dungan - Chinese Muslims Huizu - exist on the territory of modern Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan from the mid-19th century. Huizu in China does not have their own language, they speak the dialect of the province where they live. The Dungans who came to Russia spoke two Chinese dialects (Gansu and Shaanxi), but they did not use hieroglyphics. They wrote Chinese using the Arabic alphabet.

In the twenties of the last century an intensive literacy policy, which allowed the Dungans, in contrast to Chinese Huizu, to obtain their own alphabet and written language. So a small part of Huizu had received their own language, began to develop own written tradition (Gansu dialect), there are Dungan newspapers, poetry, literature.

Despite the fact that the Dungan settled among the peoples of the same religious denomination to them, the penetration Turkisms in the Dungan language has not become widespread. The Russian language, whose social status in those years was very high, had a much greater influence.

The report will show that the short-term existence of a separate language in the alien environment can not only contribute to the preservation of archaic features, but also lead to typological changes. The changes were not limited to vocabulary, which always responds dynamically to any social and other changes, changes have affected the structure of the Dungan language as a whole.

Phonetic changes, types of borrowing will be demonstrated in comparison with modern Mandarin language. But the most global changes have affected the grammar of Dungan.

The example of Dungan language development illustrates a situation where social causes lead to global consequences for the language. During a very short period (150-160 years), language began to change from isolating type towards agglutination.

2.3 Special session: CrossAsia

Matthias Kaun

(East Asia Department of Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Germany)

The Idea of a European Asia Licensing Initiative

European research communities often have very limited access to the highly specialised and costly digital materials published on Asian and international markets because the potential markets in Europe are comparatively small in number and dispersed over institutions and regions. With the initialisation of the CrossAsia research infrastructure in 2005, the technical platform of the special subject collection on East, Central and Southeast Asia, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin solved this discrepancy between need and access for German researchers and academic staff. The collection and the platform is partly funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

Among other services, CrossAsia offers its registered users access to more than 160 licensed databases, e-journals, and e-Books.

By rolling out the CrossAsia model on a European level Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin aims to “democratise” access to resources and strengthen Asia related research throughout Europe. By establishing a European knowledge and licensing network, it will foster communication among researchers and infrastructure providers to collaboratively design an open science research landscape for studies on East, Southeast, and Central Asia.

We plan and wish to approach this challenge by accomplishing the following central tasks:

- to offer an open communication and discussion platform and forum (network) on European Asia licensing activities
- to develop a flexible European licensing model on the basis of CrossAsia’s experiences;
- to scale out CrossAsia’s existing infrastructures and dissemination strategies; and

- to harmonise vendor expectations and researchers' needs concerning the modes of access, use, reuse, and sharing of results produced by digital sciences.

Georgijs Dunajevs

(The National Library of Latvia, Latvia)

CrossAsia from a User's Point of View

CrossAsia is a truly impressive and indispensable resource for any scholar of East Asia, offering over 150 databases with materials on historical and modern China, Korea, and Japan. It possesses many useful features, such as the ability to search within millions of indexed pages across various databases. As a daily user of CrossAsia, in my brief presentation I would like to talk about its functionality, covering some of the most crucial features and a selection of the most important databases.

3.1 Cultural Crossroads in the Middle East. The Historical, Cultural and Political Legacy of Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict from the Ancient Near East to the Present Day (roundtable)

Convened by Holger Mölder (Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia)

This will be a roundtable discussion between the authors of the book recently published and edited by V.Sazonov, P.Espak and H.Mölder. The region of the Middle East has been called the cradle of mankind where the first human civilizations were born (Ancient Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Egypt, the Levant). It became home to numerous cultures, religions and ethnicities with long experience of living together in a multicultural environment. At the same time, we are currently living in the midst of turmoil with crises full of enmity and rivalry the roots of which extend back to Ancient times. Historical, cultural, religious, social and political legacies often play a central role in obstructing intercultural dialogue in the Middle East. The initial idea for the publication came in April 2016 at the Baltic Alliance for Asian Studies (BAAS) conference in Tartu and some chapters are based on presentations given, with several scholars from various European and Middle Eastern countries also contributed to this volume. We propose to

build the panel rather as a roundtable discussion than a traditional set of presentations. The authors will introduce the issue to the audience, but also discuss the relevance of their study in the broader Middle Eastern context (ancient and modern), how it reflects historical, cultural and political legacy in the region and its impact on the vulnerable present-day situation full of intercultural clashes. The discussants will be three editors of the book and some authors of the chapters selected by editors among those who will participate in the Kaunas meeting. In total, we plan to have 5-7 discussants to the panel based on their availability.

Vladimir Sazonov

(University of Tartu / Estonian Military Academy, Estonia)

The Failure of Intercultural Dialogue in the Middle East – the Impact of War Theology to Contemporary Ideological-Religious Conflicts

The paper (co-authored with H.Mölder) analyses opportunities for the development of intercultural dialogue in the Middle East throughout history. The Middle East is a clear example of protracted imminent conflict formation which also possesses some distinctive cultural features. This paper examines the impact of historical, religious and political processes on intercultural communication in the region and focuses on processes which have led to the development of the current situation in the Middle East with its escalation of extremism, promoted by the spread of ethnic, religious and cultural conflicts in this region. The goal of presented study is to determine the conditions under which it might be possible to achieve a breakthrough in the development of regional peace for these multicultural religions.

Peeter Espak

(University of Tartu, Estonia)

On the Time of Composition of the Hitherto Undated Sumerian Myths

The paper points out several similarities in the myths Enki and the World Order, Enki's Journey to Nippur and Enki and Inanna, which seem to reflect the material or ideology also present in the Isin era royal poetry and inscriptions. The objective is not to claim that all the mythological ideas present in the analysed texts had to be created during the Isin period. Large part of the

mythological motifs used in these myths probably have their origins going back already to the mythology of the Early Dynastic period. The major Sumerian myths are all full of ancient mythological motifs which were accessible through written records as well as by their presence in oral folklore or story-telling. However, in addition to the almost precisely datable city-laments, several Sumerian myths also might have originated from the mythological thinking of the Isin period. Mythological motifs and sometimes almost identical textual parallels and ideological aspects lead to the conclusion that the myths Enki and the World Order, Enki's Journey to Nippur and Enki and Inanna are most probably Isin time compositions reflecting the ideology and ideological needs of that dynasty and its priests and officials.

Holger Mölder

(Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia)

The Islamic State, Clash of Civilizations and Their Impact on the Development of Contemporary International Relations

This paper makes the claim that the current spread of Islamic extremism which caused the emergence of the Islamic State (IS) is not so much a result of Western-Islamic civilizational enmity as the outcome of local ethnic and religious rivalries in which external powers intervened. Political developments in the Middle East over the last 35–40 years which have sometimes been followed by external interventions have reinforced religiously motivated political rivalries (i.e., between Saudi Arabia and Iran) and facilitated the spread of Islamic extremism based on the politicization of Islam. The emergence of the Islamic State has had a significant impact not only on the Middle Eastern regional security environment but also on the global international system. The IS, a new type of international actor, manifests neither a traditional model of the modern state nor a typical terrorist network with restricted political goals. Based on the historical narrative of the Caliphate, it claims to have authority over the entire Islamic world and intends to establish its supranational authority through affiliated organizations. As the IS is not capable of any kind of mutual relations other than war, other states will hardly recognize them as a part of the international system.

Dovilė Valaitė

(Vilnius University, Lithuania)

The conception of mental disorders in contemporary Islamic world: between tradition and modernity

Psychology, or commonly known with Muslims as *Ilm al-Nafs* (Arabic علم النفس), came to Middle East in 1950. Psychology is a growing field today in Islamic countries that helps people in a number of areas. However, mental disorders and psychological counseling are still stigmatized in Islam. The majority of Muslims with psychological problems in developed and underdeveloped countries do not receive proper help. On another hand, Western psychological counseling cannot be fully successful in the context of different cultures. Looking at the present situation in the field of mental health in Arab-Islamic region we can see a strong influence of traditional religious healing. *Junun* (Arabic جنون) is a term that describes madness, mental illnesses or otherness in Islam. It is also reflects traditional attitudes of Muslim societies toward madness. At the same time, the word *Majnun* (Arabic مجنون) describes not only person that has mental disorder, but also anyone who deviates from cultural norms or manifests unacceptable behavior. The terms bring a stigma in Islamic societies.

The aim of current presentation is to reveal the conception of mental illnesses, psychopathology and their origin in Islam. To identify the impact of culture in the field of mental health. The main question is - how mental disorders are understood in contemporary Islamic societies?

The presentation will be based on the field work conducted from September to December 2019 in the North part of Jordan. The study would lead to deeper understanding of the situation of mental health discourse in Islam.

Ernestas Jančėnkas

(Vilnius University, Lithuania)

The Concept of Nature in Ibn Ḥaldūn's theory of civilisation

Ibn Ḥaldūn's theory of civilization is well know and much studied. Different authors have claimed that Ibn Ḥaldūn was a philosopher belonging to the Aristotelian tradition of philosophy. Just as many if not more authors have

denied that this is the case emphasizing Ibn Ḥaldūn's own negative views on philosophy. Nevertheless a better appreciation of how philosophy developed in the Post-Avicennan period is needed in order to understand Ibn Ḥaldūn's position. The latter period of Arab philosophy hasn't been well researched as of yet and has been less so during the time when some of the seminal studies (e.g. M. Mahdi) arguing for the case of him being a philosopher were written.

My paper will contend that Ibn Ḥaldūn's methodological and theoretical framework is thoroughly philosophical despite him not being a philosopher in the traditional sense of the word. And that in this he was most likely influenced by Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī who himself adopted a philosophical theoretical framework in his works on kalām and tafsīr. The paper will focus on the crucial concept of nature (aṭ-ṭabiyyah) found in Ibn Ḥaldūn's Kitāb al-'Ibār and al-Muqaddimah. In order to gauge the significance of this concept a closer look at the way this concept was criticized by al-Ġazālī in his 'Incoherence of the Philosophers' and later defended by Averroes in his 'Incoherence of the Incoherence' is needed. Ibn Ḥaldūn's own declarations concerning his views on philosophy notwithstanding he shuns Aṣḥā'rī occasionalism in his own work opting for Aristotelian essentialism instead.

3.2 Japan: history and perceptions

Simona Vasilevskyte

(Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania)

Early Japanese visits to Kaunas: Yasumasa Fukushima

It is difficult to speak about Japan-Lithuania relations before 1918, just because there were hardly any possibilities for that as Lithuania was a part of Russian Empire. However, it is known of some Japanese who visited the present-day Lithuanian territory as early as second part of the 19th century. One of them was Yukichi Fukuzawa, a member of Bunkyu Mission, who has briefly stopped in Kaunas. This fact was discovered in early 1990's and until now not much is known about other visitors. Nevertheless, further investigation of the newspapers of late 19th century has presented more names of Japanese visitors in Kaunas. One such visit took place in 1892, when a major of the Japanese

Army, Yasumasa Fukushima, travelled from Berlin to Tokyo on his horse. This event is documented in local newspapers that circulated in Lithuanian territory. They revealed what Maj. Fukushima was doing in Kaunas and how he was welcomed by the locals. This paper is a research of the newspaper articles, which present a new figure in the early history of Japan-Lithuania relations. It will reveal how Maj. Fukushima was depicted in local press as well as the role of Kaunas city in the geopolitical context of that time.

Aurore Yamagata-Montoya

(Mutual Images Research Association (MIRA), France)

“Distinguished guests”: The Iwakura Mission as described in American newspapers during its journey through the US (1872)

In December 1871, the Iwakura Mission was sent by the Meiji government to the United States and several countries of Europe. One of the aims of the Mission was the observation of the practices of the West. If Japan wanted to suppress the Unequal Treaties and be considered a “first rank nation”, it had to adopt the “civilized” manners and rules of the West (Auslin, 2004; Nish, 1998). The arrival and subsequent journey of the Mission from San Francisco to Washington was recorded and commented by many American newspapers. This paper focuses on two newspapers of cities the Mission passed through, the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *Chicago Tribune*. I identified all the articles mentioning the Iwakura Mission, its members and/or Japan for the month of February 1872, which corresponds to the westward journey. I will show that, among the forty-eight members and sixty students, specific individuals raised the interest of the journalists and their readers for various reasons. The persons mentioned the most are Iwakura Tomomi and the five young girls who accompanied the Mission to study in America, followed by the ministers and high-ranking officials. Although, they are mentioned by name and sometimes described in length (physically, their past, their function, their way of dressing), they are first of all representatives of Japan. In the articles, we can see both the “modern” Japan that the Meiji Government wanted to promote and the “tradition” and exoticism of the country of the Raising Sun.

