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CENTRE FOR THE
STUDY OF
MANUSCRIPT
CULTURES

The Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC)

cordially invites you to a workshop on

New Directions in Research on Sinoxenic Scripts and Manuscripts

9-10 July 2019 at the CSMC in Hamburg

The term `Sinoxenic` usually refers to Chinese character scripts used to write languages other than Chinese. This workshop will explore new and old directions in research on Sinoxenic manuscripts more broadly considered. A key feature of the programme is that it will bring together scholars active in research on character scripts among non-Chinese East and Southeast Asian peoples along with scholars working on scripts and manuscript traditions among Chinese dialect-speakers. We expect it will be fruitful to compare the various ways in which different communities have adapted the Chinese writing system to meet their own needs. Writing is a form of social practice and an integral part of complex cultural systems. The focus of specific papers in this workshop includes a number of topics, ranging from the intricacies of calligraphic practice and graphic variation, to problems of dating, typology, cultural transmission of literacy and recitation, the role of local school-based education, and the degree of geographic variation in Sinoxenic writing systems. Discussion of both the synchronic and diachronic dimensions of such issues will be welcomed.

Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC)

Warburgstraße 26, room 0001

20354 Hamburg

Preliminary programme

Tuesday 9th July 2019

1:00 – 13:30 Welcome coffee

13:30-14:10 Shimizu Masaaki (Osaka)
Buddhist Scriptures Written in Chinese and Vietnamese Chữ Nôm Preserved at the Library of Kyoto University

14:10-14:50 Meng Yuanyao (Guangxi University for Nationalities, Nanning)
Traditional Paper-making in the Zhuang Villages of Southwest China

14:50 – 15:15 Coffee / Tea

15:15-15:55 Low Kok Wai (Diaspora Asia Theatre Arts, Singapore)
Texts, Tablets & Sounds: Chinese Characters & Manuscripts in Cantonese Taoist Funerals in Singapore

15:55-16:35 Henning Klöter (Humboldt-Universität, Berlin)
Early Written Hokkien: Sources, Scribes and Scripts

General discussion

Wednesday 10th July

9:30 Welcome coffee

10:00-10:40 Jacob Cawthorne (Independent Researcher – Vientiane)
Yao Manuscript Culture in Northern Laos

10:40-11:20 Meiwen Chen (Universität Hamburg)
A Brief Introduction to Collections of Yao Manuscripts in Europe: History and Research

11:20-12:00 Joseba Estevez (Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster)
The Lanten manuscripts: Intergenerational ritual transmission and the dynamics of knowledge reproduction among the Lanten - Yao Mun - in northern Laos

12:00 – 13:30 Lunch break

13:30-14:20 Meng Yuanyao (Guangxi University for Nationalities, Nanning)
Manuscripts of the Traditional Zhuang Song Text ‘Song of the Brigands’

14:20-15:00 David Holm (National Chengchi University, Taipei)
Vernacular Character Scripts and Manuscripts of the Tày and Nùng in Northern Vietnam

15:00 – 15:20 Coffee / Tea

15:20 – 16:00 Closing discussion

Abstracts

Buddhist Scriptures Written in Chinese and Vietnamese Chữ Nôm Preserved at the Library of Kyoto University

Shimizu Masaaki (Osaka)
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This presentation will introduce a collection of Buddhist scriptures that was originally preserved at Wat Sammananam Boriharn in Bangkok, was then brought to Japan in 1978, and is currently preserved at the library of the Kyoto University Center for Southeast Asian Studies. It also briefly describes an interdisciplinary project conducted by bibliographers, historians and linguists. Based on general knowledge about papermaking, bibliography and dialectology in Vietnam, a preliminary analysis of one of the scriptures written in Chinese and Vietnamese Chữ Nôm, called *Fo shuo tian di ba yang jing* 佛說天地八陽經, was carried out through cooperation between paper studies and linguistics. Paper analysis shows that the material used to make the scripture is bamboo paper (*chikushi*), which was used in Vietnam until the end of the 19th century. The period of the 19th century coincides with the period when the taboo characters for the king's name were avoided in the document. The phonological and lexical analysis of Chữ Nôm characters in the document reveals the dialectal variations used in the text of the scripture, which reflect central or southern Vietnamese.

