



WORKSHOP TITLE

**Sites of Inter-Asian Interaction**

WORKSHOP DIRECTORS

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Recent work in history, anthropology and related disciplines has opened up new ways of thinking about inter-Asian connections. Our workshop aims to ground the study of such connections in a consideration of particular spaces, or sites, in which inter-Asian interactions have been realised.

We define ‘sites of interaction’ broadly, to encompass particular places (from a single building or monument to border regions, or rivers), to institutions (government departments, the UN, or NGOs), and even virtual or electronic sites. In focusing closely on particular sites and spaces, the workshop will go beyond the emphasis in the existing literature on the study of texts, and on elite discourses about ‘Asia’, and to think about practices as much as ideas. Border towns; university dormitories; places of transit, like quarantine stations for migrants and pilgrims; refugee camps; places of work, from rubber plantations to oil fields; the meeting rooms of international organizations; the sites of major inter-Asian conferences of statesmen; places of pilgrimage, old and new; virtual sites of inter-Asian interaction, as in the mutually linked websites of Asian insurgent groups. These are amongst the sites we hope that workshop papers might open up for discussion.

Key themes and questions to be covered in the workshop will include:

- Sites of interaction

We aim to go beyond a typology of ‘sites’, in order to consider the ways in which the structures of particular sites (border towns, for instance, or *madrassa*.) might have an agency of their own in shaping the nature of inter-Asian encounters.

- The emergence and elaboration of Asian cosmopolitanisms

We will consider cosmopolitanism as a set of practices and accommodations forged in particular localities, ways of living with difference and connecting with a world beyond the local. To this end, we will explore the intersection of multiple diasporic worlds in, amongst other sites, urban neighbourhoods, pilgrimage sites, and refugee camps.

- How do ideas move across Asia?

The workshop’s focus on the dense interactions that emerge from particular sites will allow us to think about the precise, sometimes unexpected, channels through which ideas circulate and come to be embodied in people, things, places and institutions.

We invite contributions from scholars at all stages in their careers working in the fields of history, anthropology, geography, cultural studies, international relations and politics. We would also like to invite the participation of those outside the academy, particularly those working with international or non-governmental organizations in Asia, and those in the museum and heritage sectors. We envisage a balance in the workshop between empirical papers presenting case studies of particular sites and spaces, and more general conceptual reflections on the workshop's theme.

The workshop will mark the starting point for an international research network, which will continue its discussions in future meetings, and interactively through a web-site. A concluding discussion at the workshop will discuss ways in which to take the project forward in ways that will best serve the needs of researchers and practitioners in these fields.