Ene Selart

(University of Tartu, Estonia)

Taking sides in the distant military conflict: The media perspective of Estonia about the Sino-Japanese war in 1937

The history of the anxiety of the press in covering military conflicts and warfare goes back to the early days of journalism in Europe while it was always a vital information to be gathered in order to predict the future political situation between the hostile parties or to be prepared for the possible military hazards to one's own country. In modern times the analysis of the historical perspective gives valuable insight to the potential developments of the influence of the media to the understanding of military conflicts.

The military conflict between major Far-Eastern powers – Japan and China – that escalated into war in July 1937 was keenly followed by the media of all the Western countries. Among the others was also Estonia, one of the Baltic States, which tried to grasp the situation and follow the events and reasons of the hostilities in order to estimate the outcome of the tensions in the international relations that were escalating on the eve of the WWII.

The current paper is a work in progress trying to analyze the editorials of the leading Estonian daily *Vaba Maa* in 1937 by the method of discourse analysis in order to clarify the development of the covering of the military conflict between Japan and China during the beginning months of the Second Sino-Japanese war with the emphasis on the change of the attitude towards hostile parties in the course of time. The main topics of the analysis are how the conflict was covered in editorials and how did it change subsequently (which events, political discourses and descriptions of battles altered the media attitude) and how the results could be relevant to the modern media coverage of military conflicts.

Andrea Revelant

(Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy)

Shidehara Diplomacy and Public Discourse in Japan: The Case of Gaikō Jihō in 1929

Established in 1898, *Gaikō Jihō* was for decades the main journal on foreign affairs in imperial Japan. Besides editorials and articles by regular contributors,

the journal often featured essays by well-known scholars and journalists. At times, it also hosted articles on current issues by diplomats and politicians. Gaikō Jihō hence functioned as a forum for the discussion of international relations from diverse and even conflicting perspectives. As such, it represents a rich source of information on the development of public discourse in that period. So far, however, research based on this publication has only drawn an outline of its editorial history or focused on the personal views of some of its contributors with respect to selected issues (Itō Shin'ya 2011, 2014, 2016).

Conceived as part of a larger project on Japanese public opinion, this paper aims to show how Gaikō Jihō can usefully complement other press sources of the time. The case examined is the debate on so-called “Shidehara diplomacy” towards China in the second half of 1929, that is to say the early phase of Shidehara Kijūrō's second tenure as foreign minister (1929-31). It was a delicate period in Sino-Japanese relations, as Japan had to face pressure from the Nanjing government for the revision of the unequal treaties. Moreover, pending issues concerning Japan's special rights in Manchuria were complicated by the outbreak of an armed conflict between China and the Soviet Union, sparked by the former's attempt to take over control of the Chinese Eastern Railway. My analysis of Gaikō Jihō clarifies, in the first place, which were the main opinions on both Japan's policy to China and Nationalist leadership. Secondly, it compares them with those expressed in the leading Japanese newspapers. The results shed light on the formation of public discourse for different target readers.

Keynote presentation

Märt Läänemets

(University of Tartu, Estonia)

Concept of the Humanistic Base Texts. An Approach to Understand and Evaluate the Axial Age's Spiritual Heritage

Since appearance of the Karl Jasper's book "The Origin and Goal of History" (1949/1953) the term 'Axial Age' coined by him has been widely used in the works on spiritual and intellectual history of mankind. According to this concept, in the period of ca 800–200 BCE independently in separated from

each other civilizations of the time an important schift took place in the mind of people. This is the period of emergence of theoretical, analytical thinking and philosophy. Several teachers emerged whose teachings later formed the core of the great world religions. The Man became aware of himself as a sovereign active and creative force in the world and of the world. Therefore, we can generally define 'Axial Age' as emergence of humanism.

Many scholars have developed the concept of 'Axial Age' concretizing it and adding here different contents. In this speech, as one of the opportunities, the concept of the humanistic base texts coined by Linnart Mäll (1938-2010) will be analysed as a creative option to give more precise and meaningful matter to it that bases on the structural analysis of certain texts of the time.

4.1 Superpowers political direction and behavior in the current situation of the Middle East

Convened by Javad Keypour (Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia)

The recent tensions in the Middle East have added to the existing political turmoil in the region. Many factors contribute to the complexity of the situation, above which is the presence of trans-regional powers, including the US-led coalition and recently Russian Federation. One can't overlook the game played by variety of states over protecting their share of interest in the region. Thus, analyzing the situation needs to understand and scrutinize the corresponding conflict and compromise between the main actors' interests. This panel tries to achieve this goal via three case studies regarding the role played by Russia, EU and the USA in the Middle East. This panel contributes to understanding of the current power make-up in the Middle East, and its impact on the future of NATO and the European Union's security.

Javad Keypour

(Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia)

The role of energy factor in EU-Iran political relations: an aftermath of the US withdrawal from JCPOA

The energy factor has been applied as leverage by Iran and the West in their mutual relation in post-1979 occasionally. When Trump walked away from the

Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA), Tehran demanded the EU to preserve the deal by making it possible for Iran to take advantage of the economic benefits of the JCPOA. This research tries to answer the question of whether Iran can take advantage of its oil and gas resources as a political tool in order to enforce the EU to save JCPOA. The qualitative document analysis method has been applied in the research relying on the international political economy as the theoretical framework. The results of the research show that while in recent years the role of the OPEC members was diminished due to the oil shale revolution in North America, Iran's attempt for the revitalization of its position in the global oil market was not successful in the post-JCPOA era per se. This could mean, the performance of Iran's oil as a political weapon is not as high as it used to be. Additionally, the results of the analysis show that EU's tendency for importing natural gas from Iran has been lowered. In fact, the gap between the member states' opinion on recognizing Russian gas as a threat has been intensified, since Nord Stream II is about to be operational. Moreover, some other EU member states tend to import gas from the US instead of other potential sources. Additionally, political tensions in the Middle East challenge finding a suitable 'route' for exporting gas from Iran to Europe. Therefore, gas is not applicable as a political tool for Iran in relation with EU. Other non-energy issues like the rivalry with Saudi Arabia and the emergence of the new-nationalism wave inside and outside of the EU have been discussed as complementary preventive factors in this research. This could suggest that the strength of the energy tool has been weakened for Iran to follow its political wills in relation to EU in the current situation.

Holger Mölder

(Tallinn Law School, Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia)

Playing the Cold War in the Middle East – what would be US strategic ambitions in the region?

Though after US presidential elections of 2016 President Donald Trump promised a permanent solution for the Middle Eastern crisis and stable peace for the region, his policy has been rather inconsistent and the amount of tensions has not been decreased. The only progress has been made in establishing a kind of strategic alliance with Israel and Saudi Arabia and

stronger confrontation with Iran. Consequently, US has given up from the role of regional peacemaker and sided with Israel and Saudi Arabia in facing regional clashes, which appears in moving US embassy to Jerusalem or seizing up the nuclear deal with Iran. The strategy they follow reminds a Cold War situation, in which regional bipolarities (i.e. Saudi Arabia vs Iran) will be rather maintained. Controversial steps made recently (moving US troops out from the Kurdish-controlled area in Syria or killing Iranian general) rather indicate the absence of cohesive political strategy, in which US political decisions could be described as reactive ones. In the current situation, probably Russia has gained more political influence as it remains almost the only power who is able to negotiate with all major actors in the region.

Salahs Mohameds Šerifs

(University of Latvia, Latvia)

The Influence of Sufism on the Sudanese Belt

For a decade or so, the news have become a stage for seemingly incessant scenes of bloody violence imposed upon civilians by terrorists. Organizations that have spread throughout the world of today under different names such as Al-Qā'ida, Dā'ish, Booko Haram etc. have been responsible for many of these attacks committed in the name of Islam. This phenomenon was behind the introduction of the term “Islamic Terrorism” . This has been particularly pronounced in the case of Muslims living in the Middle East and Africa, which drove me to write this paper as a means of illuminating the peaceful, tolerant nature of Islamic tradition exemplified by the influence of Sufi orders among the Muslims of this region. Whereas the advent of Islam in the northern part of the region (North Africa) unfolded through invasion, it entered the southern part via trade relations and the influence of Sufi sheikhs, who lived with the people indigenous to the area and seamlessly weaved themselves into the fabric of the societies they came to counsel.

Sandra Peets

(Tallinn University, Estonia)

The War of Rhetorics: the strategic narratives adopted by Sayyīd Rūḥollah Mūsavī Ḥomeynī and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn in the Iran-Iraq war

Hiro has called the Iran-Iraq war a “violent manifestation of the struggle between the secular Arab nationalism of Iraq and the universalist, religious ideology of Ira[n]” (1991: xxii). This paper will look at this unique military conflict through the lens of Political Communication and International Relations. Communication and narratives, although integral parts of diplomacy, are often given little attention in the academic study of foreign affairs. Thus, to add to the existing discussion, this paper is analysing the different strategic narratives of two heads of state: the Supreme Leader of Iran, Sayyīd Rūḥollah Mūsavī Ḥomeynī, and the President of Iraq, Ṣaddām Ḥusayn. The main questions asked are first, how they constructed their intentions and motivations to the public of their respective countries? Second, how they framed the opponent and third, how they justified the war? Also, what are the differences and/or similarities in the narratives of nationalism and religion? In order to make a close inquiry into the symbols, preexisting religious feelings, myths and historical/political context that were utilised, the paper examines one speech from Rūḥollah Ḥomeynī and one from Ṣaddām Ḥusayn; both were delivered on the eve of the war. The aim is to have a small selection of examples to allow a more detailed analysis of the specific nuances in the rhetorics of each leader. The paper relies on two analytical frameworks. Firstly, Balzacq et al. (2016: 495) five key concepts for the Securitization Theory. Secondly, Chosenness-MythsTrauma (CMT) complex based on Galtung (1996).

4.2 China related politics

Konstantinas Andrijauskas

(Vilnius University, Lithuania)

Physical Infrastructure and Chinese “Creation” and “Expansion” of Inner Mongolia

China’s formidable infrastructure-based mega-project, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), has attracted the world’s attention to the country’s interior provinces that have increasingly lagged behind the coastal ones throughout the forty years of the reform era. Less noted is the fact that physical transportation, communications, energy and resource-extraction infrastructure had already played a major role in socialist China’s major development projects long before the Open-Door Policy was initiated. Based on an inter-disciplinary theoretical approach about space as a social construct, mirroring power relations, most famously represented in the works of Michel Foucault and David Harvey, this paper analyses the complex processes of using physical infrastructure in order to claim, control and develop one of the People’s Republic’s most important autonomous regions ever since its establishment in the mid-20th century. Although roads, railways, ports or mines proved to be of crucial significance in “creating” and securing the extra-mural (i.e. lying beyond the Great Wall) “Inner Mongolia” through its physical attachment to the ethnically Han China-proper (*Zhongguo bentu*), conscious disruption of centuries-old links among various parts of the Great Mongolian steppe world largely applying these same means was also successfully used in order to make the latter’s political division seemingly permanent. Somewhat similarly to neighbouring Xinjiang, since the collapse of the USSR Inner Mongolia has been increasingly perceived by Beijing as an important gateway for Chinese economic expansion towards the rest of the world, particularly independent (Outer) Mongolia and Asiatic part of Russia in this case, thus necessitating infrastructural re-connection between the three parts of the former Greater Mongolia currently performed under the BRI. Curiously, it is not only Inner Mongolia but both the “outer” one and Russia’s Southern Siberia that increasingly face the complex economic and socio-political implications of these developments.

Chien-Jung Hsu

(National Dong Hwa University, Taiwan)

China's cyber-disinformation warfare against Taiwan

Background

Under the Ma Ying-jeou administration, the policy of closer economic integration with China had provided Chinese authorities with an opportunity to use Taiwanese businessmen to influence Taiwan's media outlets. Today, China has extended its influence to cyberspace. Disinformation, as studies have shown, has deeply influenced elections in many countries. Since Taiwan is believed to be a main target of China's disinformation operations, one has reason to worry about the risks these operations pose to Taiwan's democracy.

