

Beyond the

18 _____ 22 July 2016

City

Göttingen
SPIRIT
Summer
school

Limits:

Rethinking **NEW**

Religiosities



in **Asia**

jointly organised by

Centre for Modern East Asian Studies

Centre for Modern Indian Studies

Göttingen Institute for Social and

Cultural Anthropology

summer school göttingen

SPiRiT 2016 18 ——— 22 July



Kulturwissenschaftliches Zentrum
Georg-August-Universität Göttingen

Beyond the *City Limits*: **Rehinking** *new* *Religiosities* in **Asia**

With the rapid urbanization across Asia, with new cityscapes, glittering skyscrapers, shopping malls, globalized forms of consumption it is easy to assume that cities are the primary sites for the production of the new. Indeed, urbanity is often used as a synonym for modernity and Asian futures would appear to be increasingly urban. The study of religion is no exception, and emergent trends, practices and movements are often implicitly or explicitly connected with the city. For example, new religious movements are commonly treated as distinctly urban phenomena that reflect middle class sensibilities and subjectivities, concerns and consumption patterns. Moreover, the rise of new religious forms is often understood as coming at the expense of the rural, as when village mediumship

practices are seen to give way to urban spirit cults, or when so-called "forest monasteries" in Thailand increasingly find themselves in urban or peri-urban zones.

But if cities are the future, is the country then the past? Does the focus on cities as sites of "the new" ignore the complex ways rural contexts, settings and imaginaries are implicated and contribute to contemporary religious practice? And to what extent does the notion of "urban religion" implicitly depend on its "others"? Does it reproduce the urban/rural distinction as one of the "great divides" (Latour 1993) that have been central to the experience of modernity? In truth, it is increasingly difficult to sustain sharp distinctions between rural and urban. Across Asia, increased mobility especially patterns of rural/urban migration and the spread of communications and transport technologies connect urban and rural settings like never before improved education rates have seen the rise of an increasingly sophisticated, cosmopolitan and politically engaged rural population. Yet nationalist constructions of identity and modernizing discourses across Asia have at once denigrated the rural, "the peasantry", as backwards and in need of "development" while at the same time valorizing them as embodying traditional values and the essence of national identities. Religion is similarly implicated in such discourses, at times standing for the "other"

of modernity, at others functioning as the locus of ethnic or national identities.

Yet so-called urban and rural religious practices do not constitute two opposed spheres of activity but are interconnected in various ways. Indeed, it is frequently the very notion of an opposition between city and country that facilitates interactions and networks that traverse urban and rural contexts. For example, urban religious institutions may recruit ritual specialists from the countryside because they are seen to have retained "correct" knowledge and techniques that urban practitioners have lost (Davis 2016), or city dwellers may see rural settings as sites of spiritual potential and seek out sites of pilgrimage, of refuge or retreat.

This Summer School takes up these issues and asks how the study of contemporary religious life in Asia can benefit from "thinking beyond the city", whether "the city" is understood as a spatial entity, a site of enquiry, or as an analytical category. It will call into question many of the assumptions that go along with the study of urban religiosity and will attempt to bring "the urban" explicitly into relationship with its various "others" - such as the "rural", "hinterland", "periphery", or "village". Central questions include: How do patterns of pilgrimage, travel and tourism, or the circulation of religious symbols or objects connect "urban" and "rural"? How do

religious networks and practices help particular actors - such as rural/urban migrants - to negotiate tensions between their rural and urban lives? How do notions of nostalgia and pastness figure in projects of urban religio-spiritual renewal? How do dialectics of religion, secularity and rationality play out in rural/urban spaces? And to what extent does the notion of an urban/rural divide itself inform religious practices and imaginaries? A final avenue of questioning focuses on the hierarchization of city and country and the relative superiority and agency attributed to the former. Just as postcolonial and critical theory have challenged discourses that contrast a dynamic and active occident with a relatively static, passive orient, the Summer School will critically examine the manner in which similar distinctions between city and country have inflected the study of religion in Asia. It will ask how "provincializing" the city can lead to new insights and approaches that can reveal blindspots and draw attention to power differentials in Asian societies. The purpose would be to challenge the processes of othering that assign a relatively passive or reactive role for the countryside and to instead draw attention to the agency of rural actors, to alternative imaginaries of the future, and to ask what role religion plays in specifically rural modernities.



