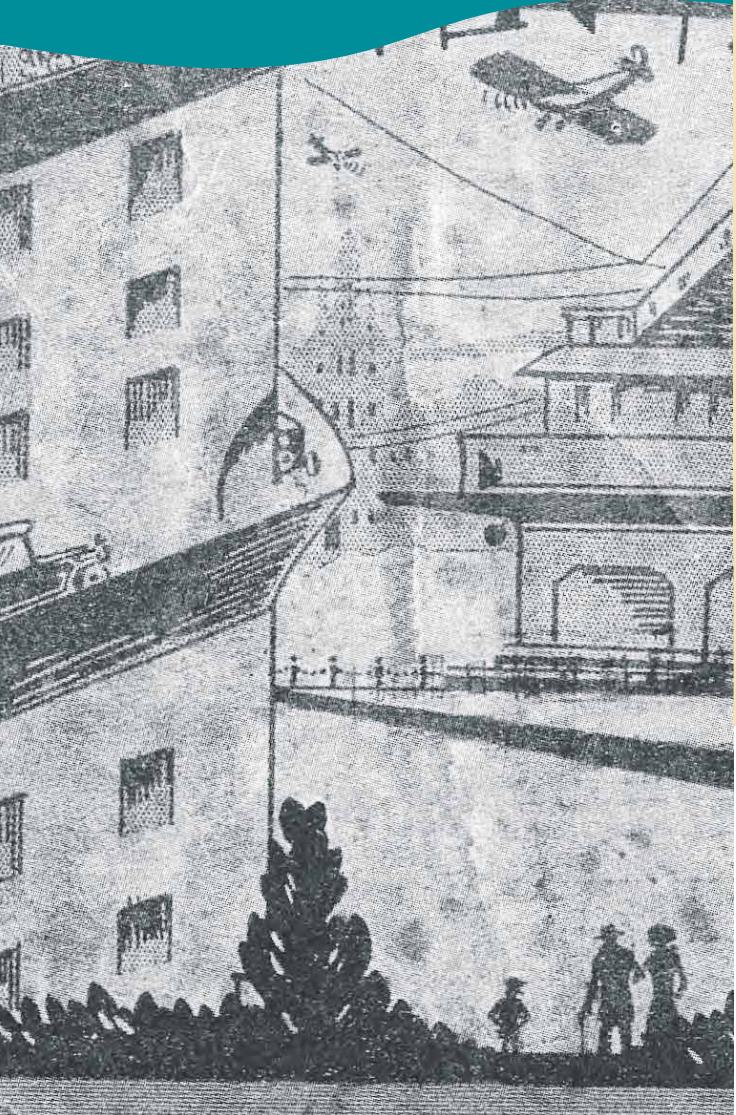


**Conference Venue:**  
IKGF seminar room, building D1  
Hartmannstr. 14, 91052 Erlangen



The aim of this conference is to examine expressions of optimism and scepticism regarding civilizational progress as they appeared within the circles of the Chinese intellectual and political elite.

Following crisis response strategies from the end of the 19th century, conceptions of civilizational progress, in the broad sense, social evolution and modernization quickly gained a great degree of influence in political and intellectual circles in China. Even though 'Western' ideas played a central role to varying degrees in the development of such conceptions, the evaluations, assessments and prognoses of 'progress' were by no means concurrent in China and Western societies. While optimistic views on civilizational progress tended to lose importance in Europe and North America from the late 19th century and sceptical findings were increasingly emphasized, optimism regarding progress continued to predominate in China in various forms. Fundamentally optimistic positions, in China, referred to the temporal aspects of civilizational advance: it was thus thought to be possible that progress/modernization could occur in an accelerated mode in China. This attitude reflects notions of a present and future China in which a catching up with, overtaking and surpassing of supposedly more advanced Western societies might take place. Moreover, a multifaceted and frequently ethically based diagnosis of China's current situation appeared which recognized a lack of simultaneity from an explicitly universal historical perspective and was associated with predictive statements. Here, China appeared as a historical entity that was stuck in a historically 'backwards' era in comparison to Western societies and therefore, facing considerable time pressure, needed to undertake targeted steps toward an accelerated process of development. Such optimistic assumptions can be found in a broad intellectual and political spectrum that is not adequately understood in terms of the usual classifications like 'progressive/conservative'.

