



Caught yet blind in Indra's Net: Reflections on Interconnected Crises in the Late Capitalist Anthropocene

An International Workshop at the German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ) in Tokyo, supported by the German Centre for Research and Innovation Tokyo (DWIH Tokyo).

With the Global Financial Crisis of 2007/08, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the opening decades of the 21st century has already been a period of global crises. While these three crises emerged out of what are commonly conceptualized as different spheres of human activity (economics, human-nature relationships, politics/ideologies), they have demonstrated not only the transnational economic, political, and social interconnectedness of human societies, but also the connections between the human and the non-human worlds, as well as between the realms of ideas and of physical existence.

These connections and mutual influences are of course well known. More holistic approaches to address them have already been introduced. One Health, for example, explicitly takes into consideration that human health rests on a healthy environment. However, there is a tendency to develop such new concepts by building on European discourses hinged on nature/culture distinctions that differentiate between human and nonhuman worlds. The widely discussed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) demonstrate this. This has of course its practical merits. Political authority is just as limited as capital to pursue more sustainable practices or the willingness of interest groups to support them, which makes a portfolio or building block approach to sustainability most practical. Yet, the past crises have shown the limitations of such approaches.

The philosophical traditions of South, East, and Southeast Asia know the metaphor of Indra's Net (Sanskrit: Indrajāla, Japanese: indara-mō 因陀羅網) to express the fundamental interconnectedness and interdependence of all existence. With this frame as an inspiration, this workshop aspires to explore holistic multispecies worldviews stemming from intellectual traditions found across South, Southeast, and East Asia. Instead of remaining within Indra's Net of inescapable interconnection and interdependence while remaining blind to it, this workshop will critically connect recent theoretical debates to concrete case studies in order to advance programs for achieving social and environmental justice.

Workshop organizers: David M. Malitz (DIJ) and Milinda Banerjee (St. Andrews)



Program:

Thursday, 15 June 2023

13:00 Welcome and Introduction

Franz Waldenberger (Director, DIJ)

David M. Malitz (Senior Research Fellow, DIJ)

Milinda Banerjee (Lecturer and Programme Director MLitt in Global Social and Political Thought, St. Andrews)

13:15 Keynote: Joseph S. Alter (Professor, Director of the Asian Studies Center, University of Pittsburgh): *Paramahansa and the Maya of Things: Enlightened Sages, Bar-headed Geese, and the Swan Song of Transcendence*

14:30 Panel 1: Multispecies Entanglements

Chair: Joseph S. Alter (University of Pittsburgh)

Barbara Holthus (Deputy Director, DIJ): *Constructions of the Animal World, Welfare, and Well-Being in Contemporary Japan.*

Milinda Banerjee (Lecturer, University of St. Andrews): *Multispecies Democracy: Towards a Global Intellectual History*

Yamazaki Wataru (Professor, Kyoto University): *Socio-ecological Background to the Frequency of Emerging Infectious Diseases: The Need for a Planetary Health Approach as an Effective Countermeasure.*

16:30 Panel 2: Economic Entanglements

Chair: Franz Waldenberger (DIJ)

Markus Heckel (Principal Researcher, DIJ): *Sustainable Consumption: Comparing Japan and Germany.*

Takahashi Takuya (Professor, The University of Shiga Prefecture): *Ohmi-Merchants and the Threefold Satisfaction (Good for Seller, Buyer, and Society): A Japanese Tradition of CSR and SDGs.*

Akkanut Wantanasombut (Researcher, Chulalongkorn University): *Itthibath Si and a Thai Approach to Social and Solidarity Economy: A Case Study of Tamsang-Tamsong.*



Friday, 16 June 2023

8:30 Panel 3: Social Entanglements

Chair: Nora Kottmann (DIJ)

Shuvatri Dasgupta (Associate Lecturer, University of St. Andrews, and PhD Student University of Cambridge): *A Brief History of Women and Care: Ecofeminism and Multispecies Wellbeing in Colonial India.*

Isaac Gagne (Principal Researcher, DIJ): *Listening to the Community: Grassroots Mental Healthcare in Local Communities.*

Arisa Ema (Associate Professor, University of Tokyo) and Celia Spoden (Senior Research Fellow, DIJ): *Staying Connected: Telepresence Robots at School in Japan and Germany.*

Kevin Wiggert (PhD Student, Technische Universität Berlin) and Martin Meister (Lecturer and Researcher, Technische Universität Berlin), *Robots as Co-Workers in Care Facilities? Cases from Germany and Japan.*

10:30 Panel 4: Brahma's Net – Buddhist Entanglements

Chair: Akkanut Wantanasombut (Chulalongkorn University)

Soraj Hongladarom (Professor Emeritus, Chulalongkorn University): *Breaking out of Brahma's Net: Achieving a Pathway through the Ecological Crisis.*

Chayanin Nuisin (PhD Student, Chulalongkorn University): *Rights and Liberty in the Mist of Karma: Secular Values in the Thai Constitutional Context and their Tension with Buddhist Values.*

David M. Malitz (Senior Research Fellow, DIJ): *Uncanny Parallels: The Buddhist Dharma between the Silicon Valley and Bangkok Barracks.*

12:00 Closing Remarks



The workshop will be held as a hybrid event.

If you would like to join us in Tokyo, please register by sending an e-mail to David M. Malitz by 14 June 2023: malitz@diptokyo.org

To register for online participation please use the links below:

Jun 15, 2023 01:00 PM Osaka, Sapporo, Tokyo

Topic: Caught yet blind in Indra's Net: Reflections on Interconnected Crises in the Late Capitalist Anthropocene

Register in advance for this webinar:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_IiR_BbsbTtGppjI40DWSeA

Jun 16, 2023 08:00 AM Osaka, Sapporo, Tokyo

Topic: Day 2: Caught yet blind in Indra's Net: Reflections on Interconnected Crises in the Late Capitalist Anthropocene

Register in advance for this webinar:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_DYjnjsSYS0e-KDc8AkVvMw

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.