SUNDAY 17th July | 20:00

Welcome & Information

L'Osteria



Haunted Infrastructures *Ghostly Encounters* with the City

Prof. Christina Schwenkel, UC Riverside

This session will explore “the uncanny” in urban environments through two lines of thought: firstly, how the specter of the socialist past continues to haunt the capitalist present (this will be based on the Ngo reading and my own work), and secondly, how the failed promise of capitalist progress (seen in abandoned infrastructure) likewise haunts the present (Johnson). Both of these contemporary spiritscapes will be situated in relation to historical encounters with spirits as a response to and in the wake of colonial modernization (Drake).

Readings

Drake, Richard Allen (1989) Construction Sacrifice and Kidnapping Rumor Panics in Borneo. *Oceania* 59(4): 269-279.

Johnson, Andrew Alan (2013) Progress and its Ruins: Ghosts, Migrants, and the Uncanny in Thailand. *Cultural Anthropology* 28(2): 299-319.

Tam, Ngo (2015) “Dealing with the Dragon: Urban Planning in Hanoi.” In: Peter van der Veer (ed.), *Handbook of Religion and the Asian City: Aspirations and Urbanization in the Twenty-first Century*; pp. 186-200. Berkeley: University of California Press.

MONDAY 18th July

08:30 Registration
Kulturwissenschaftliches Zentrum

09:00 Opening

09:30 Poster Session

11:30 Haunted Infrastructures
Lecture
Prof. Christina Schwenkel

12:30 Lunch

14:00 Haunted Infrastructures
Working Groups

15:30 Haunted Infrastructures
Plenum

16:30 City tour

19:00 What is Wrong With Urban
Anthropology? Asian and
European Refractions of a
Troubled Subfield
Michael Herzfeld

Public Keynote Lecture
Institute of Social and
Cultural Anthropology

Public Keynote Lecture

WHAT IS *WRONG* WITH URBAN ANTHROPOLOGY?

**Asian and
European
Refractions
of a Troubled
Subfield**

Monday 18.July | 19:00 | Lecture Room
Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology

MICHAEL HERZFELD

Ernest E. Monrad Professor of the Social Sciences
Harvard University

The speaker will question the validity of the category of "urban anthropology." Drawing on his own fieldwork in Rome and Bangkok in particular, and also on the work of such writers as Arjun Appadurai, Renée Hirschon, and Peter van der Veer, he will show that concepts of urbanity are ramified in the countryside, where they have considerable ideological force, while at the same time the realities of rural origins complicate descriptions of urban populations. On this basis, he will suggest that, in respect of religious practices in particular, a more comprehensive framework is required to make sense of the huge variety of ethnographic cases at our disposal.



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Spatializing Religion in the City

Ursula Rao

The workshop will consider the way body-human-divine/spirit links create particular kinds of urban geographies. We will consider how the city as an embodied space is created through making the sacred present, transparent or obvious. The aim is to make students rethink their material by thinking religious space through the body. How do religious activities permit the non-bodied spirits to become embodied in urban space (for everyone to know, feel, see).

Readings

Comaroff, John (2007) Ghostly Topographies. Landscape and Biopower in Modern Singapore. *Cultural Geographies* 14: 56-73.

Müller, Martin (2015) Assemblages and Actor-Networks: Rethinking Socio-material Power, Politics and Space. *Geography Compass* 9(1): 27-41.

Parkin, David (1992) Ritual as Spatial Direction and Bodily Division. *Understanding Rituals*. In: Daniel de Coppet (ed.) "Understanding Rituals"; pp. 11-25. London: Routledge.

