

Winter Semester 2021/2022

SDAC Guest Lecture Series

Seeking Health at the Margins: Medical Pluralism and Structural Violence in Myanmar

Céline Coderey
National University of Singapore
Anthropology

Friday
21.01.22
10am-12pm
c.t.



Céline Coderey holds a MA in Psychology from the University of Lausanne (Switzerland) and a MA and a PhD in Anthropology from the University of Provence (France). Currently she is appointed as Research Fellow and Lecturer at the National University of Singapore. Her field of expertise spans from medical anthropology and anthropology of the body, to anthropology of religion, but also to questions of identity in relation to artistic and cultural practices, heritage making and temporalities. Her research is mainly focused on Myanmar with a recent expansion also to Papua New Guinea and the Marquesas islands in French Polynesia. She is the author of several publications including "Myanmar traditional medicine: the making of a national heritage", published in *Modern Asian Studies* in 2021, and "Immortal medicine. Understanding the resilience of Burmese alchemic practice", published in *Medical Anthropology* in 2018.

In this presentation, Céline Coderey discusses health related choices grounding pluralistic processes of health seeking of individuals living in the geo-political marginal state of Rakhine, Myanmar. Here a plurality of healers and practices belonging to Buddhism, astrology, biomedicine, traditional medicine, etc. are used to face the individual and cosmic dis-order illness represents. Drawing from 15 years of work among Buddhist communities in the area, Coderey defends the idea that people's choices are neither simply a reflection of aetiological concepts nor they follow a purely pragmatic logic. Instead, they are shaped by a plurality of factors including cosmological conceptions, structural conditions, economic limitations, social connections, previous experiences. She also shows that health seeking processes are not just a seek for health but also a seek for meaning in the same time as they produce meanings; and that these two quests – for cure and for meaning – are interrelated and affect each other, through a dynamic and fluid dialogue between symptoms, hypothesis, diagnosis, treatments, assessments.

Ultimately, the pluralistic nature of the process of health seeking is at the same time symptom of structural violence and of the challenges people face to access formal healthcare, a rich cosmology resulting from historical cultural encounters, and the expression of one's desire to negotiate one's space of action. It is the proof of the resilience of this community who lives at the margins of the state.

This event will be held via zoom.
Please contact Prof. Dr. Dominik
Müller to register
(dominik.m.mueller@fau.de).



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