Statement of the Problem

Over the past two decades, we believed that "internet empowerment" could help promote democracy. Such a view, however, is challenged by cases of governments or political actors utilizing the internet, especially social media, to undermine democracy. Taiwan's 2018 election campaign and 2020 presidential campaign should be good examples to explore China's intended cyberspace strategy to influence Taiwan.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this paper is to show how China uses disinformation warfare to influence Taiwan's elections. Two key themes to be presented in this paper are (1) how does China exert influence/operation on social media and (2) how do social media exhibit changes of Taiwanese people's political orientation in response to-disinformation?

This paper's research will explore a number of case studies, including news farm (content farm), documents from National Security Council, social media big data, suspended cyberattacks from China as well as a systematic analysis, so that people can understand the issue from a comprehensive and evidence-based perspective. This paper will also analyse the three ways in which China exerts influence on Taiwan's cyberspace. First, China uses its news website and news farms to produce "fake news," in order to influence Taiwan's media outlets and social media. Second, cyberattacks from cyber-army and social

media “robot accounts” can influence social media’s algorithms to further promote certain issues or politicians. Third, China uses China-friendly online celebrities to exercise some spin control on social media.

Ying-kit Chan

(Leiden University, Netherlands)

Heeding the Warnings: Deng Huaxi and Zheng Guanying’s Shengshi Weiyan

This paper discusses the execution of Guangdong comprador Zheng Guanying’s 鄭觀應 (1842-1922) ideas explicated in his *Shengshi weiyan* 盛世危言 (*Warnings to a Prosperous Age*) by Deng Huaxi 鄧華熙 (1826-1916), who had served as the provincial governor of Anhui and Guizhou. It suggests that Deng Huaxi’s plans to improve agriculture, commerce, education, and military in Anhui and Guizhou were inspired by *Shengshi weiyan*, whose failed application in the 1898 Hundred Days’ Reform saw at least partial success in the modernization of the two provinces. Deng Huaxi’s governance of Anhui and Guizhou is contrasted with his experience as a retired local notable in his native Guangdong, a coastal province that thrived on trade but had nonetheless alienated merchants from politics and prevented them from committing fully to the goal of economic nationalism. This reveals that the geographical extent of the Qing Empire’s self-strengthening reforms was more limited than what most contemporaries and historians have suggested, and that the nature, pace, and scope of such reforms lay at the discretion of individual governors-general or provincial governors, many of whom were either gesturally committed to reforms or possessed few resources with which to implement them fully.

Jing Guo

(University of Tartu, Estonia)

Political Differences between China and the West in the Context of Glocalization

Since the enlightenment, Western society has been in the leading position in world history. In particular, it is the industrial revolution that improved

people's living standards and promoted the development of globalization in great progress. The progress and expansion of capitalism which brought by globalization and the development of science and technology have gradually confirmed the central position of the West and the great superiority of the Western capitalist system. But can this kind of superiority be applied to all countries and regions as globalization progresses? The development of politics needs to have local characteristics. All the doctrine may lose its guiding significance because of acclimatization. Therefore, politics should be localized, that is, in line with the basic national conditions of different countries and regions, all proceed from reality and adapt to local conditions. The western countries take the dominant position in political modernity with its superiority recently. However, as far as the Chinese political system is concerned, China has its own unique political theory because of its uniqueness. Moreover, Chinese politics may not apply to other countries as well due to the different conditions of different countries. Popularizing China's political system around the world may be more difficult than breaking Western-dominance. With the development of globalization, there will be more creative improvement of the political system in different countries and regions.

4.3 Shincheonji, a South Korean New Religious Movement: Expansion, Social Activism, and Coronavirus Controversies

Massimo Introvigne (Center for Studies on New Religions, Italy)

Shincheonji is often mentioned in the South Korean media as a fast-growing and controversial new religious movement, often accused by the local mainline Christian churches of being a “cult.” In turn, members of Shincheonji have promoted massive street demonstrations against what they perceive as discrimination and violence, including incidents of “coercive conversion” or “deprogramming” of their members. The scholarly literature on Shincheonji in languages other than Korean is almost non-existing. The session plans to offer an overview of the main features and controversies surrounding this large and under-studied Korean new religious movement.

Massimo Introvigne

(Center for Studies on New Religions, Italy)

Shincheonji: An Introduction

The paper offers an introduction to the history, theology, organization, and growth of Shincheonji. It starts from the participation of its founder, Lee Man Hee, in other Christian new religious movements, and describes the path leading to the foundation of Shincheonji in 1984. It then present Shincheonji's idiosyncratic theology and recruitment practices, which explain both its rapid growth and the vitriolic criticism it receives from mainline Korean Christian Churches as a "cult."

Willy Fautré

(Human Rights Without Frontiers, Belgium)

Coercive Conversion and Deprogramming in Korea: A Case Study of Shincheonji

Deprogramming, or the kidnapping of adult members of new religious movements (labeled "cults" by their opponents) on behalf of their parents, and their intensive indoctrination in secluded premises aimed at persuading them to leave their group, was once popular in the West but, by the end of the 20th century, had been declared illegal by legal authorities almost everywhere. It survives in South Korea, where the "deprogrammers" are often ministers of the mainline Christian Churches. They target members of groups they regard as "heretic," which in turn protest through large street demonstrations against the violent nature of deprogramming. Thousands of these cases involve members of Shincheonji. Based on personal interviews, the paper discusses a handful of them and situated the controversy in its specific Korean context.

Rosita Šolytė

(International Observatory of Religious Liberty of Refugees, Lithuania)

"Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light": Shincheonji as a Global Social Actor

Many non-members of Shincheonji around the world are cooperating with the founder of the movement, Chairman Lee Man Hee, through the activities on an

organization known as Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light, or HWPL. Opponents of Shincheonji, media, and some academic scholars claim that HWPL and other connected organizations are simply fronts for Shincheonji's proselytization activities. These claims seem, however, incorrect. HWPL promotes international peace through peace education, inter-religious dialogue, "peace walks" and a campaign to "legislate peace" through international law. Presidents and prime ministers, international organizations dignitaries, and leaders of different religions participate in these initiatives. While it is correct to say that they increase the visibility of Chairman Lee as a global religious and humanitarian leader, obviously Shincheonji does not expect that these international luminaries will convert to its faith. Why, thus, is Shincheonji devoting so much efforts to non-proselytizing activities? The paper suggests that, rather than on a mere promotional strategy, the answer is largely grounded on Shincheonji's peculiar millenarian theology.

5.1 Political economy: China and Korea

Jusif Seiranov

(Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania)

The impact of large business groups on outward/inward openness of the Korean economy

The paper reveals the changing role of large business groups in the economic growth of Korea within the last decade and articulates the changing profile of the economy's openness. Unique model of interaction between coordinating development state and state sponsored/private run large business groups was a major factor of South Korea's economic growth and global competitiveness achievement in 1961-1997. The national champions were the driving force of the fast ascent of the Korean economy and its soaring share in global exports. The analysis of recent developments shows that large business groups due to the scope of their share in national production and exports, leadership in certain technology and product sectors remain at the core of Korean economic growth. Export orientation of Korean economy goes hand in hand with high trade openness. However, for decades, the level of outward and inward foreign direct investments was substantially lower than the OECD average. As Korean business groups gain global dominant positions in certain industry sectors,

outward direct investments tend to grow. The trend for inward direct investments is changing as well, and the Korean economy becomes more open for large international players including European businesses. The resources of LBGs are directed to outward investments seeking to ensure dominance in globally competitive sectors. At the same time inward investments, including prominent investments from Europe, refresh the competition at domestic market and create better opportunities for small and medium enterprises.

Yossi Mann [cancelled]

(Bar-Ilan University / IDC Herzeliya, Izrael)

The Impact of China's new oil benchmark on global energy markets

In recent decades, China has become an important player in the global energy market. The sharp rise in oil consumption from the beginning of the 21st century to the present, has made it an influential player in the international oil market. As part of its new role, China has established large-scale infrastructure for storage, refineries and cross-border pipelines to address the various challenges that accompany the industry. Along with the impressive development of the energy sector, financial institutions and regulatory conditions have evolved, enabling the trade in more complex products, such as derivatives and mainly commodity futures. All these lead the Shanghai Commodity Exchange in March 2018 to announce the launch of a crude oil futures contract to better reflect domestic demand. The offered paper tries to examine the benchmark's chances of competing with the world's leading oil benchmarks, the factors behind the establishment of the benchmark, and attempts to understand the political and international significance of creating an international oil index in China.

Eunhee Park

(Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania)

Discourses of Stability and Risk: The Cultural History of the Insurance Industry in South Korea from the 1960s to the 1980s

The South Korean insurance industry rapidly grew from the late 1960s through the 1980s. This coincides with the period when the nation was seeking for developmental statist economic progress. The rapid growth of the insurance

business cannot fully explain why the public desire for a guaranteed future and stability apparently grew stronger. Understanding the public's enthusiasm for a sense of stability must take into consideration social, economic, and cultural elements. This paper addresses the history of the South Korean modern insurance industry. It examines the magazine articles from *Life Insurance* (or *saenghyŏp*) published by the Association of Life Insurance. This periodical will be used to discuss the changing perspectives on insurance and the discourses on stability and globalization during the 1960s through the 1980s. Finally, this article analyzes various emerging trends in insurance businesses in relation to household economy and finance. Insurance policy sales demonstrate the disciplining of the public for austerity and the gendered construction of insurance sales jobs. The South Korean insurance market during this period noticeably marks major characteristics. Insurance policies that prioritize savings gain far more popularity than the guarantee-centered counterparts. In spite of the fast growth of the industry, negative perceptions regarding non-professionalism and gullibility persist, even today. Another notable feature is the increase and subsequent dominance of female salespersons. Individuals' risks and growing public distrust, reinforced by the authoritarian regime, came out as the consequence of a welfare system that was poorly established and inappropriately funded. The authoritarian regime's disciplining of the public played a positive role in the growth of the insurance industry. Schools acted as insurance sellers and insurance policies worked as a tool to nurture the public's austerity and their behavior of saving. The magazine *Life Insurance* (*saenghyŏp*) produced globalization discourse aimed at learning about insurance in other advanced countries, but simultaneously showed somewhat eclectic and compromising attitudes to legitimize the major drawbacks of South Korean insurance companies. Likewise, the discourses on stability and globalization which appeared during the time of rapid national economic growth were the construct of complex interplays between the government, insurance companies, individuals, and household economy.

Vida Mačikēnaitė

(International University of Japan, Japan)

The links between Chinese companies and the party-state: a survey of economic elite mobility in China

This paper surveys the networks of links between the Chinese party-state and Chinese large state-owned enterprises (SOEs). Specifically, it surveys career transfers between selected SOEs and central government institutions or provincial governments (inter-system career transfers) in China, and how the patterns of these transfers have evolved throughout the reform era. Using a unique dataset with nearly 500 year-leader observations, the paper examines career backgrounds of the leaders from 33 major Chinese companies. In the follow-up analysis, it surveys career backgrounds of the state officials in the central government institutions in charge of Chinese SOEs in the period of 1992 to 2018 and also those of provincial leaders since 2012. The central argument here is that through the inter-system career transfers the regime sought to enhance its governing capacity, i.e., the analysis shows that managerial expertise of the leaders from specific industries has been utilized by the regime in central and provincial institutions. The paper also surveys membership of the SOE executives in the National People's Congress and examines what explains the patterns of their delegation to this institution. As Chinese companies, most often SOEs, have been increasingly active in European countries through their FDI in the last decade, it is as important as ever to understand how they are linked to the Chinese party state.

5.2 Chinese literature

Agita Baltgalve

(University of Latvia, Latvia)

Anthology of Chinese Classical Literature in Latvian Language

There are only three substantial translations of Chinese classical literature in Latvian language: „Daodejing” (by Laozi), „Lunyu” (Analects of Confucius) and „Yuandao” (Way of Ancestors: Selection of essays from Tang to Qing). First two translated by Jelena Staburova, the latter – by myself. Therefore, it is

an important task for Latvian sinologists to translate and introduce more philosophical and literary writings from Classical Chinese. Direct translations into Latvian are very necessary in order to develop fundamentals of Classical Chinese terminology and philosophy concepts in Latvian language. This will not only deepen Latvian Sinology research, but will enhance Latvian language expression forms, as well.

Here I would like to introduce a new project that I am working on at the moment: an anthology of Classical Chinese literary works. Translations have been gathered over a lengthy period of time (5-6 years) and it will include fragments of Chinese philosophical texts, poetry and prose (except for novels). The first part will deal with the period from Zhou until Han, mainly fragments from philosophical treatises, like Zhuangzi, Mengzi, Mozi, Guiguzi, Mingjia etc. The second part will include more literary works, starting with authors of Wei and ending with Qing Dynasty (e.g. Zhang Hua, Zhou Xingsi, Tao Yuanming, Liu Xie, Tang and Song poets, Pu Songling and others).