TUESDAY 19th July

09:30 **The City and Its Others**
Panel Discussion

11:00 **Coffe break**

11:30 **Spatializing Religion
in the City**
Lecture by Ursula Rao

12:30 **Lunch**

14:00 **Spatializing Religion
in the City**
Working groups

15:00 **Spatializing Religion
in the City**
Plenum

16:00 **Break**

18:00 **Dissertation Writing
Workshop**
Michael Herzfeld
CeMIS Board Room

WEDNESDAY 20th July
morning

09:00 **Cities in Motion**
Lecture by Julia Huang

10:00 **Cities in Motion**
Working Groups

11:00 **Coffee break**

11:30 **Cities in Motion**
Plenum

12:30 **Lunch**

Cities in *Motion*: Religious Cartography and Trust Networks

Julia Huang

How do we look at the life of the city beyond the city limit? Cities are hubs and nodes of religious networks through a double process of outward flows of people and goods to religious sites and inward flows of new religious practices and ideas. Drawing from my ethnography, I will suggest two approaches to this question. The first is religious cartography. A religious cartography illustrates a geographical relationship of power that may not resemble that of socio-economic and political cartography. The second approach is trust networks among cities. Religious networks of the city may facilitate the local development of translocal and transnational movements, and forge new religion-based networks that connect the city and beyond.

Readings

Huang, C. Julia (2013) "Buddhism and its Trust Networks between Taiwan, Malaysia, and the United States." *The Eastern Buddhist* 44(2): 59-76.

Kitiarsa, Pattana (2010) "Buddha-Izing a Global City-State: Transnational Religious Mobilities, Spiritual Marketplace, and Thai Migrant Monks in Singapore". *Mobilities* 5(2): 257–275.

Religion, Place and *Mobility*

Radhika Gupta

This session will explore how religious identity is shaped by forms of mobility (both physical and experiential). In the first case of physical mobility I will discuss Magnus Marsden's article: 'A Tour Not so Grand: Mobile Muslims in Northern Pakistan', *JRAI*, Vol. 15, pp. 57-75. This article offers a case study of rural Muslims and proposes the idea of 'local cosmopolitanism', derived from regional mobility. This will challenge the association of cosmopolitanism with urban life.

Readings

Marsden, Marcus (2009) "A Tour Not so Grand: Mobile Muslims in Northern Pakistan", *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15: 57-75.

WEDNESDAY 20th July
afternoon

14:00 **Religion, Place, Mobility**
Lecture by Radhika Gupta

15:00 **Coffee break**

15:15 **Chalo Hamara Des**
Film

17:00 **Religion, Place, Mobility**
Plenum

19:00 **Summer School Dinner**
Chichon Bistro

THURSDAY 21st July

- 09:00** **Tracing Ordinary Religiosity in the Urban Landscape**
Lecture by Michael Herzfeld
- 10:00** **Tracing Ordinary Religiosity**
Working groups
- 11:00** **Coffee break**
- 11:30** **Tracing Ordinary Religiosity**
Plenum
- 12:30** **Lunch**
- 14:00** **Peripathetic Seminar**
- 15:30** **Visit to Synagogue**
- 17:00** **Grant Writing Workshop**
Ursula Rao
CeMIS Board Room

Tracing *Ordinary* Religiosity in the Urban Landscape

Michael Herzfeld

This session will be devoted to a very practical question: how do we trace the significance and passage of religiosity in urban context, especially when they either conflict with doctrinal ideas or occur in a context in which religion itself is seen as outmoded or even simply wrong? What kind of questions can we ask, and what sorts of interpretations are possible? Is there anything distinctive about urban religious practices and how do we estimate that in the course of our field research?

Readings

- Appadurai, Arjun (2016) Comments on van der Veer's Paper on "The Future of Utopia". *History and Anthropology* 27 (3):263-264.
- Herzfeld, Michael (2015) Practical Piety: Intimate Devotions in Urban Space. *Journal of Religious and Political Practice* 1 (1): 22-38.
- (2016) The Intimate Solidarities of Religion in the City. *History and Anthropology* 27 (3): 265-272.
- Hingley, Liz, Benoît Vermander & Liang Zhang (2015) (re)locating Sacredness in Shanghai. *Social Compass* 63 (1): 38-65.
- van der Veer, Peter (2016) The Future of Utopia. *History and Anthropology* 27 (3): 251-262.



