

Title: The Tomb of Master Pu and the “Miscellaneous Record of the Western Mountain”

Speaker : Dr. phil habil Johannes Kurz (UBD)

Abstract:

In 1972 a tombstone was discovered in a local cemetery that in the same year was examined by Wolfgang Franke and his colleague Ch'en T'eieh-fan. They translated the inscription of the tombstone and found it to belong to a Master Pu who hailed from Quanzhou in Fujian and who died in 1264. Franke concluded that Master Pu was a Muslim from Quanzhou who had served as an envoy to Brunei. The Muslim affiliation originated in the long-held belief that anyone with the surname Pu from Quanzhou had to be a Muslim, since the most important Pu, Pu Shougen, had been allegedly a Muslim too. Franke furthermore assumed that the tombstone belonged to a tomb of Master Pu in Brunei. In the early 1990s a text appeared that purportedly was written by Cai Yongjian (1776-1835). This text, the Xishan zazhi only existed in a number of handwritten copies, had never been seen nor mentioned before, and only had partially survived the centuries. Astonishingly the Xishan zazhi contained not only information on Master Pu himself, but also about his family, the famous Quanzhou boat of 1273, and rock carvings by the She people. In the present paper I am examining the probability of Master Pu having travelled to Borneo as well as him receiving a burial there. In addition, I will critically discuss the Xishan zazhi as a potential fake and present it as a means to enhance the status of Quanzhou as not only the eastern end of maritime silk road, but also as a major trading hub since the tenth century.

Bio:

Johannes L. Kurz received his Dr.phil. in Classical Chinese Studies (major), Modern Chinese Studies (1. minor), and History of Far Eastern Arts (2. minor) from the University of Heidelberg, Germany, in 1993. After working as a librarian and temporary lecturer at the Institute of Chinese Studies as well as the Institute of Art History, he started working as an assistant professor at the Department of Chinese Studies, Institute of Oriental Studies, University of Kiel in 1995. Since 1998 he works in the History Department/Historical Studies Programme, FASS, Universiti Brunei Darussalam. In 2002 he was awarded the degree of Dr.phil.habil. for Chinese Studies (Habilitation; certification as full professor) by the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Kiel .

His main research interests are on the history of the Five Dynasties and Ten States period with a focus on the Southern Tang dynasty (937-976), as well as the intellectual-political-historiographical topics in the early Northern Song dynasty (960-1022). He so far has published two books, namely *China's Southern Tang Dynasty, 937-976* (Routledge, 2011) and *Song Taizongs Kompilationsprojekt (reg. 976-997)* (Lang, 2003). A third one on the structure, collection practices, and organization of the Northern Song imperial library is in preparation.