



Seminar

BARAK KUSHNER

Fellow, SCAS.

Professor of East Asian History, University of Cambridge

*“A Drunken Charade?”:
Finding East Asian Justice in Imperial
Decline and Colonial Defeat*

Tuesday, 28 January, 2020, 2:15 p.m.

In the Thunberg Lecture Hall
SCAS, Linneanum, Thunbergsvägen 2, Uppsala
www.swedishcollegium.se

S W E D I S H
C O L L E G I U M
for ADVANCED STUDY

ABOUT BARAK KUSHNER

Barak Kushner's work primarily focuses on 19th–21st century Sino–Japanese relations and how modern Japan emerged from its historical interaction with the rest of East Asia. He began his career as a high school teacher in Chicago, and later traveled to Iwate, Japan, where he taught English, lived in a Buddhist temple, and attended Japanese elementary school, studying Japanese along with the young students. He has lived in Japan on and off for about seven years, and also spent time teaching and studying in mainland China and Taiwan. After returning to the United States, he received a PhD in history from Princeton University. He taught in the USA, worked briefly for the US State Department, and then found refuge once again in academia at the University of Cambridge.

Among other works, Kushner has penned three monographs: *Men to Devils, Devils to Men: Japanese War Crimes and Chinese Justice* (Winner of the American Historical Association's 2016 John K. Fairbank Prize); *Slurp! A Social and Culinary History of Ramen – Japan's Favorite Noodle Soup*; and *The Thought War: Japanese Imperial Propaganda*. From 2013–2019 he managed an ERC project, “The Dissolution of the Japanese Empire and the Struggle for Legitimacy in Postwar East Asia, 1945–1965”, which will produce the forthcoming two volumes: *Overcoming Empire in Post-Imperial East Asia: Repatriation, Redress and Rebuilding*, and *In the Ruins of the Japanese Empire: Imperial Violence, State Destruction, and the Reordering of Modern East Asia*.

Kushner will use his time at the Collegium to work on a new monograph concerning the construction of justice in postwar East Asia, examining how the end of Japan's empire affected the new international order.

ABSTRACT

Why did the parallel pursuit of war crimes following the Second World War in Europe and East Asia produce virtually the opposite results? This talk will illuminate the history of war crimes trials in the Far East and explain why seventy-five years after the war the facts are still in dispute. Because these disagreements about justice continue to feed political friction in the region even today the issue bleeds into the arena of power and politics. Kushner will discuss the lived legacy of the trials and how the memory of the events, combined with a renewed effort to build political legitimacy on the backs of the trial judgements, left deep fissures in Sino-Japanese relations.