FRIDAY 22nd July

- 09:30** **Working groups**
- 11:00** **Coffee break**
- 11:30** **Wrap-up**
Ursula Rao and working
groups
- 13:00** **Lunch**
- 14:30** **Feedback and Outlook**

Beyond the
Printed
programme

LECTURERS

Radhika Gupta obtained a DPhil in Anthropology from Oxford University in 2011. She was subsequently a post-doctoral research fellow at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity. Since October 2013 she is a research fellow at CeMIS. Her doctoral dissertation, titled, 'Piety, Politics and Patriotism in Kargil, India' focused on issues of regional identity, nationalism and Islam among Shi'a Muslims living on India's contentious border with Pakistan. She is converting the dissertation into a book manuscript whilst continuing post-doctoral research on Muslim urban religiosity in Mumbai that was initiated while at the Max Planck Institute. Her research interests include the anthropology of religion, cities, post-colonial politics and the study of the Himalayas. Radhika has also worked for several years in international development on issues of minority rights, indigenous peoples and natural resources management in India and Nepal.

Michael Herzfeld is Ernest E. Monrad Professor of the Social Sciences in the Department of Anthropology at Harvard University, where has taught since 1991. He is also IAS Visiting Professor of Critical Heritage Studies at the University of Leiden (and Senior Advisor to the Critical Heritage Studies Initiative of the International Institute for Asian Studies, Leiden); Professorial Fellow at the University of Melbourne; and Visiting Professor and Chang Jiang (Yangtze River) Scholar at Shanghai International Studies University (2015-17). The author of eleven books -- including *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State* (1997; 3rd edition, 2016), *The Body Impolitic: Artisans and Artifice in the Global Hierarchy of Value* (2004), *Evicted from Eternity: The Restructuring of Modern Rome* (2009), and *Siege of the Spirits: Community and Polity in Bangkok* (2016) -- and numerous articles and reviews, he has also produced two ethnographic films (*Monti Moments* [2007] and *Roman Restaurant Rhythms* [2011]). He served as editor of *American Ethnologist* from 1995 through 1998. An advocate for "engaged anthropology," he has conducted research in Greece, Italy, and Thailand on gender and reciprocity, the social impact of historic conservation and gentrification, crypto-colonialism, nationalism and bureaucracy, and the ethnography of knowledge among artisans and intellectuals.

Julia Huang is a Professor of Anthropology at National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan. Huang's specialty includes religion, globalization, and gender. She has done extensive fieldwork in Taiwan, Malaysia, the United States, and shorter periods of research in Singapore, Vietnam, Japan, and China. Huang has published articles in the *Journal of Asian Studies*, *Ethnology*, *Positions*, *Nova Religio*, the *Eastern Buddhist*, and the *European Journal for East Asian Studies*. Her first book, *Charisma and Compassion: Cheng Yen and the Buddhist Tzu Chi Movement* (Harvard University Press, 2009) focuses on a lay Buddhist movement that began as a tiny group in Taiwan and grew into an organization with ten million membership worldwide. Recently Huang completed a book manuscript, *The Social Life of Goodness: Religious Philanthropy in Chinese Societies* (co-authored with Robert P. Weller and Keping Wu). The book examines religious contributions to social welfare in China, Taiwan, and Malaysia. She is currently working on a project on Buddhism and cadaver donations for medical purpose.

Ursula Rao is an urban anthropologist researching in India. The central focus of her work is changing power relations in rapidly globalising cities, with regards to three different topics: (1) the interaction between urban poor and state agencies in a landscape of shifting ideologies of urbanity and social security; (2) the changing role of news media for shaping urban politics; (3) The role of religious institutions and ritual performances for renegotiating social relations. Her current work focusses on e-governance and biometric technology. Before joining the University of Leipzig Ursula Rao held academic positions at the University of Heidelberg (1999-2002), the University of Halle (2002-2006) and the University of New South Wales, Sydney (2007-2012).

Christina Schwenkel's research focuses on transnationalism, historical memory, aesthetics and visual culture in Vietnam. In her first project, she conducted multisited ethnographic fieldwork in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City on transnational practices of memory, representations of war and suffering, and the politics of postwar reconciliation at museums, war monuments, art and photography exhibits, and tourist sites. She has written on Vietnamese war photographers, competing notions of torture and human rights, and sites of trauma tourism. Her book, *The American War in Contemporary Vietnam: Transnational Remembrance and Representation* (Indiana University Press 2009), looks at encounters between conflicting U.S. and Vietnamese recollections and representations of the war, and attempts to define and maintain particular visions of historical truth, knowledge and objectivity.

