A proposal for a Workshop  
**Cultural Values and Language Behaviour: Focus on Asia**  

This workshop aims to explore the “cultural logic” of linguistic pragmatics in Asian (especially East and Southeast Asian) languages by investigating some key concepts in Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism and their implications for language structures and language use.

It is often observed that in Asian languages many pragmatic phenomena appear to be irrational and illogical from a western perspective. For example, several Asian languages (e.g. Chinese, Japanese, Thai and Tibetan) have personal pronouns which simultaneously refer to the first and second persons; the first person can often be referred to by third person pronouns; complex kinship terms can be used for people who bear no relations to the speaker; apologies are made for acts done by third parties; extensive use of modal particles and honorifics to index contextual construal. Existing analyses and explanation for such phenomena are usually offered through modifications of theories and models that were originally developed on the evidence of European languages. Most of the theories and models assume a “rational and independent self” as an agent, a key notion in western philosophies.

This workshop explores the possibility of an alternative account of some of the phenomena in Asian language pragmatics in terms of Asian philosophies. A key aspect of this exploration is to examine the Asian notion of the self as a dependent one. Associated with the Asian notion of the self are concepts of space and emptiness, hierarchy and harmony, time and place, cycles and continua, unity and whole, etc. In doing so, we question some of the assumptions underlying notions such as power, solidarity, footing, stance, strategy, rapport, empathy, attunement, etc.

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**Keywords:**
Anthropological linguistics, ethnography, Asian languages, culture

**Organisation:**
The Workshop will focus on the above outlined theme, with five 20-minute presentations. Each presentation is followed by a 100-minute discussion. The Discussant will make a 20-minute presentation following the individual presentations,
bringing together the ideas and issues emerging from the papers and discussions. This will be followed by a 10-minute general discussion. A 3-hour slot is requested.

References:
Ide, Sachiko 2005 "How and why honorifics can signify dignity and elegance: The indexicality and reflexivity of linguistic rituals." In Lakoff and Ide (eds.) *Broadening the Horizon of Linguistic Politeness*. Amsterdam: John Benjamin