

WORKSHOP

# SCOPING 'NEW DIPLOMATIC HISTORY' IN ASIA

The New Diplomatic History Network (NDHN) was established in 2011 as a collaborative, interdisciplinary and international initiative which focuses primarily on "the historical study of diplomats, their methods, and their cultural, political, and social milieux." In July 2023, a group of early career scholars revisited the NDH's original mandate and issued a manifesto which was published in NDH's journal, *Diplomatica: The Journal of Diplomacy and Society* (published by Brill) as 'Provincializing "New" Diplomatic History: An Interdisciplinary Manifesto' in April 2025 (available as open access) to inject a healthy degree of critical self-reflection among its younger scholars.

One of its key objectives is to enhance the diversity of scholarly representations and the empirical coverage of new research across various academic communities worldwide. To support this aim, this one-day workshop is designed to connect scholars in Asia and explore innovative approaches to global diplomacy with the New Diplomatic History Network.

**5 MAY 2026**  
**AS8, ROOM 04-04**

National University of Singapore

## 5 MAY 2026 • TUESDAY

<b>10:00 – 10:10</b>	<b>INTRODUCTORY REMARKS</b>
	<b>TIM WINTER</b>   <i>National University of Singapore</i> <b>NAOKO SHIMAZU</b>   <i>University of Tokyo</i>
<b>10:10 – 12:00</b>	<b>PANEL 1 – DIPLOMATIC PRACTICES IN ASIA</b>
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>NAOKO SHIMAZU</b>   <i>University of Tokyo</i>
10:10	The Field of Merit in Buddhist Diplomacy <b>MATT PHILLIPS</b>   <i>SOAS University of London</i>
10:25	Ways of Conducting Diplomacy in Early Modern Asia and Europe <b>FELIX KUHN</b>   <i>University of Tokyo</i>
10:40	Decolonising Indian Diplomacy <b>SANDEEP BHARDWAJ</b>   <i>National University of Singapore</i>
10:55	The Civilisational Diplomacy of Post-Independence Asia <b>TIM WINTER</b>   <i>National University of Singapore</i>
11:10 <i>Online</i>	National Reconstructions of Colonial Territory in Southeast Asia <b>CHRISTIAN C. LENTZ</b>   <i>University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill</i>
11:25	<b>DISCUSSION</b>
<b>12:00 – 13:00</b>	<b>LUNCH BREAK</b>
<b>13:00 – 15:00</b>	<b>PANEL 2 – AGENTS OF DIPLOMACY IN ASIA</b>
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>TIM WINTER</b>   <i>National University of Singapore</i>
13:00	Multilateral Diplomacy in the 1720 Choson Embassy to Beijing: Control, Agency, and Entanglement in Il'am yongi (Records of Il'am's Journey to Beijing) <b>JIMIN LIM</b>   <i>Boston University</i>
13:15 <i>Online</i>	Diplomatic Intimacies: A Framework for Postcolonial Diplomatic History <b>KHUSHI SINGH RATHORE</b>   <i>European University Institute</i>
13:30	Reading a New China–Nepal Diplomatic History from Diplomatic Memoirs <b>ZEZHOU YANG</b>   <i>National University of Singapore</i>
13:45	Artistic Agency and the Revolution of the Filipino Ilustrados: Juan Luna and José Rizal, 1884-1896 <b>MARTINA ZAGO</b>   <i>University of British Columbia</i>
14:00	Trần Văn Dĩnh: Portrait of a Bandung Humanist (1923-2011) <b>PATRICK QUINTON-BROWN</b>   <i>Singapore Management University</i>
14:15	<b>DISCUSSION</b>
<b>15:00 – 15:30</b>	<b>AFTERNOON TEA BREAK</b>

