



**AFRASO – Goethe University, Frankfurt/Germany
Centre for Chinese Studies, Stellenbosch/South Africa**

Conference Announcement – Call for Papers

**African-Asian Encounters (II)
*Re-Thinking African-Asian Relationships:
Changing Realities – New Concepts***

**24 - 26 March 2015
Stellenbosch, South Africa**

Over the last 15 years, relations between Africans and Asians have multiplied, beginning with booming trade and increasing investments in Africa from Asia, that have been supplemented by a broad range of recently emerging social, political and cultural interactions. Globalization not only entails the rise of large-scale economic and political communities but also an historic increase in identities born of human travel and the concepts and ideas stemming from it. An intensification in market-orientated economic interests between Asia and Africa has simultaneously given birth to significant inter-regional migrations including African traders in Guangzhou and Yiwu in China, African students in Kuala Lumpur, Chinese investors across Africa, and Vietnamese contract workers in Angola. We can see the use of Chinese traditional medicine in African urban settings and can ask about implications of Chinese goods being traded. What are effects on consumption patterns in rural contexts? In some instances, regional dynamics also spill-over into transregional relations. Relations between states are re-negotiated on all political levels and in all policy fields, accompanied and simultaneously challenged by new forms of collaboration of transnational civil society networks, including in matters such as environmental protection. Additionally, alternative geographic imaginaries of community are re-activated, not least of all the Indian Ocean and the various Africa-Asia linkages it has produced. Such relationships also overlap with earlier historical patterns of Africa-Asia interaction – both real and imagined – including transmigrations such as Arabic maritime conduits and the role of colonial powers in bringing Asian labour to Africa.

While empirical systematization of these phenomena has considerably progressed over the last few years, their impact on ideas, concepts and imaginations of politics, economics and cultural developments has barely been discussed. This conference aims to identify and explore the multiplicity of ideas about societal development to which these processes have given rise. Which new ways of imagining society and societal relations have emerged? How do recent African-Asian interactions inform concepts and ideas of “community”, “development”, “diplomacy” or

“sustainability” and the like? How do interactions “on the ground” inform these larger understandings and in which ways might such interactions differ from official discourses? The latter is an important question, firstly, for the sake of filling a gap in our understanding of how experiences with respective “others” have altered worldviews (both abroad and back in domestic settings). Secondly, localized cross-cultural currents can have direct effects on other aspects of societal relations such as business, governments and regional bodies: how much power are these latter bodies able to exert in defining and determining the way of thinking about inter-actions? Overall, the conference will be interested in how complex, contested historical processes inform such relationships and how history – both in its empirical dimensions as well as imaginaries of the past – is pressed into the service of the present to blend with new representations of African-Asian interactions.

The international conference will be organized jointly by the Centre for Chinese Studies (CCS) at Stellenbosch (South Africa) and the collaborative research programme “Africa’s Asian Options” (AFRASO) based at Goethe University, Frankfurt (Germany). It is part of a series of international conferences on African-Asian Encounters that started with the conference “New Cooperations – New Dependencies?” which took place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in March 2014.

Themes

1. Localized African-Asian Communities

Small business, petty traders, migrant communities, long-term migrant communities; the role of cyberspace in the production of community; tensions with alternative discourses of community; ethnographic accounts of localized interactions.

2. Conceptions of the Other

Traditional and contemporary concepts of Africans and Asians towards each other; attitudes towards philanthropy and giving; intersections of race and gender; perceptions of the African/Asian “other” in the context of global mediascapes.

3. Re-thinking Development

Changing concepts and norms: theoretical and methodological approaches, governance and diplomacy, sustainability. The role of actors and institutions: nation-states, multi-national companies, state-owned enterprises and civil society networks.

4. Trans-Regional Imaginaries

Intersections between historical and contemporary concepts as well as cultural and political imaginaries of “Afrasia” as a transregional space; the role of literature, film, and other (electronic) media in the (re)shaping of Indian Ocean and/or “Afrasian” imaginaries.

Abstract Submissions

Papers will be allocated 20 minutes for oral presentation. Please submit a 250 to 300-word abstract and a 150 to 300-word biography *latest by 29 September 2014*. The biographical note should mention the presenter’s name and title, affiliation, country, email address, and provide information about disciplinary and professional background, research interests and relevant publications of the applicant.

Please indicate which theme your contribution falls under.

Please send your documents to: papers-stellenbosch2015@afaso.org

Important Dates

- 4 July 2014: Call for Papers
- **29 September 2014: Deadline for Abstracts**
- 1 December 2014: Notification of Acceptance
- **01 February 2015: Deadline for Presenter Registration**
- 01 March 2015: Deadline for Participant Registration
- **Conference: 24 – 26 March 2015**

Registration fees will be 100 Euro / 135 US Dollars / 1500 Rand (by bank transfer to Frankfurt University). Local students and postdocs may attend sessions for free, space permitting; registration will be needed if meals are required.

For all general inquiries please write to: stellenbosch2015@afaso.org

You will find more information on the conference soon at <http://www.sun.ac.za/ccs> and <http://www.afaso.org>