



Neither Invisible nor Silent: Historizing and Conceptualizing Asian Germany

Dr. Kien Nghi Ha (University of Tübingen)

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Diaspora Studies, Asian American Research Center, and the Institute of European Studies.

The term “Asian Germans” goes back to the anthology “Asian Germans. Vietnamese Diaspora and Beyond” (2012), which was re-released in 2021 as an extended edition. In my lecture I will outline the history of Asian immigration to Germany and discuss the cultural-political concept of the self-designation “Asian German”. This term reflects historical experiences with anti-Asian racism, which, in addition to exoticization and social exclusion, is also linked to massive racist violence such as the pogrom in Rostock-Lichtenhagen (1992) against the Vietnamese community.

The concept of “Asian Germans” also represents a self-constructed form of cultural and political identity that recognizes the diversity and differences within the Asian diaspora and offers solidarity and cooperation on this basis. But there is also the fear that this concept is too broad and over-arching to address specific concerns of certain immigrant communities, which are mostly based on national and religious identifications. Some efforts have recently been made to establish Asian German Studies as a new research direction. Instead of reproducing the dominant White view of the German majority society this scientific approach aims to center Asian Germans and their perspectives. Against this background, I would like to finally discuss the question: What is Asian German Studies and what scientific and socio-political potentials are associated with it?

Dr. Kien Nghi Ha, cultural and political scientist, is a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies of the University of Tübingen and teaches Postcolonial Asian German Studies and Asian Diasporic Studies. He also works in Berlin as writer and curator on postcolonial criticism, racism, and migration in art institutions like the House of the Cultures of the World and Sinema Transtopia. His research was awarded with the major Augsburg Science Prize for Intercultural Studies among other grants and fellowships. He is the author and editor of more than ten books and numerous articles, including the ground-breaking anthology *Asiatische Deutsche Extended. Vietnamesische Diaspora and Beyond* (2012/2021). New editions: *Asiatische Präsenzen in der Kolonialmetropole Berlin. Localizing Decolonialization* (2024) and *Anti-Asian Racism in Transatlantic Perspectives: History, Theory, Cultural Representations and Social Movements* (contracted for 2025).