## SCOPING 'NEW DIPLOMATIC HISTORY' IN ASIA

5 May 2026 | Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore

<b>15:30 – 17:00</b>	<b>PANEL 3 – DIPLOMATIC SPACES IN ASIA</b>
Chairperson	<b>FELIX KUHN</b>   <i>University of Tokyo</i>
15:30 <i>Online</i>	The City as Diplomat: New Delhi and the Spatial Diplomacy of Post-Colonial India, c.1947–1984 <b>HARLEEN KAUR</b>   <i>National University of Singapore, and King's College London</i>
15:45 <i>Online</i>	Hosting Asia and the Social Practice of Diplomacy in Early Twentieth-Century Tokyo <b>SOUMYA RANJAN GAHIR</b>   <i>Ravenshaw University</i>
16:00 <i>Online</i>	An Insight into the Art of High Diplomacy through <i>The Wedding at Cana</i> by Paolo Veronese <b>MARINE SARGSYAN</b>   <i>University of Bologna</i>
16:15 <i>Online</i>	Gains before Labels: How Sanctions against South Africa Provoked World-Making in the Economic Realm for Japan and Africa <b>TOMOKO TAKAHASHI</b>   <i>University of Tokyo</i> <b>YUSRA ABDULLAHI</b>   <i>Leiden University</i>
16:30	<b>DISCUSSION</b>
<b>17:00 – 17:30</b>	<b>CLOSING REMARKS &amp; FUTURE PLANS</b>
	<b>NAOKO SHIMAZU</b>   <i>University of Tokyo</i> <b>TIM WINTER</b>   <i>National University of Singapore</i>
<b>17:30</b>	<b>END OF WORKSHOP</b>
<b>18:30 – 20:00</b>	<b>WORKSHOP DINNER</b> ( <i>For speakers and chairpersons only</i> )

## The Field of Merit in Buddhist Diplomacy

**MATT PHILLIPS** | *SOAS University of London*

This presentation introduces puññakkhetta or the field of merit as a framework for analysing inter-state relations in contemporary diplomatic practice. In Buddhist thought, the value of a gift lies not in the object but in the moral worthiness of its recipient. States and their representatives strategically position themselves as privileged sites for merit-making. When foreign actors direct resources toward them, those resources are transformed into acts of virtue. This affirms the donor's moral standing while reproducing the recipient's elevated status.

Drawing on Stanley Tambiah's concept of the galactic polity, this talk will argue that such a cosmological logic continues to structure modern diplomatic relations in ways conventional IR frameworks miss. The argument moves between historical examples and contemporary practice - including the author's own direct involvement in Buddhist diplomatic event - to show that merit-field dynamics actively shape diplomatic activity through to the present day and thus offer a vital tool for interpreting contemporary power relations.

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## Ways of Conducting Diplomacy in Early Modern Asia and Europe

**FELIX KUHN** | *University of Tokyo*

The diplomatic systems of early modern East Asia and Europe were both marked by a wide variety of ways of conducting diplomacy. However, in both cases, one way for polities to engage in diplomatic exchanges with each other has been treated as central. In East Asia, the focus has been on tributary exchanges and the so-called tributary system they ostensibly formed. In Europe, the emphasis has been on the establishment of permanent embassies as the central diplomatic institution. While in both cases this notion has been challenged, other ways of conducting diplomacy remain relatively neglected. This is especially visible in comparisons between the two diplomatic systems, where they are usually treated as fundamentally distinct. The aim of this paper is to elucidate the various ways of conducting diplomacy in both systems by placing them in a proper comparative perspective. The purpose is not to identify what is "missing" in one system or the other; rather it is to think through some of the differences and similarities between diplomacy in early modern East Asia and Europe, and thereby also achieve a firmer understanding of each.

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## Decolonising Indian Diplomacy

**SANDEEP BHARDWAJ** | *National University of Singapore*

British India was unique among the colonized nations in maintaining a vast diplomatic presence. Despite its subjugated status, it operated a substantial foreign policy apparatus, comprising diplomats, soldiers and spies, to oversee a "sub-imperial system" spanning parts of East Africa, Southeast Asia and the Middle East. The post-colonial Indian state inherited this infrastructure intact in the 1947 transfer of power. This article traces how Indian diplomacy gradually decolonized over the next decade, often in surprising ways. Three transitions were notable. First, the fundamental mission of Indian diplomacy changed from imperial to national (with a tinge of anti-colonialism). This was a contested process which required Indian diplomats to unlearn worldviews, assumptions and practices and develop new ones. Second, the national discourse on foreign policy widened before narrowing again. The anticipation of decolonization engendered considerable public interest in international affairs. In the two decades prior to independence, India witnessed emergence of several journals focused on events abroad, international outreach by various Indian political parties, and establishment of a foreign policy think tank. These energies carried over to independent India. Eventually, the post-colonial state was compelled to restrain this discourse, through secrecy and obfuscation, in order avoid the scrutiny it brought. In the 1950s, foreign policy issues gradually evaporated from the public conversation. The third transition was the taming of Indian diplomatic apparatus. The colonial Indian government had encouraged a culture of free internal debate among its officials, bolstered by the practices of meticulous documentation, cross-departmental consultations and emphasis on