Professor Schwenkel's current work examines the legacies of socialist humanitarian practices and transnational mobilities between Vietnam and former East Germany, in particular, Vietnamese contract labor programs in German factories and East German architectural/urban planning projects in Vietnam. In 2010-2011, Professor Schwenkel conducted historical and ethnographic research in Vinh City, Vietnam on postwar socialist urbanization and postsocialist/neoliberal urban renewal. Funded by Fulbright-Hays, ACLS, and the UC Pacific Rim Research Program, Schwenkel traced shifts in the aesthetic, cultural and affective meanings and value of East German-built public housing, from its postwar construction as a model socialist community to its privatization and impending demolition under new forms of urban governance and new market economic initiatives.

PARTICIPANTS

Working Group I

Christina Schwenkel

HAUNTED INFRASTRUCTURES: GHOSTLY ENCOUNTERS WITH THE CITY

Non Arkaraprasertkul

Harvard University, Cambridge

Locating Shanghai: Globalization, Heritage Industry, and the Political Economy of Urban Space

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Siti Hazariah McGill University, Montreal

Betwixt and Between: Social Marginalization and Ritual Specialization in Contemporary Singapore

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Pushkal Shivam

Indian Institute of Technology, Madras

Infrastructure's Spaces: Practices and Imaginations of Territory

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Working Group II

Ursula Rao

SPATIALIZING RELIGION IN THE CITY

Aditi Mukherjee

Leiden Institute for Area Studies

Lived-space, Segregation and Identity in a Post-colonial Metropolis: Refugee Settlements in Suburban Calcutta

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Dannah Dennis

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Re-Imagining the Nation: Citizens in the New Nepal

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Maggie Paul

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Political Subjectivity, Slums and Urbanization in Mumbai: A Problematization of Methodological Assumptions

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Fan Tsang Kings College London

The Real and the Textual: (De)theorizing Bodies of Chinese Educated Youth Writers Represented in Fictional Works Between 1976 and 1989

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Working Group III

Julia Huang

CITIES IN MOTION: RELIGIOUS CARTOGRAPHY AND TRUST NETWORKS

Mark Joseph Calano, Ateneo de Manila University

Urban Realities and Rural Sensibilities in the Devotion to the Black Nazarene

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Cambodian Diasporic Religiosities

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Bram Colijn Free University Amsterdam

Interwoven. Hetero-religious Households in Contemporary China

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Working Group IV

Radhika Gupta

RELIGION, PLACE AND
MOBILITY

Heba Ahmed JNU, Delhi

**In Search of Wali: Oral History among Dargahs in
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Anuj Choudhury

Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

**Sanskritization among the Koches of India: A Cul-
tural-Political Process**

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Durgesh Solanki

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**Cast(e)ing Life: The Experience of Living in Periph-
eral Caste Quarters**

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Kranthi Kumar

Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, Mumbai

**Invoking Religion and Religiosities in the Making
of the New Capital City of Amravati**

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Working Group V

Michael Herzfeld

TRACING ORDINARY RELIGIOSITY IN
THE URBAN LANDSCAPE

Friederike Trofier University of Frankfurt

**City Promotion in Decentralized Indonesia: Palembang's
New Image as a 'Sport City'**

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Sarah Kelman University of California, Santa Cruz

**Walking the Sufi Path: Ethical Entanglements in
Entrepreneurial Malaysia**

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Nurseem Aksay Free University, Berlin

**Reconstructing Islam, Class, and Gender: The
Discursive Emergence of the "Islamic Bourgeoisie"
and Middle Class Veiled Muslim Women in Istanbul**