The anthology is arranged according to the overall trend of Chinese writings: before Common Era there were more philosophical works, folklore and mythology, but after Han Dynasty a pure literary tradition started. Short introduction about each author and work will be given before the translation of the original text. The paper will also introduce some issues regarding Classical Chinese grammar and vocabulary, because in each time period, even each author used a special writing style and vocabulary. This is why different translation techniques should be applied.

Tadas Snuiškis

(Vilnius University, Lithuania)

Indian Philosophy in China: Was “Daśapadārthī” 勝宗十句義論 authored by a Vaiśeṣika?

“Daśapadārthī” is an early Indian philosophical text providing a clear and systematic exposition of the main tenets of the philosophy of Vaiśeṣika. The original Sanskrit text is not extant, and the present text version is only known from Xuanzang 玄奘 translation in Chinese in 648 CE. This translation was included in the catalogs of East Asian Buddhist texts and subsequently in East

Asian Buddhist Canons (Dazangjing 大藏經) despite clearly being not a Buddhist text.

The text is almost unquestionably assumed to be written by a Vaiśeṣika 勝者 Huiyue 慧月 in Sanskrit reconstructed as Candramati or Maticandra. But is that the case? The author seeks to argue, based on internal evidence in the text itself, as well as comparing the text with other related materials that the original Sanskrit text was compiled by a Buddhist relying on existing Vaiśeṣika texts for exclusively Buddhist purpose. That would explain Xuanzang's choice for the translation as well as the non-circulation of the text among Vaiśeṣikas.

Martina Renata Prosperi

(Roma Tre University, Italy)

Deviance in and of Contemporary Sinophone Literature: A Selection of Case Studies

From the New Culture Movement (1919) to the Rupture Movement (1998), up to A Yi's, Sheng Keyi's and Guo Xiaolu's most recent masterpieces (the three of these authors being born in the first half of the 70s), creating a new literature has always implied deviating from tradition. This deviation is often expressed thorough the topic of deviance, which is meaningfully explored by several contemporary authors working within the sinospheres. Talking about Ba Jin's Family, Professor Chen Sihe said: "The whole middle class was shocked at the novel because they could see part of themselves in Gao. The hero was a symbol of Chinese intellectuals in a time of changes". Now, talking for example about A Yi's A Perfect Crime, one might ask: why does the reader perceive the murderer-protagonist as some kind of hero? Who is this strange (and estranging) hero representative of, in this time of changes? Echoing Peter Brooks' distinction between a "narrative of desire" and a "desire of narrative", literary deviance, as well, can be interpreted and analyzed both as a "narrative of deviance", and as a "deviance of narrative". In other words, deviance is characteristic of the characters' stories, but also of the narrative devices employed by the author, as to emancipate the text from its embedding reality and make it exist as a self-standing value (or no-value) system. By analyzing a selection of works from the landscape of contemporary sinophone literature,

I propose and implement an alternative approach to these literary texts, which aims at challenging any (still) orientalist reception of them, by finally enlightening their very current and universal value.

Balys Astrauskas

(Vilnius University, Lithuania)

Social Significance of Rural Migrant Workers (Dagong) Poetry of the Pearl River Delta Region, China

The paper surveys the phenomenon of dagong poetry (dagong shige 打工诗歌), sometimes also referred to as diceng 底层 (subaltern) poetry, which is a wide and eclectic literary genre, written by Chinese rural migrant workers, who move to the cities to make a living, because of a lack of economic opportunities in the countryside. Being a relatively young and “minor” genre of contemporary Chinese literature, dagong poetry is not only seeing a rapid growth of its literary corpus but is also witnessing an increasing attention from academia, mass media and established cultural institutions. Taking into consideration that in China, traditionally a monopoly of poetry writing was held by the cultural-intellectual elite, the rise of this peculiar genre leads to the plethora of questions. Why is it that in recent years, so many migrant workers in mainland China, many of whom have limited formal education and little of what would conventionally be considered cultural capital, have started writing poetry? Wherein lies this poetry’s significance? In order to answer these questions, the paper starts with examining social, political and economic issues that led to the formation of rural migrant workers as a post-socialist subaltern class. Then it will provide historical overview of worker themed poetry in mainland China from the Republican period (1911-1949) to dagong poetry phenomenon in recent times. Being highly contested and controversial term, dagong poetry is a subject for heated debates among literary critics and academia, therefore main issues surrounding the discourse on dagong poetry will also be discussed. Finally, the paper will survey main literary themes of the poetry texts itself, to conclude that its main social significance lies within its ability to convey a voice of the contemporary Chinese subaltern class.

5.3 Gender in Asia

Chang Liu

(Heidelberg University, Germany)

What's Madonna Got to Do with Post-Mao Chinese Femininity?

The earliest major Chinese press coverage of American superstar Madonna can be traced back to 1986, however, it was only in the 1990s her popularity in China skyrocketed and some observers even announced the existence of a Madonna craze in China. Madonna's music and music videos were not easily available in China during the 1980s and 1990s, yet she achieved great popularity in a different ideological and media environment, which makes it an interesting case for the studies of the construction of her star image in China. I will begin by recounting the sensational exhibition of nude oil paintings in Beijing in the late 1980s and consider Chinese mass's growing interest in naked bodies and their sexual awakening in post-Mao China. Then, I move on to the release of Madonna's 1992 album *Erotica* and coffee table book *Sex* and discuss how Madonna's hyper sexualized star image benefited from China's body craze which evolved into a new wave of Madonna craze in China. Drawing on close analysis of visual and textual materials from underground publications of Madonna photo books, biographies, and pirate copies of Madonna cassettes, CDs, and VCDs, I will argue, China's 1990s' Madonna craze first and foremost focuses on her gender and sexuality, which eventually turns Madonna into a sex object. The sexualization of Madonna in post-Mao China, I will argue, is a response to the repression of gender differences and sexuality during Mao and Deng's China.

Sofia M. Rebrey

(Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Russia)

Gender Inequality in Advanced Asia: A Cross-Country Socio-Economic Analysis of Axis Institutions

Gender economic is a rapidly developing science, however not rapidly enough. The world still suffers from severe female discrimination. The problem of female discrimination is widely recognized on global scale and included in

SDG (#5). International organizations strive to improve inequality by introducing gender indexes and conducting global analysis, particularly focusing on developing countries, as women are literally in danger there. However, global analysis fails to capture the depth and the complexity of gender inequality in different countries, up to identifying trends that actually contradict reality (for example, Sri Lanka case). In that sense national and regional gender analysis are required.

I alternative methodology to capture inequality in axis institutions that include family, education, knowledge production & governing, - the most influential and conservative institutions, highly resistant to external influence. Axial institutions form and maintain moral and ethical standards. Thorough cross-country examination of axis institutions opens new frontiers in gender studies, as it helps to identify the variety of factors; to weight variables of gender inequality; and to calculate their respectful impact on GDP growth rate and birthrate. Including birthrate and family institution helps to escape common mistake, when crude women empowerment policies cause double burden effect and decrease birthrates.

Advanced Asian Economies - Japan, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan, share both socio-economic model and Confucianism, which is widely blamed for gender inequality in Japan and in South Korea. However, Singapore and Hong Kong enter top-ten gender equal states, according to gender indexes (UN, WEF, OECD). The research aims to capture gender inequality in axial institutions of advanced Asia, and to trace the key factors of gender inequality and their impact on GDP growth rates and birthrates.

Kayako Takagi

(Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania)

Women's language in education of Japanese language: Focusing on the analysis of textbooks

One of the key features of Japanese language is varied the role languages (yakuwari-go). It can easily represent attributes of a person and it is considered as an important factor in fictions. On the other hand, the role language is criticized in the context of translation, because it often emphasizes gender stereotypes. This paper is going to focus on the Japanese women's language

(onna kotoba) from the perspective of teaching Japanese as a foreign language. It is going to disclose how women's language is treated in Japanese language textbooks of beginners' and intermediate level, and discuss its influence over the learners. It attempts to answer two questions. (1) In Japanese language textbooks, is women's language introduced as a type of speech for fictions or a language in real life situation? (2) Are there any differences and tendency of the appearance of women's language between textbooks for beginners and ones for intermediate?

6.1 Migration, memory and identity: uncertainty and challenges of belonging of transnational migrants and disadvantaged locals

Convened by Vytis Čiubrinskas (Vilnius University, Lithuania)

The panel, in the case of Asia, will tackle on the issues of fragmentation of belonging through the unfolding of particular discourses, experiences and practices of forced and labor migration as well as disadvantaged locals. Memory of social traumas and displacement, structural inequality, political subjectivation and stigmatization of transnational migrants and disadvantaged locals (i.e. subaltern, homeless etc.) is addressed along with migrants' agency of challenging assimilation and marginalization via long-distance nationalism and social remittances transmitted on their return/journeys back to homelands.

Main field of scrutiny will open-up the issues of historic and contemporary forms of forced migration due to wars, deportations, kidnapping, sex slave trade etc. as well as many other forms of oppression and stigmatization experienced by the vulnerable locals more and more involved in counter-cultural and other social movements.

The panel also explores discourses and emotions of memory/suffering/resistance of marginalized and stigmatized groups enacting their politics of identity, politics of culture and traditionalization of heritages in everyday life and in public arenas.

Ilona Kazlauskaitė

(Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania)

Uncertainty of belonging of international students from Asia in the Western Universities: case of academic migration

International student mobility is fast-growing globally and becoming a distinctive feature of contemporary tertiary education. Globally, more than five million students are undertaking tertiary education outside their home countries. The highest number of incoming international students are from Asia (especially China & India). International academic mobility as a type of migration is most often explored in terms of brain drain, brain attraction and / or brain circulation.

Viewing the student-migrant experience through a transnational lens, the problematics of negotiation of belonging across multiple nations, construction of new identities and status, different forms of agency experienced by international students when dealing with the uncertainty and challenges during their life abroad, will be discussed in this panel. The focus will be on the Asian students' migration to Western countries for studies.

Kuldip Singh

(Guru Nanak Dev University, India)

The Illegal Migration from Indian State of Punjab: A View from the Below

The human migration has picked up incredibly in recent times. It involves widespread practice of inhuman treatment meted out to those who attempt to migrate illegally, at the hands of professional handlers. The present study is focused on Indian state of Punjab which has a long history of outward migration and has been in the limelight for ill-legal migration to Europe and North America. The study analyzes push and pulls factors for ill-legal migration involving all types of risks. The study also examines ill-treatment meted out by trans-national syndicates during their illegal journey and physical and psychological tortures they are put to. The variables such as age, sex, caste, category, religion, location, education level, marital status and numbers of dependents of the migrating persons have also been worked out. The study is

based on a sample of around four hundred respondents, who were unsuccessful in migration and became victims of either human trafficking or human smuggling.

The processes of migration being hugely complicated prospective migrants are easily trapped by the traffickers/smugglers. They are promised high income employment, safe journey, legal work visas and permanent residency. The traffickers/smugglers have trans-national linkages that run through transit countries. The exploitation of trafficked/smuggled persons takes place during each of these halts. The trafficked/smuggled persons are not allowed to contact their family during journey at times lasting many months, as sharing unhappy experience could be problematic for local level agents. For dodging law enforcing agencies they are often relocated from one place to another and not permitted any outside contact. Still government has not tried to create effective structures for regulating the process, as it does not want to annoy the electorates among whom there is strong urge to migrate.

Irma Kondrataitė

(Vilnius University, Lithuania)

The role of NGOs in dealing with prostitution in India: case of counter-hegemonic strategies

This presentation focuses on the role of non-governmental organizations in the prostitution of India. In academic discourse prostitution is debated in two ways: some scholars support victimizing discourse and others argue for the empowerment of the prostitutes. This research contributes to the debates about the agency in prostitution. This paper doesn't deny the existing violence, poverty, corruption and other negative aspects in the field, but it shows that agency also exists in the prostitution of India. This presentation is based on ethnographic research conducted in two nongovernmental organizations in June – August 2018 in New Delhi. I will also use my work experience from 2007 - 2008, when I worked as a development instructor in a non-governmental organization, which provided help to the prostitutes of Rajasthan. Main aim of this paper is to examine the polemics in the case of “volunteering” prostitutes from three different perspectives: state, non-governmental organizations and prostitutes themselves. The state of India is projecting the victimizing discourse

in the field of prostitution. Non-governmental organizations are reproducing the same agenda and in this way the agency of the prostitutes is restricted. This paper confirms the hypothesis, that non-governmental organizations, while being the only source of help and support to the prostitutes, is forcing them to depend on the patriarchal state. And state through non-governmental organizations is further projecting the victimizing discourse on the prostitutes and in this way restricting their agency.