institutional memory. In the post-colonial state, the culture of free policy debate gradually gave way to centralized, opaque decision-making. While historians have discussed continuity and change between the foreign policies of colonial and independent India, this article is the first attempt to follow how the policy-making process itself.

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## The Civilisational Diplomacy of Post-Independence Asia

**TIM WINTER** | *National University of Singapore*

The last decade has seen extensive discussion about the diplomatic and internationalist ambitions of Asia's so-called civilisational states. As 'rising powers' have gained economic and technological parity with their Western counterparts, civilisational legacies have moved to the centre of debates about shifting world orders and multipolar geopolitics. IR theories of such civilisational state affairs emphasise novelty and a paradigm shift from a nation-state to civilisational actor.

This paper argues for a longer history of civilisational internationalism in Asia, one which highlights the continuities in diplomatic conduct and recovers histories of civilisational heritage diplomacy that formed part of the geopolitics of the Cold War and post Bandung era. Particular emphasis is placed on Pakistan and India and their relations with the UN to advance forms of internationalism that reach across the Islamic world and Southeast Asia.

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## National Reconstructions of Colonial Territory in Southeast Asia

**CHRISTIAN C. LENTZ** | *University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

This paper examines trilateral relations between Indonesia and the two Vietnams from 1955-65, when political elites negotiated between commitments to free themselves from colonial rule on the one hand and imperatives to fill out territories defined by colonial rule on the other. All three countries sent delegates to the 1955 Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung, embraced principles of non-alignment and self-determination, and pledged to its decolonizing agenda. Yet subsequent diplomatic, political, and military maneuvers demonstrate that Vietnamese and Indonesian elites used the same Bandung principles to legitimize the conquest of territory created by former colonial overlords. Putting the principle of "respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations" to work, Presidents Sukarno of Indonesia and Ho Chi Minh of northern Vietnam (DRV) made common cause in their respective pursuits of western New Guinea, left out of the 1949 settlement with the Netherlands, and southern Vietnam (RVN), administered separately since the 1954 Geneva Agreements. Caught in between, RVN leaders worried about the expansionist ambitions of both and, consequently, drew closer to the US in a heating Cold War contest. Taken together, their pursuit of territory suggests how Bandung principles exceeded anti-colonial solidarity and became, instead, tools of postcolonial recolonization.

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## Multilateral Diplomacy in the 1720 Choson Embassy to Beijing: Control, Agency, and Entanglement in Il'am yongi (Records of Il'am's Journey to Beijing)

**JIMIN LIM** | *Boston University*

The paper examines the complex diplomatic dynamics of the Chosŏn tributary embassy to Beijing in 1720, as presented in Yi Ki-ji's *Il'am yŏngi* (一菴燕記, Records of Il'am's Journey to Beijing), through the lens of New Diplomatic History (NDH). Previous scholarship on Korean envoys' travelogues to Beijing (K. *yŏnhaengnok*, C. *Yanxinglu*) has primarily emphasized intercultural exchange within a bilateral framework, focusing on interactions between Chinese and Korean literati or on encounters with Western culture.

Departing from this approach, this paper argues that Yi Ki-ji's 1720 embassy could be understood as a form of multilateral diplomacy involving three sets of actors—Koreans, Chinese, and Westerners. The presence of this additional actor intensified the complexity of diplomatic interactions, reconfiguring the conventional interplay between Qing imperial control and the strategic responses of tributary envoys. Although the Western missionaries as a liminal intermediary between the imperial bureaucratic framework and transregional religious network was not free from the imperial control, their presence generated new layers of negotiation and agency among all participants.