Traditional Paper-making in the Zhuang Villages in Southwest China

Meng Yuanyao (Guangxi University for Nationalities, Nanning)
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Traditional paper-making using paper mulberry (*Broussonetia papyrifera*) has a very long history in the south of China, and the use of the plant in the Indo-Pacific region goes back several millenia. The author conducted fieldwork investigations of traditional paper-making methods among Zhuang-speaking villages in the central part of Guangxi as part of a broader project to document Zhuang ethnobotany and the traditional uses of plants in village life. This presentation will give an overview of such practices as they are maintained in present-day villages, and provide details of the technical procedures employed in the process.

Texts, Tablets & Sounds: Chinese Characters & Manuscripts in Cantonese Taoist Funerals in Singapore

Low Kok Wai (Diaspora Asia Theatre Arts, Singapore)
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Being a nation of immigrants, Singapore began as a multicultural and multilingual society where the Chinese, whose ancestors came from different regions of Guangdong and Fujian provinces, spoke a rich variety of dialects like Hokkien (福建), Teochew (潮州), Cantonese (广东), Hakka (客家) and Hainanese (海南), in descending order of their distribution. Today, the average educated

Chinese speaks, reads and writes in Mandarin socially at a rudimentary level, but hardly speaks any dialect which is his/her mother tongue.

This paper is part of a larger study of the performance of Cantonese diaspora identity where Cantonese is being excavated, mapped and archived within its disappearing cultural spaces in Singapore. Here, the author focuses on the use of Chinese characters inscribed on tablets (牌位) of the deceased and the manuscripts used by Taoist priests (道士) to perform funeral rites (藏礼). The former provides a window into Chinese traditional views on seniority, gender and marital status and the way in which the inscribed Sinitic characters memorialise the deceased. In the latter, the author annotates and contextualizes the manuscripts of a particular recitation in Cantonese Taoist funeral ritual (道教藏礼) known as San Hua (散花), which is recited and performed the night before the funeral procession. This research is carried out using written sources, field research and grounded interviews.

Early Written Hokkien: Sources, Scribes and Scripts

Henning Klöter (Humboldt-Universität, Berlin)
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Hokkien, also known as Southern Mǐn, is a regional Sinitic variety spoken in China's southeastern province of Fújiàn, the island of Taiwan and in overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia. According to Ethnologue figures, the total number of speakers is around 50 million (Eberhard, Simons, Fennig 2019). In comparison to Mandarin, Hokkien has more tones and a complex set of tone sandhi rules. In addition, there are many lexical items which are unique to Hokkien (cf. Norman 1988:231f.). This presentation aims at giving an overview of the written history of Hokkien. After a brief introduction of native Chinese sources, the earliest of which dating to the 16th century, I will focus on Chinese-Western manuscripts written by European missionaries and their Chinese tutors during the 17th century. Due to their systematic arrangement, these handwritten dictionaries and grammars allow for a detailed examination of early Hokkien writing conventions. My analysis will discuss whether and on what grounds it is justified to claim the existence of a Hokkien writing tradition distinct from standard Chinese writing.

Yao Manuscript Culture in Northern Laos

Jacob Cawthorne (Independent Researcher –ChildFund Australia)
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Yao peoples (Iu Mien and Kim Mun) have inhabited lands beyond the borders of dynastic and modern China. At various times, and repeatedly over the past millennium, they have moved into territories now known as Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand, and in the previous century migrated to the US and France. A distinguishing feature of these communities is that they brought with them texts written in a Chinese script as well as the norms and practices that sustain their meaningful use. More importantly, these norms and practices also enabled the production of new texts in these new lands. Hence, these Yao communities can be seen as a case of non-Han peoples using the Chinese script to produce original texts outside China. Furthermore, these texts are not always directly linked to statecraft, organised religion, or the regional cultural movements of China's past and present. In this presentation I will focus on Kim Mun texts and practices documented during fieldwork in Luang Namtha in northern Laos, and introduce the following topics: 1) What is a Kim

Mun manuscript? 2) What are the material, social, and linguistic contexts that shape the production of Kim Mun manuscripts? 3) What is the current state of writing culture among Kim Mun communities?