Alina Nidagundi

(Riga Technical University / University of Latvia, Latvia)

The Concept of Identity in Indian Diasporic Literature

The impact of globalization, transnational practices and migration is constantly redefining the concept of diaspora, which in its turn is intertwined with the question of identity. From being associated mostly with excite, scattering and separation from the homeland it is changing to include forming a community and creating networks of people who share the same country of origin. Members of diasporas frequently encounter the dilemma of identifying themselves with a particular place, rather experiencing what could be called belonging to no place and all places simultaneously, thus facing the hybridity of the identity that they share.

India is one of the top countries with its population spread all around the world reaching 17.5 million and gaining the status of the largest diaspora according to the latest statistics. The given paper focuses on the representation of the concept of identity in the works of such Indian diasporic writers as Amit Chaudhuri, Neel Mukherjee, Tabish Khair and Archana Painuly who in their works often address the struggle of Indian-origin people to adjust to their new host countries, in this way highlighting the complex journey of the transformations their identities undergo along the way.

6.2 Literary heritage of Buddhism: old tenets and new interpretations

Convened by Märt Läänemets (University of Tartu, Estonia)

Literary heritage of Buddhism with its history of 2500 years and incalculable number of texts and divisions in many languages has been an important subject of academic study of Buddhism for decades. Recorded literary texts are the fundamental sources from where we draw information about the tenets of Buddha's teachings, their understanding, development, and practicing in different times and cultural environments. The bodies of texts (text corpora or dharmakāyas) in Buddhism thorough its whole history have never been a mere dead letter but functioning as a living body of ideas and instructions inspiring and leading millions of people of many generations towards spiritual emancipation and thus contributing to the developing and growth of human culture and civilization. In modern academic studies too, research of Buddhist texts never limits with narrow study of words but in concurrency and coherence of methods aims creation of new models of understanding and interpretation of old tenets contained in the texts in accord to today's culture and mindsets. Looking forward towards the ways of how these tenets may contribute to solving of problems human civilization and individuals in changing world face today should be an intrinsic task of Buddhist studies as well.

In the presentations of this panel, specific tenets from definite texts and/or traditions are taken as subjects of careful investigation to (1) explore their meaning in the context of origin; (2) offer fresh interpretation; and (3) analyze a possible practical value of them in the modern context.

Panel is open to new participants who want to share the results of their study in the field in the form of academic presentation. Necessary condition for the presentations to be included is that the study should base on the research of an original textual source.

Bhikshuni Lozang Trinlae

(University of Tartu, Estonia)

Critically Establishing the Rational Dynamics of Vajrayāna Contemplative Ritual Processes: An Exploratory Qualitative Phenomenological Study with the Drukpa Tradition of Vajrayāna Buddhism

Buddhism teachers are challenged to provide a critical rationale for demonstrating how traditional Buddhist rituals and ceremonies (*pūjā*) serve as training modalities. In the research presented here, I investigated if experiences of traditionally practicing a Vajrayāna Buddhist Amitāyus contemplative practice found in several Tibetan traditions could be described generally from a Buddhist training perspective, such that it could serve as an authentic description for students and teachers to use for teaching purposes.

Terminology was first critically established using scholarly sources from Buddhist and clinical medicine literatures. The Amitāyus ritual practice was performed and phenomenological interviews were conducted with IRB oversight and written consent to elicit verbatim reports from 7 participants from the Drukpa Kagyu tradition. A composite phenomenological description of the experience was systematically constructed. The ritual text was searched for indicators of emic contemplative phenomena which were then identified in the verbatim interview reports, and this data was systematically analyzed to clarify the nature of the contemplative experience from the perspective of a practitioner's subjective experience. The resulting phenomenological description thereby serves as an empirically-derived, conventionally constructed example of what is indicated when asking "what is the nature of a typical Buddhist Amitāyus contemplative experience when practiced in a Drukpa Kagyu puja (group ritual/liturgy)?" It also serves as proof of principle for the efficacy of the research methodology in producing authentic descriptions of possible Buddhist ritual practice experience that can be used to inform further investigations.

Conclusion: Based on this preliminary evidence of verbatim phenomenological data, it is possible to reject the proposition that Vajrayāna Buddhist ritual is necessarily an expression of uncritical devotion or lacks a rationale for why it could be beneficial as a Buddhist training resource.

Andres Herkel

(University of Tartu, Estonia)

Psychological Meaning of Nāgārjuna's Mūlamadhyamakakārikā, X

Mūlamadhyamakakārikā X, *Agnīndhana-parīkṣā* is the only chapter dealing with external phenomena fire (*agni*) and fuel or firewood (*indhana*). However, the main subject of Nāgārjuna's argumentation remains psychological.

The paper explores:

1. Continuity of fire-fuel metaphor in Buddhist and non-Buddhist Indian texts with special look to Pāli Nikāyas.
2. Correspondence between fire-fuel metaphor and theory of personality (*pudgala*, *ātman*). Personality means fire and psychological groups (five *skandha*'s) mean fuel. The connection between them is strongly emphasized in X, 15. *Skandha*'s described in Buddhist texts are following: visible form, feeling, conceptual perception, volitional formations and consciousness.
3. Reflections of Nāgārjuna's strategy of argumentation in MMK X: refutation of identity, refutation of distinctiveness etc. Personality and five *skandha*'s can be neither identical nor distinct.

Wider perspective of the symbolism of fire may also include fire as living principle, fire of poetry etc.

Focus of MMK exegesis has been for long time concentrated on linguistic interpretation (Wittgenstein). Regarding chapter X is the wider context, *inter alia* with chapter XXIV we can't underestimate Nāgārjuna's significance for soteriology and Buddhist pedagogy. The main task of Buddhist meditation is transformative yogic experience (Conze).

Teet Toome

(University of Tartu, Estonia)

Karma in the Lotus Sutra

Karma is one of the main concepts in Buddhism. Cleansing one's karma is also a central practice. How Lotus Sutra contributes to this aim, how it is expressed in the sutra's stories and predictions is the focus of this paper.

Fruit of previous deeds is important in predictions what Buddha gives to his main disciples. These stories have a particular structure and the role of karma

is also part of this structure. Karma is also very important in the stories of great bodhisattvas and their previous deeds.

In addition to that we can talk about karma in the context of the sutra itself. Listening the sutra and then coping it and spreading its message are also good deeds that result in better situation in the future. Even more, there can be almost immediate results of listening the sutra and therefore cleansing one's karma.

Märt Läänemets

(University of Tartu, Estonia)

Description of levels of spiritual emancipation in the Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra

In the *Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra* (*Gv*), a prominent Mahāyāna scripture of Indian origin, numerous lists are found containing both figural patterns and logical definitions which describe personal types and groups of Buddhist practitioners (e.g. bodhisattvas), tenets and doctrines (e.g. *kalyāṇamitra*, *bodhicitta*, *dharmadhātu*), but most often mental states and hierarchically ordered levels of spiritual emancipation. In the paper, the last category of such lists is taken into consideration with the aim to analyze used vocabulary and explore the meaning and function of them in the context of conceptual apparatus and framework of lysiology (“doctrine of release”) of the Mahāyāna Buddhism.

6.3 Japan's foreign policy: State and non-state actors in rethinking the past and looking towards the future of relations in North East Asia

Convened by Kamila Szczepanska (University of Turku, Finland)

The main aim of the panel is to showcase the research examining the relevance of multiple stakeholders – who originate from outside of the official governmental circles – in shaping the relationship between Japan and South Korea as well as the mainland China in the recent years. All panellists explore the contributions and influence exercised by Japanese actors whose presence and participation in these processes often remains

understudied in the existing academic research, i.e. the Japanese emperor, private sector and non-governmental organisations.

First, Barbasiewicz explores the importance of the 2019 power shift on the Chrysanthemum throne and the meaning of this change for the reconciliation process and war memory debates between Japan and South Korea. Second, with the contribution by Pletnia, we move towards discussing the inordinate influence exercised by the Japan War-Bereaved Families Association on the politics of memory in Japan and its consequences for Japan's relationship with its closest neighbours. Both of the panel presentations illuminate the sources of frictions and the potential to alleviate the 'history problem' in the trilateral relations originating from outside of the Japanese government agencies. With the panel presentation of Schnelle we turn to the increasing complexity of Japan's energy diplomacy and we critically re-examine the assumption that the renewable energy transition with its broader landscape of state and non-state stakeholders – including business actors – may promote regional cooperation and reduce rivalry. Similarly, Szczepanska's presentation on trilateral cooperation between Japanese, Chinese and Korean NGOs within the field of international development elucidates whether non-governmental actors managed to tackle antagonisms afflicting the intergovernmental relationships.

On theoretical level, the panel demonstrates the utility of pluralist approaches to foreign policy and relations between the states in order to explore the potential of understudied state and non-state actors to offer new avenues for either increasing the rapprochement or tensions between the three North East Asian countries and nations.

Olga Barbasiewicz

(Jagiellonian University, Poland)

Heading the new era – remembering the past. Japanese-Korean relations at the turn of two historical periods

2019 was a special year for Japan. It was the beginning of the Reiwa period and together with the abdication of Emperor Akihito, the end of the Heisei

period has come. Due to this event, South Korean president, Moon Jae-in expressed his gratitude to the Japanese Emperor “for his role in fostering positive ties between Japan and South Korea” [J. Berkshire Miller, 2019]. Despite these friendly greetings, on the occasion of the withdrawal of the Japanese monarch who governed from 1989, the Japanese-Korean relations are still under the influence of the historical disputes over past events such as occupation of Japan and World War II.

While many papers have been published on the Japanese-Korean relations in the shade of historical animosities such as the comfort women issue, disputed territories and the occupation of the Korean Peninsula, this paper aims at the very contemporary time in Japanese-Korean relations. It is a moment in Japanese and Korean policy concerning the war memory, when the politicians and the social opinion focus on the time when the new Emperor gains power and starts a new period, which aim is the “beautiful harmony”. In this paper I will consider the role of the Emperors’ (Akihito and Naruhito) approaches in shaping the reconciliation between the Republic of Korea and Japan, as well as the state of the memory struggles over the war in the time of the power shift on the Chrysanthemum throne.

Maciej Pletnia

(Jagiellonian University, Poland)

Internal pressure - Japan War-Bereaved Families Association and their influence on Japanese politics of memory in the international context

Despite over 70 years that have passed since the end of World War II in East Asia, historical controversies are still a factor affecting relations between most significant powers in the region. Ever since Prime Minister Shinzō Abe came back to power in 2012, Japanese memory politics has been largely against the expectations of both Beijing and Seoul, especially regarding Yasukuni shrine. Even after Prime Minister Abe stopped visiting the shrine himself, and decided to only send offerings during spring and autumn festivals, it remains a controversial topic in the region.

While most research regarding issues related to Japanese politics of memory concentrates on state agents, with special attention given to prime ministers, this paper will focus on the influence of a Japan War-Bereaved Families

Association (Nippon Izokukai). Initially formed in 1947 as War-Dead-Family Welfare Union to represent the interests of relatives of dead war veterans, it has a very strong ties with the Yasukuni shrine and it has been a vocal advocate of taking the shrine under state supervision. What is more important, this association has strong ties with ruling LPD party, to the point that former prime minister Ryūtarō Hashimoto was a leader of Nippon Izokukai before taking the position.

Japanese international politics has often been characterized as “reactive”. That term usually refers to foreign influence, particularly one of the United States, on the Japanese decision-making process. This paper argues that in the case of politics of memory, the reactivity might refer to internal influences – particularly one of Nippon Izokukai. Through its strong ties with LPD politicians, both direct, and as one of its electoral bases, the association was able to exert its influence on politics of memory, regardless of its negative impact on international relations.