Yi Ki-ji occupied a particular position that was simultaneously embedded within the official embassy and structurally marginal to its actual diplomatic practices as a non-official envoy. However, this marginality enabled him to maneuver within and around imperial restrictions with flexibility and offered new opportunities. Focusing on Yi Ki-ji as a diplomatic agent, the paper demonstrates how he navigated imperial restrictions with strategic acumen by leveraging his ambiguous status and through his frequent visits to Catholic churches. In doing so, he pursued both personal and diplomatic goals and emerges not as a mere observer of foreign cultures driven by curiosity, but as an active diplomatic actor.

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## Diplomatic Intimacies: A Framework for Postcolonial Diplomatic History

**KHUSHI SINGH RATHORE** | *European University Institute*

In this paper, I propose 'diplomatic intimacy' as a methodological framework to re-conceptualise what counts as diplomacy through the study of anti-imperial internationalism of postcolonial women diplomats of India. This paper argues that the terrains of anti-imperial internationalism allow us to interrogate the embodied, affective, and relational dimensions of postcolonial diplomatic encounters that have long been obscured by conventional diplomatic history — centred on state actors, formal institutions, and masculine modes of representation. This in turn opens the space for us to systematically recover and study a rich and generative archive of postcolonial diplomacy anchored in the ideas of 'one world' and 'world-making (Bhagavan 2012; Getachew 2019<sup>1</sup>). By recovering these encounters, the framework of intimacy opens up new ways of reading how diplomacy was performed, imagined, and contested beyond the bureaucratic definitions of the foreign office. In doing so, the paper challenges the existing narratives of diplomatic history by centring non-Western, gendered, and postcolonial actors as sites of theoretical as well as empirical innovation. In this pursuit, the paper studies closely the diplomatic encounters of Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, as the first woman diplomat of India as she transitions from representing Indian National Congress at the San Francisco Conference (1945) of the United Nations, contesting the official British Indian delegation- to being the leader of India's first UN delegation (1946).

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## Reading a New China-Nepal Diplomatic History from Diplomatic Memoirs

**ZEZHOU YANG** | *National University of Singapore*

Diplomatic history between China and Nepal has conventionally remained a marginal and often invisible component within broader narratives that portray the relationship between the two states as linear and relatively uneventful. Yet a closer examination of its historical intricacies can illuminate the complex agents, practices, meanings, and historical contingencies that shaped diplomacy in the inter-Asian context.

This paper focuses on the period between the 1910s and the 1940s in China–Nepal diplomatic history. This period is largely absent from prevailing diplomatic histories for two main reasons. First, China and Nepal had not yet established formal diplomatic relations during these decades. Second, following the establishment of new sovereign regimes in both countries in the 1950s, earlier diplomatic encounters were marginalised within the official narratives of the contemporary states.

To address this historiographical gap, the paper reconstructs a little-known diplomatic episode based on two memoirs written by Zhang Min. In 1930, Zhang Min, a senior officer of the Nationalist government of China, was commissioned to visit Nepal to bestow a medal upon the Nepali prime minister, making him only the second Chinese official known to have visited Nepal in modern times. Behind these ceremonial diplomatic activities, however, Zhang's mission was also intended to ease tensions following a potential military conflict between China and Nepal at the end of 1929.

After completing the mission, Zhang Min published two memoirs in Singapore recounting his experiences. These little-known texts not only allow us to reconstruct the details of Zhang's diplomatic visit but also provide insight into how diplomacy in Asia could be facilitated through intricate networks of individuals and transregional connections rather than through formal state-to-state relations alone.

By constructing a new China–Nepal diplomatic history through the reading of diplomatic memoirs, this paper joins the emerging conversation of rethinking diplomatic history in Asia, one characterised by ambiguity, complexity, and overlapping networks of actors. In doing so, it contributes to ongoing efforts to provincialise “New” Diplomatic History (Boer et al., 2025) by foregrounding inter-Asian diplomatic practices that fall outside the conventional framework of modern state diplomacy.