This conference follows last year's discussions and presents new approaches, points of view and reviews to the papers introduced during the first conference.

Please **register** until October 20, 2014  
via our website [www.ikgf.fau.de](http://www.ikgf.fau.de)

### **International Consortium for Research in the Humanities**

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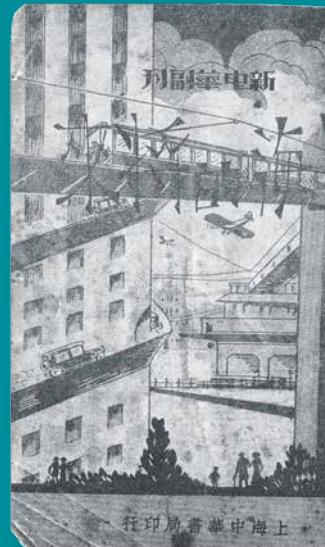
## **INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM for Research in the Humanities**

*Fate, Freedom and Prognostication.  
Strategies for Coping with the Future in East Asia and Europe*

**October 23 – 24, 2014**

**CONFERENCE**  
Convenor: Prof. Dr. Thomas Fröhlich

# **Optimism and Scepticism regarding Progress in Late 19<sup>th</sup>-Century and Republican China II**



**FAU**

FRIEDRICH-ALEXANDER  
UNIVERSITÄT  
ERLANGEN-NÜRNBERG



## INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM for Research in the Humanities

*Fate, Freedom and Prognostication.  
Strategies for Coping with the Future in East Asia and Europe*

### Thursday, October 23, 2014

#### 9:30 a.m. Welcome address

Thomas Fröhlich (conference convenor)

#### 9:45 a.m. Confucianism and Modernity in Japan: Fukuzawa Yukichi and Nakae Chōmin

Takahiro Nakajima 中島隆博 (University of Tokyo)

Respondent: Peter Zarrow (University of Connecticut)

#### 10:45 a.m. Coffee Break

#### 11:00 a.m. The Idea of Progress in Modern China – The Case of Yan Fu

Li Qiang 李強 (Beijing University)

Respondent: Kai Vogelsang (University of Hamburg)

#### 12:00 p.m. Lunch Break

#### 1:30 p.m. Fantasizing Science: Kexue xiaoshuo 科學小說 in Early Twentieth-Century China (1902-1920)

Rui Kunze 王瑞 (University of Erlangen-Nuremberg)

Respondent: Hsiao A-chin 蕭阿勤 (Academia Sinica)

#### 2:30 p.m. Coffee break

#### 2:45 p.m. The Utopian Impulse in Modern Chinese Political Thought, 1890-1940

Peter Zarrow (University of Connecticut)

