

Although folklore studies may share certain subject matters—customs, traditions and social institutions—with social/cultural anthropology, the two fields do not necessarily share the same social-scientific orientation. Even in the discipline's earliest phase of development, folklore studies was dominated by its affiliation with the humanities. In this sense, *Volkskunde* in Germany and *minsuxue* 民俗学 in China share similar experiences and encounters.

"Volkskunde sei eine Sozialwissenschaft" (Let folklore be a social science) was a slogan circulated among the folklore students and researchers of Tübingen at the beginning of the 1960s. With such a re-orientation in place, German *Volkskunde* successfully adjusted itself to be able to respond to rapid social changes in examining everyday life. In contemporary China, folklore studies' similar shift in orientation seems to have been indispensable in understanding the cultural re-arrangements that result from a confrontation with dramatic societal transformations.

This workshop offers a forum for intensive communication between German- and Chinese-language scholarship of folklore studies and social anthropology. The majority of thirteen papers presented, covering the fields of folk religion, kinship, coping with new technologies and ethnic identity, are based on empirical case studies of China. Meanwhile, German-speaking scholars will offer their comments on these papers from the perspectives of methodology and research design.

The focus questions this workshop raises are:

1. How do folklorists incorporate methodological concerns to make their own academic development compatible with the new social-scientific orientation?
2. What advantages and restrictions do the abundant historical written documents and oral literature of China have for the social anthropological analysis of contemporary society?
3. Which areas/themes emerge as promising from a successful integration of folklore and social anthropology?
4. If we are somehow able to offer clear responses to Questions 2 and 3, then we are approaching a new paradigm of studying Han-Chinese society. How can we help bridge the gap between social-anthropological literature and Chinese area studies? How can we characterize the position of social-anthropological studies of China on the international stage of general social anthropology?

**Venue:**  
**Institute of European Ethnology**  
**Mohrenstraße 41**  
**10117 Berlin**  
**Germany**

**For further information:**  
**[www.china.tu-berlin.de](http://www.china.tu-berlin.de)**

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# Doing Social Anthropology with Folklore

In Search of a  
New Paradigm for  
Studies of  
Han-Chinese Society

**Keynote Speaker:**  
**Prof. em. Dr. Hermann Bausinger**

**International Workshop**  
**July 9-11, 2009**

## July 9 (Thursday)

- 14:00 Welcome: Wolfgang Kaschuba and Eva Sternfeld
- 14:15 Introduction: Wu Xiujie and Chen Yongchao
- 14:30 Keynote speech: Hermann Bausinger
- 15:30 *Coffee break*
- 16:00 **Constructing kinship and beyond through narratives (1)**  
Zhao Shiyu (Beijing Normal University):  
„How Can Images Be Historical Evidence? - A Historico-Anthropological Study of a Stone Painting in the Tuzhu Temple, Chuxiong, Yunnan“, Discussant (D): David Sabean
- Bai Lanling (Communication University of China, Beijing):  
„Descriptions of Family Life in Feng Menglong's Popular Novels (1574-1646)“, D: Brigitte Steger
- 18:30 *Dinner*

## July 10 (Friday)

- 9:15 **Constructing kinship and beyond through narratives (2)**  
Wu Xiujie (Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/Saale, Germany):  
„To trust or not to trust strangers? Social support among strangers reflected in the folk narratives of North China“, D: David Sabean
- 10:15 *Coffee break*
- 10:30 **Highlighting Folk Traditions: Exploring or Exploiting?**  
Yang Lihui (Beijing Normal University):  
„Displaying Chinese Folklore to the World: 2008 Olympic Games and the Re-continuing and Reconstruction of Folk Traditions in Gaobeidian Village“, D: Wolfgang Kaschuba
- An Deming (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing):  
„Negotiating Authority and Resources: The Interaction among Villagers in Reconstructing Popular Religion in Jieting Village“, D: Hans Peter Hahn

## July 10 (Friday, cont.)

- 12:30 *Lunch break*
- 14:30 **Folk Religions in Transition (1)**  
Philip Clart (University of Leipzig, Germany):  
„Conceptualizations of ‚Popular Religion‘ in Recent Research in the People's Republic of China“, D: Ildiko Beller-Hann
- 15:30 *Coffee break*
- 16:00 **Folk Religions in Transition (2)**  
Ye Tao (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing):  
„Civil Discourse and Political Practices: Tracing a Folk Religious Association *longpaihui* in the Last Two Decades“, D: Jacob Eyferth
- Chen Yongchao (Peking University):  
„Folk Legend and Its Dynamics: A Case Study of Oral Narratives and Worship of Ancient Holy Figures in Hongtong, Shanxi“, D: Ulrich Marzolph
- 19:00 *Dinner*

## July 11 (Saturday)

- 9:15 **Articulating identity (1)**  
Maja Veselic (University in Ljubljana, Slovenia):  
„*Huizu*, *Huimin* or Muslim? - The Shifting Identities of Hui Youth in Northwest China“, D: Eva Sternfeld
- 10:15 *Coffee break*
- 10:30 **Articulating identity (2)**  
Peng Mu (Beijing Normal University):  
„*Jianghu*, Masters, and Apprenticeship: Embodiment and Esoteric Knowledge in Rural Hunan“, D: Ildiko Beller-Hann
- Shi Aidong (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing):  
„Contextualizing a Goddess Story in Human Experience: Madam Xian as Orally Transmitted and Literary Inscribed“, D: Ulrich Marzolph
- 12:30 *Lunch break*

## July 11 (Saturday, cont.)

- 14:00 **When folk meets technologies**  
Chen Peng\* (Tsinghua University, Beijing):  
„Information Technology as Social Recognition and Cultural Expression – A Case Study of Using Mobile Phones among Current Rural Residents“, D: Hans Peter Hahn
- Mareile Flitsch (Ethnographic Museum of the University of Zurich, Switzerland):  
„How Do People in the North-east Dwell? - 20th Century Rural Han-Chinese Everyday Material Culture between Local Gazetteer, Folk Literature and the Archive of Disappearing Practical Knowledge“, D: Brigitte Steger
- 16:00 *Coffee break*
- 16:15 Concluding discussion (Guest Chair: Nathan Light)
- 17:00 *End*

### Keynote Speaker

Hermann Bausinger (Emeritus Professor, Ludwig-Uhland-Institute for Empirical Culture Studies, University of Tübingen)

### Discussants

Ildikó Bellér-Hann (Martin-Luther-University of Halle-Wittenberg, Germany)  
Jacob Eyferth (University of Chicago)  
Hans Peter Hahn (Goethe University of Frankfurt am Main, Germany)  
Wolfgang Kaschuba (Humboldt University, Berlin)  
Nathan Light (Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/Saale, Germany)  
Ulrich Marzolph (Georg-August University of Göttingen, Germany)  
David Sabean (University of California, Los Angeles)  
Brigitte Steger (Cambridge University)  
Eva Sternfeld (Technische Universität Berlin)

\* The authors of the paper are Guo Yuhua, Chen Peng and the research team on „Peasant and Information Technology“, Dept. of Sociology, Tsinghua University.