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## Artistic Agency and the Revolution of the Filipino Ilustrados: Juan Luna and José Rizal, 1884-1896

**MARTINA ZAGO** | *University of British Columbia*

Artistic agents who spanned Southeast Asia and Europe are the focus of this paper, in particular the elite network of Filipino intelligentsia and artists known as the Ilustrados that operated between 1872 and until the end of the Philippine Revolution in 1898. Specifically, it will focus on the relationship between Juan Luna—the renowned Filipino nationalist painter—and José Rizal—the great novelist and anti-imperial hero whose execution became a martyrdom. By tracing the effects of their respective cultural works on each other (for example, Luna's *Spoliarium* was a source of inspiration for Rizal's first novel, *Noli Me Tángere*) and their involvement together in the Propaganda Movement, especially between 1884 and 1896, the paper explores how a Filipino network of artist-diplomats became an alternative nodal point in global connections and the role of art and culture in inventing communities of identity.

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## Trần Văn Dĩnh: Portrait of a Bandung Humanist (1923-2011)

**PATRICK QUINTON-BROWN** | *Singapore Management University*

In this essay I provide a portrait of a historical figure who was not only a scholar of non-alignment but who lived non-alignment. Trần Văn Dĩnh's name, to the extent that it is known, has been misunderstood. My aim is to rectify it, and in doing so, say something about what it should mean today. First I reflect on Dĩnh's upbringing in Huế and his diplomatic career that spanned missions in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and North America. Second I explore his anti-war and anti-racist activism after the events of 1963, including in relation to the Pan-Africanism that he taught and realized at the Afro-Asian Institute at Temple University. Finally I provide an account of his academic writings on the Non-Aligned Movement in the years that followed: particularly Dĩnh's attempts at insisting upon the true and proper meaning of non-alignment, and the true and proper meaning of non-aligned contestations of existing global orders that, in some ways, culminated with his second novel. Taken together I mount the claim that Trần Văn Dĩnh was not only a revolutionary patriot, a diplomat, an educator, and a novelist, but, and above all, a Bandung humanist.

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## The City as Diplomat: New Delhi and the Spatial Diplomacy of Post-Colonial India, c.1947–1984

**HARLEEN KAUR** | *National University of Singapore, and King's College London*

This paper argues that New Delhi functioned as a diplomat in its own right in the decades following Indian independence (c. 1947-1984). Through its spatial configuration – the planning of a Diplomatic Enclave, the construction of multilateral institutional headquarters, and the organisation of ceremonial and political landscapes – the city actively communicated India's non-aligned worldview, and post-colonial ambitions to the world. The built-environment was not merely a backdrop to diplomacy but an active instrument of it. Drawing on official archives, institutional records, and newspaper reports, this paper takes the physical fabric of the capital city as an active diplomatic agent, arguing that the built-environments of post-colonial Asian capitals illuminate nuances that conventional diplomatic history tends to overlook. To situate New Delhi's diplomatic spatial expansion, the paper traces the ideological foundations of India's foreign policy to the late colonial period, particularly the establishment of the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) in 1943, which shaped early diplomatic engagements, most notably the Inter-Asian Relations Conference of 1947 – signalling India's commitment to decolonisation and its ambition to bridge East and West. These ideals took concrete spatial form in the construction of Sapru House (the ICWA's headquarters) and the planning of the Diplomatic Enclave, while the presence of international organisations such as the WHO, UN, and Ford Foundation further positioned New Delhi as a hub of multilateral engagement. The paper also examines how State Bhavans (liaison offices for Indian states) evolved into spatial manifestations of inter-state diplomacy, extending the meaning of diplomacy well beyond the strictly international realm. The paper ends in 1984, a moment that marked the end of the Nehruvian style diplomacy and a shift in both India's foreign policy orientation and its capital city's spatial politics.

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## Hosting Asia and the Social Practice of Diplomacy in Early Twentieth-Century Tokyo

