

InAsia Day Monday 20th October

Vontilius Auditoriet, Søauditorierne

Asian Secularisms?

Both “religion” and “secularism” (or “secularity”) are concepts based on Western contexts. Asian history challenges such notions, and Asian cultures are differently affected by the realities, which the concepts describe. How does China deal with religion and secularization? Is India possible to imagine without religion and secularization? Is there a secular Buddhist ethics, how is media used in creating Tibetan Buddhist identity? How does Buddhism and violence connect, and how do young Tamil Hindus in Denmark respond to secularity? What are the political and social implications of these issues?

InAsia’s *Asia Day* will address these important questions with presentations from and discussions with international and local scholars. All are welcome to join the seminar.

10-11.30 Prasenjit Duara: *Is the Concept of Secularism Relevant to China?*

This lecture discusses why the idea of secularization seems to do so little for our understanding of modern China, even though the question of religion is an explosive one. It argues that China largely escaped the conflicts among confessional communities through much of its history. It also largely escaped the late 19th and early 20th century penetration of faith-based models of nationalism that appeared in Japan and India. But if the Chinese case escaped both these developments, it suppressed and continues to deal with another type of problem: a vertical division between state and elites versus popular religiosities.

Prasenjit Duara is Raffles Professor of Humanities and Director of the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore and Professor emeritus of the University of Chicago. He is one of the world’s leading historians of China and Asia. His new book, *The Crisis of Global Modernity. Asian Traditions and a Sustainable Future*, is forthcoming from Cambridge University Press.

11.30-13.00 Lunch break

13.00-14.00 Meera Nanda: *Is the idea of India Relevant without Secularism?*

The Constitution of India declares it to be a secular democratic republic, but the reality is that of a deeply-rooted Hindu nationalist culture. India's *secularism*, in other words, is not accompanied by *secular-ization* of the society. This lecture will examine the gap between the secular laws and the non-secular culture in contemporary India. It will argue that the forces of secularization have been weakened by the appropriation of science and the Enlightenment values for a revival – rather than a critical revaluation – of the Hindu nation and Hindu cultural mores.

Meera Nanda is a Visiting Professor at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research at Mohali, India where she teaches history of science. She is working on a new book titled *The Ancients and the Moderns: The Cultural Meaning of Science in India*.

14.00-14.30 Coffee break

14.30–16.00

Presentation of Aarhus University research projects on Religion, Secularization and Conflict in Asia:

Mikael Gravers, Associate Professor, Marianne Fibiger, Associate Professor, Cameron Warner, Associate professor and Elizabeth Williams Ørberg, Ph.D.

FUTURES

17.00-18 Prasenjit Duara : Inaugural Lecture in the Aarhus University series:
Futures:

Network Asia: Futures of the Past

Coordinators and information:

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