

## **How to read China**

VENUE: Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, University of Tokyo,  
7-3-1 Hongo, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113-0033

DATE & TIME: April 3, 2 pm to 5 pm

GAS, Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia  
German Institute for Japanese Studies, Max Weber Foundation

### Venue:

First Conference Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, IASA building

### Participants:

Hans van Ess (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München: sinology)

Mats Lennart Harborn (Traton China Group)

Franz Waldenberger (DIJ: economics)

Torsten Weber (DIJ: history)

Dolf Neuhaus (DIJ: Japan-Korea relations)

David Malitz (DIJ: Japan-Thailand relations)

Christian Oberländer (University of Halle Wittenberg, Japanese Studies)

Harald Kümmerle (DIJ, History of Science, Digital Humanities)

Sonoda Shigeto (Univ. of Tokyo: sociology)

Marukawa Tomoo (Univ. of Tokyo: economics)

Li Hao (Univ. of Tokyo: political science)

Pattajit Tansinmunkong (Univ. of Tokyo: history)

Shimazu Naoko (Univ. of Tokyo, history)

The impressive rise of China has had a major impact on the world economy in terms of the level and the structure of trade and investment flows. There has been a strong belief or hope that China's economic development and its increasing integration into the world economy, would also spur political reforms at home towards a more inclusive and democratic society. Privatization of state companies, burgeoning entrepreneurship and the opening up of the Communist Party to entrepreneurs pointed in that direction. However, recent trends seem to refute these expectations. Under Xi Jinping's leadership, the Communist Party has redefined its ideological stance propagated as socialism with Chinese characteristics, strengthened regulations towards state surveillance, upgraded its military power, and moved away from the original "one country, two systems" approach on Hong Kong while upholding its claims against Taiwan. Internationally, supported by extensive infrastructure initiatives, it is positioning itself as new global power, a leader of the Global South and a challenger of US hegemony. At the same time, China also faces many issues at home, such as regional disparities, widening income gaps, environmental pollution, climate change, demographic change and a real estate bubble. The strong centralization of power does by itself neither ensure a monolithic structure

nor political stability or immunity against popular discontent, as China's history demonstrates. There are tensions between the military and the Party, among regions and the regions and the center.

Given China's undisputable economic and geopolitical importance, it is essential to understand, in which direction the country is moving both politically as well as economically and what this implies for its international relations. Naturally, there will not be one answer to these questions, but many. They will depend not only on the depth of our knowledge about China, but also from where – both geographically and ideologically – we look at China. With this in mind, it is important that we listen to experts with diverse backgrounds. Therefore, this workshop brings together European, Japanese, and Chinese experts with backgrounds in business, academia and/or media to discuss and weigh diverse experiences and viewpoints.

Participation will be on invitation only. Chatham House rules apply. Any report about the outcomes of the workshop will need to be authorized by the speakers.