**SOUMYA RANJAN GAHIR** | *Ravenshaw University*

This paper asks where, and through whom, diplomacy was actually practised in early twentieth-century Asia. It examines the Oriental Youngmen's Association in Tokyo (c. 1900–1915) as a site where inter-Asian relations were enacted not through embassies, but through everyday forms of sociability. Bringing together Japanese, Indian, and other Asian students, the Association organised lectures, hosted visiting intellectuals, facilitated introductions, and sustained networks of exchange that extended beyond formal political channels. Existing scholarship on Indo-Japanese encounters and pan-Asianism has largely centred on prominent political actors or ideological currents. In such accounts, student associations appear only as background to larger narratives. This paper shifts the focus by treating the Association itself as an institutional space where diplomacy was actively practised. Drawing on memoirs of Indian students in Japan, institutional and educational histories, and contemporary press references, this study reconstructs how associational life structured repeated interactions among participants and enabled the circulation of political ideas across colonial and imperial boundaries. The paper argues that practices such as hosting, debate, and organised sociability constituted a form of informal diplomatic labour. Through these practices, participants cultivated trust, negotiated difference, and articulated shared visions of Asia at a moment when formal diplomatic relations were limited or uneven. In this sense, the Association functioned as a micro-infrastructure of diplomacy, shaping how inter-Asian encounters were experienced and understood. By foregrounding a setting often treated as peripheral, the paper contributes to ongoing efforts within New Diplomatic History to expand both the archive and the geography of diplomacy. It demonstrates that diplomacy in Asia was not only conducted by states, but also produced through institutionalised social interaction, where the meanings and possibilities of "Asia" itself were actively negotiated.

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## An Insight into the Art of High Diplomacy through The Wedding at Cana by Paolo Veronese

**MARINE SARGSYAN** | *University of Bologna*

This paper provides an in-depth analysis of Paolo Veronese's largest painting, *The Wedding at Cana*, and sheds new light on the relationship between art, diplomacy, and trade in sixteenth-century Venice. It examines the commercial and diplomatic relations of the Most Serene Republic with East Asia, expressed through the opulent materials and the main trading items, such as silk, pearls, and jewellery, depicted in this painting. The research suggests that Veronese's artistic practice extends beyond art history and religious symbolism, embracing the realm of international relations, which was closely intertwined with its long-distance trade. The overall aim of this study is to investigate the political significance of *The Wedding at Cana* in relation to its trade with Asia, as well as to demonstrate how art was used in the diplomatic affairs of the Most Serene Republic.

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## Gains before Labels: How Sanctions against South Africa Provoked World-Making in the Economic Realm for Japan and Africa

**TOMOKO TAKAHASHI** | *University of Tokyo*

**YUSRA ABDULLAHI** | *Leiden University*

After the Second World War, economic order has been explained as a push and pull between capitalist and interventionist ideas, most notably in the context of the East-West or North-South divides during the Cold War. Labels that connote such ideas include terms on economic activities such as free trade, investment, loans, lending, and development. However, were economic activities categorized clearly according to such norms, even before countries calculated their national interests? This paper investigates one of the very first moments when economic activities saw substantial expansion on a global scale; Japan, a defeated East Asian country, met the African continent, then afresh with newly independent states, in the 1960s and onwards. Diplomatic historical materials from both Japan and the United Kingdom reveal that calculations on substantial gains came before any form of language making. Western countries insisted on sanctions against South Africa adopting apartheid policy, which functioned as an exogenous factor that Japan reflexively reacted in protection of its economic interests. It takes up concrete archival sources to show that economic labels were mere choices that accorded with Japan's economic preferences; it was the expansion of economic markets and influence that were sought in Africa, and so long as either capitalist or interventionist norms served such purposes, it took up such language. This paper contributes to Asian and African world-making in the economic sphere.

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## ABOUT THE SPEAKERS & ORGANISERS

**Christian C. Lentz** is Associate Professor of Geography and Environment and Adjunct Associate Professor of History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is author of *Contested Territory: Điện Biên Phủ and the Making of Northwest Vietnam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), winner of the 2021 Harry J. Benda Prize for outstanding first book in Southeast Asian studies. His articles have appeared in *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, *Political Geography*, *Modern Asian Studies*, *American Historical Review*, and other journals. He has held fellowships with Fulbright in Vietnam, the Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore, and the School of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, NJ. His current research examines territory, nationalism, and decolonization in Indonesia and the two Vietnams during the early Cold War.

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**Felix Kuhn** received his PhD in the field of Political Science from the National University of Singapore in 2019. After teaching for several years at the Beijing Foreign Studies University-Keele University Collaborative Programme on Diplomacy, he joined the University of Tokyo in 2023. He teaches courses on historical and contemporary Japanese foreign relations and the practice of diplomacy. His research areas are diplomatic history and contemporary international relations, with a focus on East Asia. He is especially interested in the variety of diplomatic practices in history and the development of these practices up to our time.

