

Cosmology in a Living World: Knowledge Regarding Environment and Life in Late Imperial China

An introductory workshop by the Max Planck Partner Group “Daily Practices of Cosmological Knowledge in Late Imperial China (1368–1911),” a collaboration with the University of Chinese Academy of Sciences

October 28, 2024

9:30–16:00 CET | 16:30–23:00 BJT

Harnack House, Conference Venue of the Max Planck Society, Ihnstraße 16–20, 14195 Berlin, Germany

This workshop introduces a Max Planck Partner Group at the University of Chinese Academy of Sciences titled “Daily Practices of Cosmological Knowledge in Late Imperial China (1368–1911).” The historical study of cosmology shares key themes with modern science, particularly the ongoing dialogue between abstract theory and practical application, both of which are crucial for understanding the natural world. Investigating the integration of cosmology into technological practices highlights how human survival and adaptation have always depended on knowledge of the environment and the universe. It marks the beginning of an exploration into how imperial cosmology was shaped by regional geography, culture, and technical processes in the Ming-Qing period, focusing on the complex interplay between universal theories and local practices.

SCHEDULE

20 minutes for each speaker, 5 minutes for each discussant, and 15 minutes for open questions.

09:30–10:00 CET | 16:30–17:00 BJT

Opening Remarks

Dagmar Schäfer

MPIWG

Shih-Pei Chen

MPIWG

Mengmeng Sun

UCAS/MPIWG

10:00–11:20 CET | 17:00–18:20 BJT

Session 1 (Virtual presentations) Chair: Mengmeng Sun

- Shenmi Song Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine
Misfortune: The Writing and Interpretation of Birth Difficulties in Genethliacal Astrology during the Ming and Qing dynasties
Discussant: Michael Lackner FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg
- Che Jiang Tsinghua University
Myriad Things of One Commoner: Shen Maoguan’s Compilation of Natural History in late Ming China
Discussant: Cynthia Brokaw Brown University/MPIWG

11:20–11:40 CET | 18:20–18:40 BJT

Coffee Break

11:40–13:00 CET | 18:40–20:00 BJT

Session 2 Chair: Jiajing Zhang

UCAS/MPIWG

- Mengmeng Sun
Visualizing Correlative Cosmology: Illustrations (*Tu*) of the seasons in Late Imperial China
Discussant: Andrea Bréard FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg
- Shih-Pei Chen
Tracing the Origins of Recording Disasters in Local Gazetteers: Cosmology versus Experience
Discussant: Chun Xu Heidelberg University

13:00–14:30 CET | 20:00–21:30 BJT

Lunch Break

14:30–15:50 CET | 21:30–22:50 BJT

Session 3 Chair: Shih-Pei Chen

- Jiajing Zhang
Daily Cartography during the Cosmological Transformation in Late Imperial China
Discussant: Ping-Yi Chu Academia Sinica
- Bichen Yan Tsinghua University
Western Mineral Theory in late Ming China: Mineral Genesis in a Hybrid Cosmology
Discussant: Ping-Yi Chu

15:50–16:00 CET | 22:50–23:00 BJT

Closing Remarks



中国科学院
CHINESE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

1974–2024
50
YEARS



50 years of cooperation between the Max Planck Society and the Chinese Academy of Sciences