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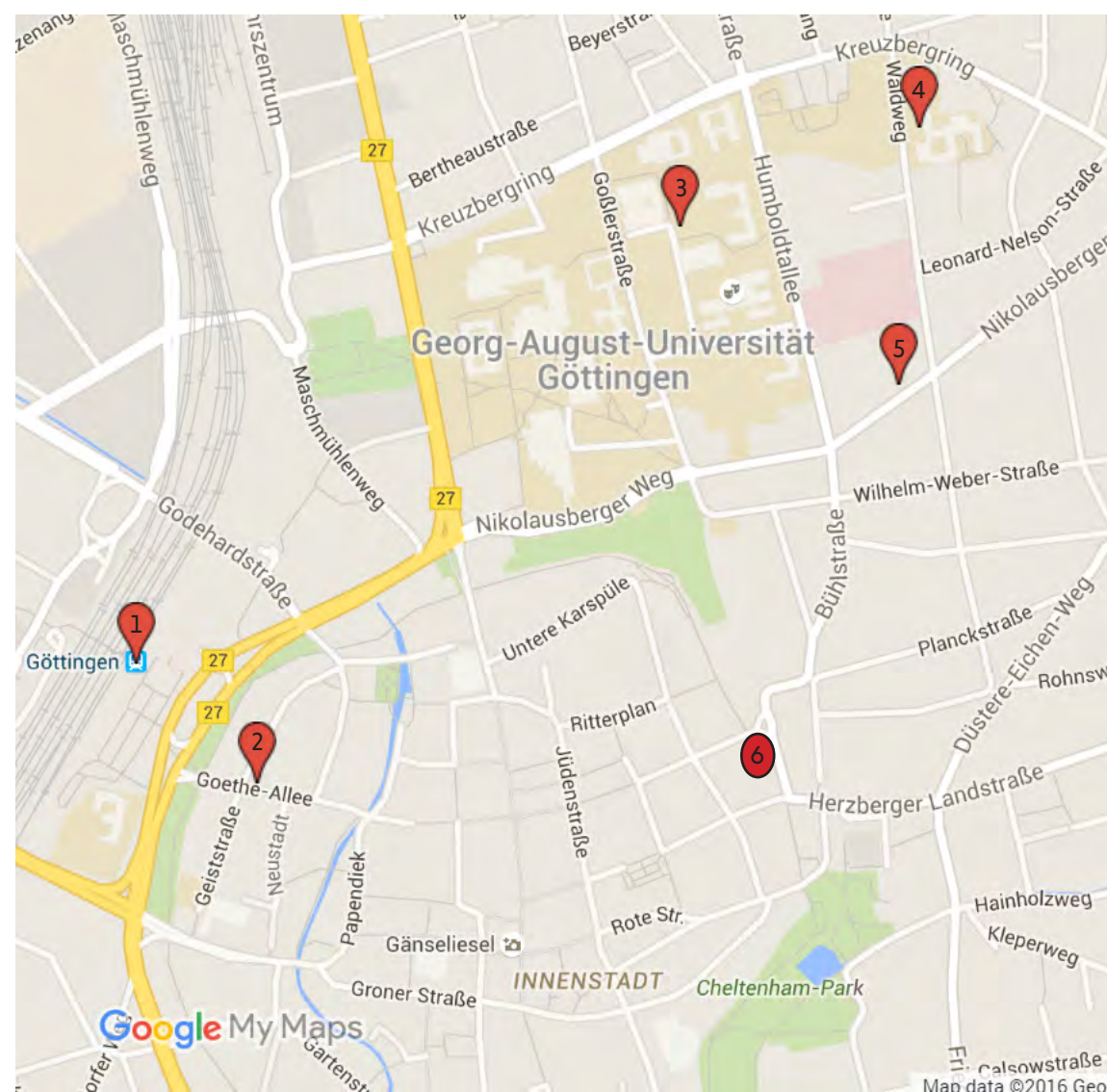
SI Dingnan CeMIS, University of Göttingen

**Trade and Artisan in the Process of Urbanization in
Pune from 1770s to 1930s**

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- 1 Göttingen Main Station
- 2 ACCOMMODAHON FOR SPEAKERS
Hotel Stadt Hannover
Goethe-Allee 21, 37073 Göttingen
- 3 SUMMER SCHOOL VENUE
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Heinrich-Düker-Weg, 37073 Göttingen
- 4 Centre for Modern Indian Studies (CeMIS)
Waldweg 26, 37073 Göttingen
- 5 CICHON Weinbar & Bistro
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- 6 Institut of Social and Cultural Anthropology
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