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**Harleen Kaur** is a historian of South Asia specialising in contemporary Indian history, and postcolonial capital cities. She holds a Joint PhD from the National University of Singapore and King's College London (2026). Her dissertation examined the urban transformation of New Delhi between 1947 and 1984, tracing how the built-environment of India's national capital was shaped by the intertwined processes of decolonisation and democratisation. Her work sits at the intersection of South Asian Studies, urban history, and postcolonial urbanism. She has published in *The Journal of Indian and Asian Studies* and has presented her research at several international conferences. She has also sustained an active practice in public history through Delhi Heritage Walks, and the Sufi Kathak Foundation.

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**Jimin Lim** is a PhD student in the Department of History at Boston University, under the mentorship of Dr Eugenio Menegon. His research focuses on Sino-Western cultural exchanges and their impact on Korea, with focus on the cultural translation of Western texts in China and the travelogues of Korean envoys to Beijing during the Ming-Qing dynasties. Prior to joining Boston University, Lim received a BA in Theology from Yonsei University; and Master of Divinity from Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary. He further pursued a Master of Theology in historical studies at Vanderbilt University. An ordained Presbyterian pastor in Korea, he served as a military chaplain in the South Korean army for three years. His experience in military service has sparked a strong interest in the history of military chaplaincy.

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**Khushi Singh Rathore** is a Max Weber Fellow at the Department of History and the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute (EUI), Florence, and a Non-Resident Associate Fellow at the Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP), New Delhi. She received her PhD from the Centre for International Politics, Organisation and Disarmament (CIPOD), Jawaharlal Nehru University. Her current project, *Diplomatic Intimacies: Asia in Indian Women's Postcolonial Thought*, examines the idea of Asia as it expanded and contracted in early postcolonial Indian internationalism through the diplomatic encounters of anti-imperial Indian women leaders. Her research focuses on gender and diplomacy, feminist IR, diplomatic history, and postcolonial internationalism. She is Associate Editor of *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* and co-editor of *The Contemporary Reader of Feminist International Relations* (Routledge, 2025) and *Gender and Diplomacy: Critical Junctures, Innovations and Future Research Directions* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2025).

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**Marine Sargsyan** is Adjunct Professor of International Relations at the University of Bologna. She holds a PhD in Political Sciences with a specialization in European and International studies from Roma Tre University (2018-2022). She has extensively published with prestigious journals and publishing houses, including SAGE and Palgrave Macmillan. Dr Sargsyan's academic path and professional background are built on achievements and collaborations with leading universities, such as Columbia University in New York, Leiden University in the Netherlands, and Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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**Martina Zago** has recently been awarded a PhD in Political Theory at the University of British Columbia. She works in the history of global political thought, with particular focus on empire, culture and civilization, as well as the fine arts. Her first article, "Civilization as an Aesthetic Concept: The Standard of Civilization Reconsidered," has been published in *Global Studies Quarterly*. She is currently working on a new project that will center on Rabindranath Tagore's anti-imperialism as rooted in art.

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**Matt Phillips** is a Research Associate at SOAS, University of London, Centre of South East Asian Studies. He has previously held the position of Lecturer in Modern Asian History at Aberystwyth University, Wales and more recently, Research Analyst at the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). Matt has published widely on Thailand during the Cold War, with a focus on the interplay between diplomacy, culture, religion and geopolitics. His most recent publication was an edited volume with Naoko Shimazu on a visual history of diplomacy in Cold War Asia (Cambridge University Press, 2025). Matt is currently serving as a diplomat in Bangkok.

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**Naoko Shimazu** is Professor and Deputy Director of Tokyo College, Institute for Advanced Study, University of Tokyo. She is an associate of the Inter-Asia Engagements Cluster, ARI. She is a cultural historian of global diplomacy, and a global historian of Asia. She is completing a range of work on the cultural history of global diplomacy, including *Cold War Asia: A Visual History of Global Diplomacy*, edited with Matthew Phillips (Cambridge University Press, 2025), *Oxford Handbook of Cultural History of Global Diplomacy* (Oxford University Press, 2026/2027) with C. Goeschel as the Editor, and a monograph, *Diplomacy as Theatre based on the Bandung Conference of 1955*.

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