A Brief Introduction to Collections of Yao Manuscripts in Europe: History and Research

Meiwen Chen (Universität Hamburg)

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Scholarly research on Yao manuscripts dates back approximately four decades. The Yao people are a non-Han Chinese ethnic group predominantly residing in the mountainous regions of southern China and northern Thailand, Laos and Vietnam (as of 2010, the Yao population in China numbered roughly 2.79 million). Without their own writing system, the Yao acquired Chinese literacy more than a thousand years ago and since then have been producing written artefacts for various purposes. In this presentation, I will touch upon the following issues: 1) How and why Yao manuscripts have become collectible items; 2) What types of documents do collections of Yao manuscripts contain; 3) What are the material, social and linguistic contexts that shaped the production of Yao manuscripts; and 4) What is the current status of preservation of and research on the collections in Europe.

The Lanten manuscripts: Intergenerational ritual transmission and the dynamics of knowledge reproduction among the Lanten - Yao Mun - in northern Laos

Joseba Estevez (Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster)

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The Lanten, a population also known as Lao Huay or Yao Mun, living in the highlands of continental Southeast Asia, have been exposed for centuries to conflicts and processes of marginalisation, ranging from clashes with various Chinese dynasties from the 12th century onwards to their involvement in the Indochina Wars from the 1950s to the 1970s. These forced them to undertake long migrations that brought them from their native land in China to Vietnam and Laos. In the face of these vicissitudes, Lanten society has displayed an extraordinary resilience. In this respect, the Lanten belief system and particularly the roles performed by the Lanten ritual experts and their Daoist manuscripts are of essential importance. This paper aims to present and to analyse the socio-historical background of these manuscripts, some of them dating back to the 18th century, their means of production and transmission, and their current ritual use. Furthermore, it introduces the on-going state of the projects in northern Laos to digitalise a selection of Lanten manuscripts, namely Endangered Archives Programme EAP791 and EAP1126.

Manuscripts of the Traditional Zhuang Song Text ‘Song of the Brigands’

Meng Yuanyao (Guangxi University for Nationalities, Nanning)

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The ‘Song of the Brigands’ (*Fwencaeg*) is a long song cycle that is current in traditional song markets in the Zhuang-speaking areas of west-central Guangxi in southern China. It is usually sung antiphonally by two male and two female singers, singing the parts of young men called up into the armies of the native chieftains and their young lovers. The lyrics of the song recount their experiences as the young men are taken off to fight in military campaigns as native troops, and the women are left behind. Unlike other pre-modern accounts of martial prowess and military campaigns in East Asia, this song cycle presents the everyday experiences of common soldiers and their womenfolk. Evidence indicates that the song cycle dates from the Ming dynasty. Various versions of this song cycle circulate in different localities, and the lyrics circulate in the form of manuscript booklets, written in the Zhuang vernacular script. This paper will present an overview of this manuscript tradition, explain how the booklets are used in actual performance, and discuss aspects of regional variation and cultural transmission.

Vernacular Character Scripts and Manuscripts of the Tày and Nùng in Northern Vietnam

David Holm (National Chengchi University, Taipei)

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In collaboration with Zhuang colleagues, the author has conducted a survey of vernacular character scripts and manuscripts of the Tai-speaking ethnic groups of southern China, including the Zhuang, Bouyei, Nong and Sha. The survey analysed traditional texts from 45 different locations, including four texts from northern Vietnam. The preliminary results of that survey were published in *Mapping the Old Zhuang Character Script* (Brill, 2013). In recent years the author has extended the coverage of this survey further into northern Vietnam, looking specifically at the vernacular character scripts of the Tày and Nùng, who speak Tai-Kadai languages similar to Zhuang. The present paper will survey the different manuscript types that circulate in Tày and Nùng society, and compare the different vernacular scripts of the Tày and Nùng, and point out how they are related to each other and to Zhuang. The survey allows us to quantify degrees of commonality and difference, and generate hypotheses on the relative dates of the Zhuang, Tày and Nùng scripts. I will also argue that analysis of such texts can be used to track patterns of migration on both sides of the China-Vietnam border, and that such data can be used to supplement phonological and grammatical information in dialectology.