Diana Schnelle

(Ruhr University Bochum, Germany)

Shaping Japan's foreign policy in a time of energy transition: the role of non-state actors

For resource-poor countries such as Japan energy security has always been a crucial part of foreign policy strategy. Access to and affordability of primary sources of energy remain a top priority among foreign policy goals. Growing concern with climate change as well as the risks associated with nuclear energy, however, also increasingly inform the making and implementation of Japan's foreign policy. The ongoing global energy transition not only affects what kind of resources are procured and where, the emerging clean energy market provides new opportunities while also creating new competitive pressures for Japanese businesses. Thereby boundaries between energy and non-energy sectors are becoming increasingly blurred while the number of stakeholders in the energy market is steadily growing.

In this context non-state actors play an increasingly important role when it comes to shaping Japan's energy diplomacy and foreign policy. While traditionally business interests have already been crucial to the formulation and

implementation of Japan's energy security strategy, the advent of renewable energy prompted a diversification of significant non-state actors, including public and private interests, as well as their influence on foreign policy decision making and outcomes.

This paper analyses that shift using a neoclassical realist approach. It outlines the evolving role of non-state actors in Japan's energy-related foreign policy and attempts to explain how and why it is affected by the global energy transition. Finally, it looks at the implications that this shift has for Japan's international relations with its Northeast Asian neighbours. In particular, it aims to examine and evaluate the widespread assumption that the renewable energy transition and the subsequent shift towards new issue areas and actor levels will promote regional cooperation and reduce rivalry.

Kamila Szczepanska

(University of Turku, Finland)

Beyond the trappings of state animosities? Development cooperation between North East Asian NGOs in the 21st century

Whereas the official relationship between Japan and its closest neighbours – the Republic of Korea and the People's Republic of China – has been fraught with difficulties on multiple levels during the 21st century, in the background of high-level politics the contacts and exchanges between non-governmental actors grew substantially. This cooperation has resulted in heightened efforts to collaboratively address humanitarian, development and environmental issues at regional and global levels.

The aim of the paper is to discuss how Japanese NGOs engage in collaboration with their South Korean and Chinese counterparts in the field of international development and what are the outcomes of such cooperation. To this end the paper explores the cooperation between NGOs on the example of three cases. The first case focuses on analysing activism North East Asian (NEA) NGOs surrounding the implementation of new international norms and standards on aid effectiveness as represented by the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (2012 onwards). The second case explores the manner and extent of NGO joint activities within the framework of the North East Asian Multistakeholder Forum on Sustainable Development Goals (2017

onwards). Last but not least, the paper investigates collaboration in the area of capacity building to increase aid competences between NEA NGOs in recent years.

The paper draws on global governance theories. On the basis of its findings it provides an assessment of opportunities and challenges present in the collaboration between non-governmental actors from these three countries. Here, the recent round of the tightening of control over civil society under Xi Jinping's leadership in the PRC and its potential impact on limiting cooperation between NEA NGOs is of special interest. Last, the paper appraises to what extent NGOs managed to overcome the antagonisms afflicting the intergovernmental relationships and build a joint North East Asian stance in global development discourses.

Polkhova Ekaterina

(St Petersburg State University, Russia)

Russia – Japan cooperation in the Arctic Region

Proclaimed in 2015 Japan's Arctic Policy is evidence of the growing Tokyo interest to the region. In addition to this, as the dialogue between President V. Putin and Prime Minister S. Abe has become an impetus for improving Russia – Japan relations, the Arctic has turned into space for cooperation between two nations. However, it is not only about politics but also about business interests. Overall, the current proposal reveals the scale of Japanese companies' interests and especially the most significant projects in the Arctic region within bilateral relations between Tokyo and Moscow.

The analysis touches upon energetics and the Northern Sea Route (NSR) as interconnected and crucial points for Japan business' economic interests in the Arctic, deriving from the International Northern Sea Route Programme, which took place in 1990s.

Nowadays, the main companies, whose interests are aimed at energetics, represent shipping, oil and gas industries. For instance, Mitsui and JOGMEC joined Arctic LNG 2 on 29th of June 2019 to continue the diversification of Japan's energy suppliers. LNG projects are wider than temporary contracts due to including technologies and people-to-people exchanges.

Drawing attention to the NSR itself, it is associated with opportunities for Hokkaido to integrate into the NSR logistic chain. Tomakomai port is expected

to become the hub connecting the NSR with Asian countries. It can boost the development of Hokkaido prefecture.

Finally, although Russia and Japan have several projects in the Arctic for further collaboration, it does not break through their traditional economic ties with the dominance of energetics. However, the convergence of Moscow and Tokyo appears in the niche, which meets the expectations of both nations. Moreover, it provides Russia and Japan with a basis for long-term cooperation. Therefore, Tokyo approach is not as reactive to the Arctic policy of China as it seems to be.

7.1 Alternative Religiosities in the European (Post-)Communist and East Asian Countries: Emerging Diversities within (Trans)Formations, Disruptions, Continuation (Part I)

Convened by Rasa Pranskevičiūtė-Amoson (Vilnius University, Lithuania) and Justina Razumaitė (Vilnius University, Lithuania)

The session addresses the dynamics of diverse alternative religiosities starting from the communist regime period up to today in (Post-)Communist countries in Europe as well as in East Asian countries in the 1990s and afterwards. It deals with the processes of (trans)formation of changeable and instable religious/spiritual ideas and groups all over various regions during this time. It also studies the past and current socioreligious and political processes, discussing diverse manifestations, changes and disruptions of religious phenomena concerning individual religiosities in (trans)regional and (trans)national levels.

In times of Soviet regime, atheism was officially established ideology and alternative religiosities were mostly active underground. There was as well an unofficial cultural field that was very receptive to the arrival, formation, spread and expressions of diverse alternative religiosities and spiritualities. During the post-communist period, local alternative identities were challenged to adapt to a new situation and rich market of religious demands. In addition, newly arrived religiosities, as well as locally emerged and actively borrowing variously expressed western ideas spiritualities raised current topics among post-communist societies. In the 1990s and first

decades of the 21st century East Asian societies experienced several developments involving socio-religious transitions, conversion, moral vacuum, strengthened governmental control on religion, etc. which should be taken into consideration.

The session aims to discuss a wide range of questions related to an emerging diversity of alternative religiosities in the countries during/past the regime and their attendant fields of influence: e.g. (trans)forming diversities and multiple belongings within alternative religiosities under/past the regime (individual/group alternative religiosity values, identities and practices); the milieu of alternative religiosity as a space of plurality, diversity, flow, action and resistance; alternative religiosity networks and inter-community relations; formation and transfer of religious/spiritual ideas within the societies in Europe and Asia and from the outside; oppositions and connections as a response to the past (images of tradition, traditional religious institutions, post-Communist cultural heritage, etc.); memory, continuity and changes within alternative religiosities; response of religious societies to political and global challenges, etc.

Michael Strmiska

(Orange County Community College (SUNY-Orange), USA)

Eastern Religions in Eastern Europe: Three Cases from Latvia

Building on an earlier study of Eastern Religions in Lithuania by the presenter, published in 2012 in the Journal of Baltic Studies, this paper will examine the ways in which three different New Religious Movements (NRMs) in Latvia, the Hindu-oriented ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness) movement, commonly known as the "Hare Krishnas," the Tibetan Buddhism-based Karma Kagyu movement, more commonly known as the "Diamond Way," and the Baltic Pagan revival movement Dievturība, more commonly known as Dievturi, each involve different uses and interpretations of "Eastern," that is, Asian-derived religions in the European Baltic context of Latvia. The paper will also explore how these different religious groups' relate Asian religious and cultural traditions to Latvian national identity and the status of Latvia as an "Eastern" European society.

Rasa Pranskevičiūtė-Amoson

(Vilnius University, Lithuania)

The Hare Krishna Community in the Light of KGB Persecutions: the Case of the Soviet Republic of Lithuania

The paper presents a research on the formation of International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) and its underground activities in the Lithuanian Soviet Republic until its official registration in 1989. The aim of the paper is to reveal the situation of ISKCON in Lithuania under the Soviet regime, focusing on the approach and strategies of Soviet authorities towards alternative religions, interactions of the KGB with the Krishna community, the life of the community under the surveillance of KGB and its impact on the members of ISKCON. The material in the chapter comes from the previously secret documents of the State Security Committee of the Lithuanian SSR (KGB) on Lithuanian Hare Krishnas, which are now preserved in the Lithuanian Special Archives (LSA), as well as, from Lithuanian ISKCON archives. The paper covers a wide range of questions related to the phenomena of alternative religiosities in the regime countries and their attendant fields of influence: politics and strategy of activity of the regime towards alternative religiosities; restrictions, repressions, survival ways and resistance of representatives of alternative religiosities; the milieu of alternative religiosity as a space of resistance; formation and transfer of religious and spiritual ideas within the Soviet Union and from the outside; methodological problems in research of alternative religiosities within the Soviet Union.

Justina Razumaitė

(Vilnius University, Lithuania)

Conversion to Christianity in China as a Response to Global and Socio-political Challenges

In 2019, China is / was celebrating the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China and it is a timely occasion to review the process of conversion to Christianity in communist society from the historical, socio-political and institutional points of view.

Christianity is becoming one of the most popular religions in contemporary China. The number of Chinese Christian population is steadily growing. In

2014, this number reached about 200 million of believers (in comparison there are about 90 million members in the Communist Party of China). It is expected that China will become the biggest Christian country in the world by 2030 with 247 million of Christians.

Therefore, it is important to discuss the questions such as what are the advancements in the interaction between state and society bearing in mind the tightened governmental control on religious practices at individual and group levels, what are the developments in protecting freedom of religion in the *de jure* atheist state, what are the external factors supporting the process of conversion to Christianity in China in recent years, etc.

7.2 Japanese art

Līga Sakse

(Latvian Academy of Culture, Latvia)

Temporality of Japanese Floral Art: Case of AMKK (Azuma Makoto Kaju Kenkyusho)

Japanese are used to having living flowers in the environment as a reminder of the importance of enjoying the present given the brevity of life. A Tokyo-based floral art collective AMKK (*Azuma Makoto Kaju Kenkyusho* / *Azuma Makoto Botanical Research Institute*, 2009) is refreshing the international art scene with floral art installations by experimenting with living flowers and working through the developing characteristics of the Japanese way of life, ancient cultural insight, centuries-old aesthetic principles in action. The aim is, as we have indicated to explore approaches of temporality, to illustrate diverging points of view on Time Perspective (TP) and related temporal processes and add them to the current floral art practical experiences of AMKK. Hence, the article attempts to understand the Japanese conventional notions of the passing of time with a particular focus on the AMKK statement and Azuma's interviews followed up in artworks in the time frame 2009-2019. The study highlights that AMKK's botanical sculptures represent unusual viewpoints on flower arrangements, acknowledging the appreciation for its exoticism in use of time-space perspective, and how it inspires artists all over the world to experiment with wild living flowers. Elements of fashionable Azuma Makoto style had been identified as Japanese influences in the global art scene.

Maxime Danesin

(Independent researcher, France)

Transculturality in Mangaesque literature and its fantasy branch

Thanks to its worldwide popularity, Contemporary Japanese popular culture has become a phenomenon to be reckoned with. Scholars from various fields are dedicating themselves to observe and decipher its massive production - animation, manga, video games... - and its ecosystem (i.e. fandom, marketing). In recent years, several studies have started to examine how fragments of foreign cultures are being transferred, assimilated, and reorganised in Contemporary Japanese popular works, giving birth to a new and complex syncretised imagination. Japanese authors have taken control of foreign elements to create a vast network of creations that share a common, transcultural imagination, linked to what Azuma Hiroki once called the Otaku Database (Dōbutsuka suru Postmodern. Otaku kara mita Nihonshakai, 2001). This is particularly the case in Contemporary Mangaesque literature (i.e. manga, light novels, visual novels) and its fantasy branch that has gained much popularity in Japan and abroad since the 1990's. From early works such as Record of Lodoss War (1988), Slayers (1989) or Berserk (1989), to the recent trend of isekai - stories where the protagonist is generally sent to an RPG-like world of medieval-fantasy -, Mangaesque literature is enriching itself with foreign elements and backgrounds, to the extent that it created its own perspective on Fantasy.

In this study, I choose to examine the way European elements are being integrated and syncretised in neo-medieval works of Mangaesque literature. By doing so, I argue that not only transculturality is a vital process of Contemporary Japanese imagination, but also that neo-medieval works of Mangaesque literature challenge the western-centric view of Fantasy.

Agnese Haijima

(University of Latvia, Latvia)

Contemporary Japanese Gardens and Parks

While the traditional Japanese gardens have attracted a wide research both in Japan and abroad, the contemporary Japanese gardens and parks, created within recent decades have remained almost unnoticed in the academic circles.