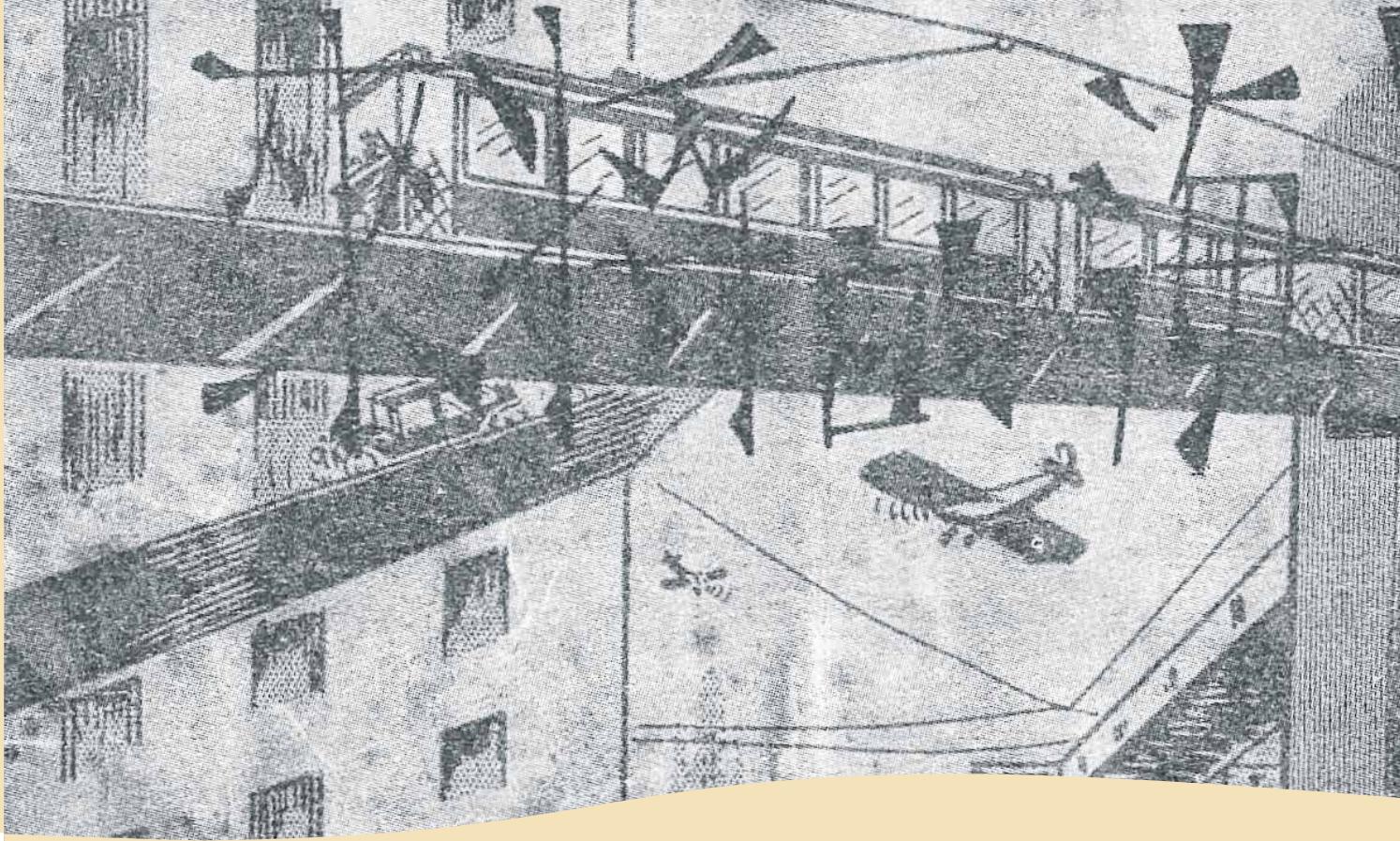
Respondent: Thomas Fröhlich (IKGF, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg)

#### 3:45 p.m. Coffee Break

#### 4:00 p.m. General presentation and discussion of the following paper: The Contingency of Culture: Westernization and Cultural Construction in the 1930s

Leigh Jenco (London School of Economics and Political Science)

#### 4:30 p.m. End



### Friday, October 24, 2014

#### 9:15 a.m. Pessimism about Progress? Reflections on Conservatism

Axel Schneider (University of Göttingen)

Respondent: Rui Kunze 王瑞 (University of Erlangen-Nuremberg)

#### 10:15 a.m. Coffee Break

#### 10:30 a.m. The Paradigmatic Form of Prospect Optimism in Modern Chinese Political Thought

Thomas Fröhlich (IKGF, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg)

Respondent: Qiang Li 李強 (Peking University)

#### 11:30 a.m. Coffee Break

#### 11:45 a.m. The Chinese Concept of "Progress"

Kai Vogelsang (University of Hamburg)

Respondent: Takahiro Nakajima 中島隆博 (University of Tokyo)

#### 12:45 p.m. Lunch break

#### 2:15 p.m. When Revolutionary Optimism Encountered Local Particularity: The 1947-49 Literary and Cultural Debate in Post-Colonial Taiwan

Hsiao A-chin 蕭阿勤 (Academia Sinica)

Respondent: Axel Schneider (University of Göttingen)

#### 3:15 p.m. Coffee Break

#### 3:30 p.m. General discussion/Roundtable

#### 4:30 p.m. End