

Shaping Asia

Institutional Location and Epistemic Authority in 19th Century Asia Two Case Studies

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Friday, 24 June 2022
10:15–11:45 (CET)
Zoom event

The literature on the social histories of knowledge often postulates a linkage between institutions and ways of knowing. But most histories of ideas and modern science are so fixated on ways of knowing that they fail to recognize the variety of institutional practices and sites and their function in the making of knowledge. This has meant that these histories have been vulnerable to charges of philosophical and conceptual Eurocentrism, especially when dealing with histories of knowledge from other regions of the world. The two cases discussed – the Banaras Sanskrit College in India and Jesuit complex of T'ou-sè-wè in Shanghai, 'The Vatican of the Far East', offers an opportunity to pose some "transcendental questions in a particularist mode". It could in fact be argued that not just in the study of Asia, but even in Europe a focus on sites of knowledge, both as spaces and 'geographical' places, could move the discussion on "knowledge' beyond the conventional university, academy and learned societies. It is against this backdrop that the talk attempts to set a context for the forthcoming workshop on sites of knowledge and its salience to the Shaping Asia network.

Joachim Kurtz is Professor of Intellectual History at Heidelberg University. His research focuses on cultural and intellectual exchanges between China, Japan and Europe, with special emphasis on practices of argumentation, logic, political theory, rhetoric, translation studies, historical semantics, and the history of the book. His book publications include *Reading the Signs: History, Philology, Prognostication* (Co-edited with I. Amelung, 2018) and *The Discovery of Chinese Logic* (2011).

Dhruv Raina is Professor of History and Philosophy of Science at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. His research has focused upon the politics and cultures of scientific knowledge in South Asia both in historical and contemporary contexts, as well as the history and historiography of mathematics. His most recent work addresses the contemporary concerns of the circulation of concepts in the social sciences, the emergence of inter- and transdisciplinary fields of research. His book publications include *Needham's Indian Network* (2015) and *Science between Europe and Asia* (2011).