Surprisingly Japan has a lot to offer in this sphere. The presentation will be devoted to recent Japanese landscape designers and their most outstanding creations. The author will look deeper into the topic of blending Japanese ancient traditions with new materials, innovative approaches and modern interpretations. Another important aspect discussed will be recent Japanese response towards environmental problems in the sphere of landscape architecture.

Maret Nukke

(Tallinn University, Estonia)

The Enlightenment of Danish Prince: Adapting Shakespeare's Hamlet as a Japanese nō play

Translating Shakespeare's blank versed dramas into Japanese language has been considered a rather impossible task, but converting his tragedies into the form of Japanese medieval *nō* plays seems even more complicated. However, Professor Emeritus at Shizuoka University Ueda Kuniyoshi succeeded in creating Shakespeare's iconic tragedy *Hamlet* as a new *nō* play. Guided by the words of his close friend Okamoto Yasumasa, who said that "*nō* drama begins at the point where Western dramas end," Ueda set his adaptation *Noh Hamlet* (2004) as Horatio's journey to the grave of Hamlet many years after Prince's death. In translating Shakespeare's tragedy into Japanese cultural context and the form of traditional *nō* drama Ueda was challenged in many ways, since this 14th century Japanese traditional theater has a relatively rigid canon of form that includes the specific characteristics of protagonist, specific adaptation methods of source material, fixed place for poetic quotes, and dual climax designed in the structure of the play. These conventions set the rules a playwright has to carefully consider when having an intention to write *nō* play. This paper analyses some of the many changes Ueda made in the story of the Danish Prince Hamlet for transmitting it to the Japanese *nō* stage: first, re-designing the structure of his play by constructing a fictional story; second, creating a novel interpretation of the relationship between the characters; and third, expressing Reginald Horace Blyth's universalistic concept of Buddhism in the play. The close analysis of Ueda's *Noh Hamlet* shows that despite of using traditional adaptation strategies of *nō* theatre Ueda deliberately created a

new *nō* play that deviates from the traditional *nō* plays in some aspects, such as exceptionally active supporting roles, and inserting the concept of universal religion.

7.3 Politics of India

Jacek Skup

(Jagiellonian University, Poland)

Whose heroes are they anyway? Leaders of the independence struggle in Narendra Modi's historical politics

Among the controversial moves made by the government of India under the Bharatiya Janata Party's Narendra Modi one can find activities related to the historical figures related to the period of the struggle for independence. Prime Minister promoting the legacy of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, and strongly criticizing voices from his own political camp praising Nathuram Godse – Mahatma's killer – as a patriot, commemorating Subhas Chandra Bose and his Indian National Army or supporting the construction of the colossal Statue of Unity depicting Vallabhbhai Patel was met with accusations of “appropriating” the key figures of the independence struggle, all of whom were members of Indian National Congress, for his political camp and its brand of nationalism, which, contrary to Indian nationalism represented by the Congress is seen as funded on religious-based exclusion related to Vinayak Damodar Savarkar's concept of *Hindutva*. The BJP and Modi himself respond that the national heroes belong to the whole nation and not just one political party and point out that their political opponents focused on creating a “cult” of the Nehru-Gandhi family.

Proposed paper examines the narratives presented by the government and its critics concerning the historical policy in the light of the concept of political myth understood as an ideologically marked narrative which has its protagonists – heroic figures. Modi's moves concerning the key figures of the struggle for independence will be analysed as being a part of the process of reshaping the “civic religion” of India and steering it towards nationalism as presented by the BJP.

Kuber Nag

(University of Tartu, Estonia)

Dalit Literary Activism and Identity Politics in India

Dalit literature from India has a distinct literary culture and tradition. However, it is underrepresented both in regional and global literary discourses, Dalit writers from India continuing to follow their unconventional narrative strategies and literary form. Dalit writings are distinct not only for its unique literary style; it is more about defying the dominant literary and aesthetic convention in a caste-ridden society (Limbale, 2004). For Dalits, literature is a mode of resistance and revolution against the society which continually trying to subvert their identity and existence. Whereas the mainstream literary discourse in India often overlook or romanticizes the cause of Dalits, and focuses on a more artistic way of writings by deploying the literary devices and terms. As the mainstream literary discourse monopolizes the literary sphere, it is quite challenging to find Dalit literature in the bookshelves of many libraries and schools in India. Despite facing the academic, institutional, and social boycott, Dalit writers are continuing building their counter-narratives against the literary hegemony created by the upper caste Hindu in India. They want to tell the world about their lived experiences, and for that, it is not essential to subscribe to the mainstream literary discourses or use the standard literary devices. So the Dalit writers from India employed the oral narrative structures which challenge the bourgeois aesthetics and hegemonic literary culture. Through their unconventional and innovative narrative strategies, Dalit writers from India creating a space for the subaltern/Dalits to speak for themselves.

Manish Patel

(Aarhus University, Denmark)

The Implication of Two Poems in Mass-protest

Today, people all over the world are protesting for their rights. It is happening in every corner of the world. Simultaneous ways of protest are also changing. In particular, a trend is beginning in India that the community whose rights are being taken away. The same community takes to the streets with all their might.

It is a matter of concern that a large group is showing disappearance. This makes it easier for the ruling class to crush those movements.

The main objective of my paper is to find the roots of the feeling of collectivity in the people. To know this, I chose two poems to read and sung in Protest in India. These poems symbolize resistance. One is written in Urdu and the other in Hindi. Looking closely, I found that these poems have a profound influence on the social structure of India. In Urdu poetry, where the poet has maintained the authority of God through religious faith. On the other hand, there is an influence of patriarchal thinking in Hindi poetry.

The Protest is the best weapon to challenge the ruling class. The weakening of songs that are going on at this time is a weakening of our collective public sentiment. Moreover, the power class cleverly carries out its work. Right now there is a big CAA (Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019) movement in India. The government is saying that this is a Muslim movement. They want to divide society and call the movement weak. So, we need to know what is in our poems that sometimes prevent one group from joining another group. In such situation, this is necessary that our poems and songs to be sharper. To connect all the people.

It is hoped this study will describe some implications of the mass-protest through some selected poems.

7.4 Environmental issues in East Asia

Katsuhiko Mori

(International Christian University, Japan)

Competition and Cooperation on Environmental Issues in Asia and the Pacific

This paper analyzes the complex interplay between competition and cooperation on critical environmental issues on the atmosphere, the biosphere, and the hydrosphere in Asia and the Pacific. For the atmospheric environment, the power transition between the US and China observed over the last three decades impacted the climate change negotiations. In this process, the contention about the Kyoto Protocol was turned into cooperation on the Paris

Agreement between the world's two largest emitters. In the field of the land biosphere, increased resource use for the developed and emerging economies causes degradation and loss of ecosystem services in the megadiverse countries in the region. For life in the hydrosphere, the gaps in scientific knowledge and evidence-based understanding of the causes of overhunting led to Japan's withdrawal from the International Whaling Commission. Thus, a varied combination of power, economic interests, and ideas can account for the competition-cooperation dynamism in the environmental issues in the Asia-Pacific region. It is argued that effective environmental governance requires not only renewal of cooperation but also innovative and transformative changes in the region.

Hiroshi Ohta

(Waseda University, Japan)

Why is Japan faltering in climate diplomacy: Explaining from the domestic politics of Japan's energy and climate change policy?

Why is Japan so reluctant to take a leadership role in climate change negotiations and running behind in the development of renewable energy? This paper argues that the source of Japan's inaction in climate diplomacy arises from its energy policy, which has been discouraging the extensive development of renewables. The root cause of this energy policy is Japan's energy security concerns that have prevailed in its energy policy since the two oil crises in the 1970s. Since then, the Japanese government has promoted nuclear energy as the primary alternative source of oil, not renewable energy sources, while pursuing energy conservation. The policy to mitigate climate change is closely related to energy policy over which the Agency for Natural Resources and Energy (ANRE) of the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Trade (METI) has its jurisdiction. The lack of strong political leadership on energy and climate policy renders the organized economic interests and the economy ministry influential. In short, the combination of politics of vested interest with the perspectives of historical institutionalists can explain best about the performance of Japan's climate diplomacy.

Margarita Putniņa

(Buddhist Community Riga Drikung Ngaden Choling, Latvia)

Global Society's Environmental and Psychological Interconnectedness: Problems and Solutions

Our civilization, being faced by environmental and climate changes, assigns the enormous number of disastrous events to the process of global warming determined by world's growing economic potential based on development of modern technologies. For instance, influenced by global warming and rampant mining the ecological state of the Tibetan plateau is deteriorating at an alarming rate. The process not being stopped, the world's highest plateau will soon turn into a toxic Chinese province, creating a disaster for Tibet, China and for millions of Asians who depend on Tibet's rivers.

This research points out that interconnectedness is a multidimensional phenomenon, and should be treated holistically.

Scientists and politicians research on economical interdependence and its connections to physical and biological systems. (Climate conventions and conferences have become regular events being held several times a year).

Some scholars and experts talk on techno-economic culture that manipulates and instrumentalises human's consciousness negating its sacral, spiritual dimension. Psychologists, in their turn, work on mind and environment's interdependence looking for balance and equilibrium between the two. (For example, conferences on Cosmology and Consciousness- a dialogue between scientists and Buddhist scholars).

Our global society's further development, based on the model of competition and rivalry is not sustainable, it does not work anymore. We should turn towards a culture of sharing and solidarity, fruitful dialogue and mutual understanding. Empathy, tolerance, compassion and altruism have to become the key words of the 21st century's interconnected eco and social systems, their mutual cooperation and communication activities.

8.1 Alternative Religiosities in the European (Post-)Communist and East Asian Countries: Emerging Diversities within (Trans)Formations, Disruptions, Continuation (Part II)

Darima Amogolonova

(Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia)

Constructing new religiosity, contesting secular authorities: Buddhist Traditional Sangha of Russia in Desecularization process.

Collapse of soviet ideology brought to ethnic awakening and to the large-scale politicization of culture, in which religion played and still plays a crucial role. At present, declarative or true religiosity has become the characteristic of the sociocultural climate though sociologists fail to distinguish between believers and those who have very slight ideas about religion. In the case of Buddhism, most ordinary Buryats-Buddhists find it difficult to answer a question what they believe in and prefer blurred arguments about traditional values and the religion of ancestors. Moreover, in the course of twenty years the Law on Religion in Buryatia officially recognized only three religious communities: Orthodoxy, Drevlepravoslavie (Old Orthodoxy) and the Buddhist Traditional Sangha of Russia (BTSR). The latest shows a curious substitution of religion by a religious community. Thus the Buddhist groups outside BTSR became illegitimate from the juridical point of view though Tibetan Buddhist teachers also have their followers in Buryatia. Majority of Buryats associate themselves with BTSR, which contributed to the idea of Buryat Buddhism independent from the Tibetan one. The agitation bore fruit as most Buryats declare that their religion is Buryat Buddhism. Having become the most significant figure in public discourse in Buryatia, Hambo Lama Damba Ayusheev launched a broad social activity not related to religion. Though BTSR doesn't embrace Kalmyks and Tuvinians, Ayusheev is considered the main Buddhist of Russia. In this capacity, he gained recognition among highest Russian authorities. For this reason he feels enough strength to confront Buryat secular officials demanding from them financial support in realization of his social projects on reviving livestock husbandry. Also he accused the authorities in absence of contribution to restoring or newly constructing datsans. The conflict reached its peak when

Hambo Lama prohibited the head of the republic and the minister of finance to enter the BTSR datsans.

David W. Kim

(Australian National University, Australia)

Cao Đài and Gucheon Sangje: Ethnical Grassroots New Religious Movements in Modern Vietnam and Korea

The global influence of colonial imperialism affected the Confucian tradition of Chinese border countries in modern history. France involved the process of establishing the Nguyễn dynasty (1802-1945) in Vietnam under the pretext of protecting Catholic missionaries. Japanese Korea (大日本帝國) refers to the time when late Joseon dynasty was under the colonial rule, between 1910 and 1945. Such a historical difficulty caused the transformation of society, culture, and thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The new religious movement (NRM) was another phenomenon in the region where many indigenous NRMs appeared. Among them, Cao Đài and Daesoon Jinrihoe of Jeungsangyo are the most successful and progressive groups. How were they emerged in those societies? What were their backgrounds? What were their unique teachings? Why were they so prosperous even under the social persecution? This paper explores the geo-religious nature of both new movements in a comparative perspective. The contextual study of origin, ethnic and political identity, cosmology, key teachings, sacred sites and rituals, and leadership (gender) argue the distinctive feature that the monotheistic syncretic religions of Gucheon Sangje and Cao Đài are ethnical grassroots movements in the East Asian society.

