

## NEW ISSUES IN CHINESE GRAMMAR: THE MORPHO-SYNTAX OF THE ASPECTUAL SYSTEM IN LATE ARCHAIC CHINESE 漢語語法新問題。古代漢語體貌系統的形態語法

**Date: 19 June 2015 (Friday)**

**Time: 10:30 a.m. – 12 noon**

**Venue: Room GH803, 8/Floor, GH Core, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University**



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### Abstract

In my presentation the morpho-syntax of the category aspect in Ancient Chinese is at issue; i.e. the morphological marking of different verbal categories by affixation assumed in the literature will be investigated from a syntactic perspective. There is general agreement that a morphological system existed which affected verbal categories, including the category aspect in the Ancient Chinese language. Usually this system is assumed to concern the imperfective-perfective alternation which belongs to the category of grammatical aspect, but in this discussion it will be hypothesized that it rather concerns the situation type or Aktionsart of the verb, i.e. the lexical aspect, to the effect that activities, accomplishments, and achievements on the one hand, and the states resulting from them on the other may have been distinguished by affixation, i.e. by prefixes and suffixes. However, many questions with regard to the extent and the productivity of this morphological system remain still open for debate. One important question would be whether the employment of the assumed aspectual affixes was constrained by the semantics of the verbs they could combine with, and how productive this system in fact was.

### About the Speaker

**Meisterernst, Barbara** is a research fellow at the Humboldt University Berlin, an associate member of the Centre de Recherches Linguistiques sur l'Asie Orientale (CRLAO) and the Centre of Buddhist studies at Gent University. She teaches Classical Chinese, Chinese linguistics, Buddhist Chinese, History of Grammar, and Silk Road Studies. She is the author of two books on the grammar of Classical Chinese, co-editor of a book on Chinese linguistics, and author of a number of articles on diachronic studies of the semantics and the syntax of Chinese, on Buddhist Chinese, and on comparative studies of Buddhist translation texts. Her most recent book is *Tense and Aspect in Han Period Chinese: A Linguistic Study of the Shǐjì* (2015).