Marika Laudere

(Daugavpils University, Latvia)

Minority Religions in Latvia: Buddhism

The paper examines one of the minority religions in Latvia that is Buddhism. At the end of the 20th century Buddhism attitude towards peace, mindfulness

and care for all living creatures have appeared to be close to the view of life of some Latvians. This resulted in the creation of the first Buddhist groups. According to the data of the Ministry of Justice on the activities of religious organizations, 4 communities with 169 members in total are registered as religious organizations in 2017 but the actual number of Buddhist groups and members is higher.

The first, the paper will introduce some facts on the historical transmission and development of Buddhism in Latvia. The second, it will explore the present situation: practicing groups, dynamics and representation of Buddhism to society of Latvia.

8.2 Japanese and Chinese art

Zofia Weiss

(Wojciech Weiss Museum Foundation, Poland)

Polish national identity and Japanese art

In my paper, I would like to continue the theses which I have already put forward about the extremely individual nature of the phenomenon of Japanism in the art of Poland, which during the *art nouveau* period was a country divided between three partitioners: Russia, Prussia and Austria.

I would like to pose the problem of defending the Poles' national identity and show how difficult, but at the same time how deep the reception of Japanese art turned out to be.

The topic of Japan in journalism at that time was not only the result of fashion for orientalism, but was an important factor in maintaining national consciousness. It was also to strengthen the spirit of our nation. Japan was written as a nation of "distinguished heroes". Japan was presented as a great example of heroic death of the victims of the Japanese-Russian war, from which - "a resurrection would be born".

The art of Young Poland (Art Nouveau, Jugendstil), which came to life around the year 1900, according to the authors of the various manifestos written around that time, was supposed to be open to new trends and tendencies from the outside. But what was underline, it was to be "Polish through and through," rooted in the national tradition, including the victories and martyrdom, "the

royal spirit and the strength of the eagle”. As a result, the art which came to Poland from the West but also from the Far East, was never adopted in Poland in pure and unprocessed forms. The intense, particular and unique sensitivity of Polish artists was formed against the backdrop of the unchangeably difficult experiences of history and drawn its strength from deep religiosity.

Nataša Visočnik

(University of Ljubljana, Slovenia)

Collections of Japanese Art in Slovene Museums: Alma Karlin's Hand Fans

Hand fans are unique items combining practical, ceremonial and aesthetic functions. Fans have mainly been used for cooling purposes, but they have also played an important part in social etiquette, and the way they were held transmitted very different messages. Decorated fans which display the best quality of workmanship can also be unforgettable works of art. As a collective object hand fans have a great appeal on the collectors not only because of its aesthetic values, but also as they show the glimpses into the lives of people.

This paper is focusing on the collection of hand fans that was acquired in Japan where Alma Karlin, a worldwide traveller from Celje, spent one year from 1922 to 1923. The research is a part of the bigger project East Asian Collections in Slovenia looks on the fans from different perspectives. It is first searching for the fan's position in the collection of Alma Karlin among the hundred items brought from all over the world, and then showing a wide variety of styles, motifs and techniques of the fans showing the role of fans in certain period of Karlin's stay in Japan.

Kristine Milere

(Latvian National Museum of Art / Art Museum RIGA BOURSE / Latvian Academy of Culture, Latvia)

Chinese graphic art collection of the Latvian National Museum of Art

The Latvian National Museum of Art has an Asian Art Collection with Chinese, Japanese, Indian and Southeast Asian art objects. The collection is kept and displayed at the Art Museum RIGA BOURSE, which is the Foreign

Art Department of the Latvian National Museum of Art. The largest part of it consists of various Chinese and Japanese artworks – graphic art, porcelain, ceramic works, textiles, lacquerware, metal, ivory, wood objects, etc. Most of the artworks in the collection are from the end of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century with few objects dating back to the 16th and the 17th century. There are about 360 different type of Chinese graphic art pieces from traditional scrolls to political gifts that were given during the Soviet times. The collection has never been fully researched. There has been some separate research done on few works, because of the exhibitions or restoration projects, but it has never covered the whole collection. This paper will focus both on the history and the content of the collection. Which are the first works acquired by the museum and from whom? And which are the most important and valuable works in the museum's collection?

8.3 Politics of India

Ranjan Kumar Sahoo

(University of Delhi, India)

A study of the concept of 'Citizenship' and 'Democracy' among the Students and Teachers of the state of Jammu & Kashmir.

The state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) which is often termed as the 'heaven on the earth' due to its extraordinary characteristics also termed as a 'disturbed state' due to the continuous disruption of peace through violent insurgent activities. The constant struggles, violence and disturbances have a direct and adverse impact on the quality of life of the people of J&K. Thus, it becomes imperative that the students are provided with a kind of education which can help them in understanding the significance of peace. The term 'democracy' and 'citizenship' plays a most significant role in this respect and its need widely felt in the State like J&K. Both the concept helps in understanding the concept of justice, liberty, fraternity, equality along with the notion of active participation, self-governance, associative living, civic duties and responsibilities etc. Hence, present piece of work is an attempt to study the concept of 'citizenship' and 'democracy' among the students and teachers of

the state of Jammu and Kashmir. For this purpose, data have been collected from 84 secondary school teachers and 512 secondary school students by employing observation schedule, questionnaire, interview and focus group discussion. The whole data set are analyzed item wise by percentage analysis method followed by thematic analysis and discussion. Both students and teachers in this study strongly identified with some aspects of liberal democracy, such as majority rule by voting, but they also brought up elements of participatory and deliberative views of democracy, such as other modes of involvement or participation and the value of debate and discussion. In the same vein, the findings of this study in response to the notion of citizenship indicate that a clear majority of students and teachers have adopted, whether consciously or not, a legalist perspective of citizenship. The most common and clearest responses in this category focused on traditional values (honesty, respect, civic awareness and pride, awareness of laws and rules in the community, patriotism, tolerance, responsibility), and traditional behaviors (voter participation, community participation, volunteering, following laws).

Vivek Kumar Shukla

(Aarhus University, Denmark)

Changing Language of North Indian Electoral Politics

This paper focuses on changing language of Indian politics. The presentation has an attention on the foul language in Indian politics. Foul language and Swearing has been an integral part of the languages and Hindi, in the case of North India, is no exception. Indian politics had been following a general code of not using foul language in their political speeches or in public spaces though we it was used as street language.

The paper takes 2014 and 2019 elections as case studies to understand this change in the language of the Indian politics. 2014 Parliament elections play a key landmark in this scenario. We see for the first time that political leaders started using swear words or foul language to ridicule their opponents. This is also important to notice that around this year Indian politics started using social media aggressively for political campaign and re designed their cyber cells. Supporters of different parties started using old swear words for each other, sometimes re defining them and sometimes coining new ones. This

presentation will try underlining the changes in the language especially in the 2019 elections. Since 2014 the language in Indian politics has drastically changed, the low language one of the major concern in 2019 Indian elections. At this point we see that the language of official party line being separated from its worker or fan base. Though there were times when the party leadership actually borrowed one-liners to attach the opponents from the worker base. This paper has three aims- First to talk about the historical background of the language of Indian politics. Secondly, to identify the new coined words in this context and tracing their first use in social media. Third, to identify the language used by the leaders and the supporters and draw a relationship in those. The sources of this paper are the reports of political speeches (electronic or print). Debates on social media and official and unofficial statements poetical parties.

Deepika Kashyap

(University of Tartu, Estonia)

Politics of Space and Identity in Northeast India: Understanding Nyishi and their Lost Glory

Northeast India is always apprehended very carefully and sensitively because of its geopolitical location. Many of the northeastern states shared a border with a neighboring country like China, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, etc. So northeastern states are the critical strategic point for the Indian government and military. On the contrary, the people and culture of these northeastern states never get enough appreciation from the rest of India. It has been witnessed that people from northeast India often get harassed in other parts of India because of their physical appearance and cultural practices. Despite being a part of India and having Indian citizenship, northeastern people are treated as second class citizens. Many people in the central part of India do not even know the existence of these northeastern states and their culture. Perhaps the border and geographical location make these northeastern states invisible. However, one must go beyond the border and discover the existence of this beautiful and diverse culture from northeast India. This paper is going to talk about such formidable land and their people, culture, and resistance for

existence. It will explore the culture and identity of the Nyishi community from Arunachal Pradesh.

Nyishi community is the most significant tribal group in Arunachal Pradesh, India. They have been identified with their attire, culture, and traditions. Nyokum festival and Mithun (*Bos Frontalis*) is the symbol of Nyishi culture and traditions. The history of Nyishi culture and tradition can be traced through their folklore since they do not have any written history. This beautiful culture is slowly losing its ground and identity because of the changing social paradigm. Nyishi people are leaving away their culture for a better opportunity in life. So, it is the time to understand the systematic marginalization of culture, and how the border and contested space push someone to the boundary.

8.4 Japanese politics and society

Arvydas Kumpis

(Vytautas Magnus University, Klaipėda University, Lithuania)

Personal blogs and the spread of Far-right ideas in Japan: the case of Makoto Sakurai's "Doronpa no hitorigoto"

Latest changes in the regulation of hate speech in Japan caused the public demonstrations against Koreans in Japan to basically disappear. Nevertheless, there are more proxies to express one's attitude towards ethnic groups and other sensitive issues in Japan. This presentation sheds light on personal blogs which are functioning as unconstrained means of sharing the Far-right ideas. Particular attention is paid to Makoto Sakurai and his blog "Doronpa no hitorigoto" (Doronpa の独り言, Monologue of Doronpa). The blog was started in 2005 and is continued until now. It covers the major events of Japan's Action conservative movement (ACM), including well detailed presentation of the formation and activities of Zaitokukai, creation of Japan First Party (JPF), comments on domestic and international events. Relying on theory of fields by Fligstein and McAdam, I argue that the storytelling is a basis for the creation, transformation and, eventually, dissolution of social movements, including the Far-right groups as well. Makoto Sakurai is a skilled storyteller and in this

paper I will present my findings of the analysis of “Doronpa no hitorigoto” in this regard.

Aya Kimura

(Ochanomizu University, Japan)

Museums Acts in Japan and Lithuania: Comparison of National Attitude toward Cultural Institutions

Museums are public, open, and non-commercial institutions, and the national policy of each country reflects their vision and interest in culture and education. The common dominant feature in Eastern Asia and Eastern Europe, including the Baltic States, is that museums tend to be regulated by legal acts. This paper will compare laws regulating museums in Japan and Lithuania. The purpose of this paper is to contrast national attitudes toward museums, which are typical cultural institutions.

Japanese and Lithuanian laws indicate that there are different relationships between museums and responsible government agencies. In particular, classifications in each law imply the legal state of museums. Japanese law defines two main types: registered museums and museum-corresponding institutions. Moreover, according to national statistics, museums that do not fit into those two types are regarded as museum-like institutions. These definitions function as a criterion for registration - if a museum fits into one of those definitions, it can register as a museum. It is a possibility, but not an obligation, for museums to register. On the other hand, Lithuanian law classifies according to entity: national, republic, municipal, affiliated, and others. Except for affiliated and others, these entities are established by the council in national or local government, and they have obligations to the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania.

Thus, the difference in classification reflects a distinction between the nature of museums and museum policy led by the law. Interpreting these laws, Japanese museums have less obligations than their Lithuanian counterparts. However, from the perspective of national responsibility and control, Japanese policy has more limitations. Thus, in contrast with Lithuanian policy, current Japanese policy for museums aims to supplement institutions rather than lead them.

Uģis Nastevičs

(University of Latvia / Latvian Academy of Culture, Latvia)

The Perception of Latvians by Japanese on Twitter

During the last seven years the number of Japanese tourists to Latvia has quintupled. The circulation of the information regarding Latvia and Latvians in Japanese has risen, yet polarization of the experiences has been shown likewise. Therefore, the image of the relatively poorly known Latvia is shaped by responses on the Internet. It directly affects the further inbound tourist dynamics.

An interdisciplinary folkloristics research reflecting the Latvianness via Japanese point of view may provide solutions in several sectors, thus eventually propelling economic performances. The goal of this research is to analyze tweets published in Japanese reflecting the characteristics of Latvians as people – a segment within more than 377 thousand tweets acquired from the year 2006 to 2018.