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Papers of an International and Interdisciplinary Symposium in Mainz and Hanoi

An Asian Impact Activity
In Memoriam of Momoyo Okura

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Konrad Meisig

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Contents

Editor's Preface IX

Pham Quang Minh

Welcome Address XI

Section One
Technology: Myths and Magic

Konrad Meisig

"Man is No Machine." Three Levels of Techno-Ethics 3

Masako Sato

Mythos oder mythische Denktradition in der Zeit der Groß-Technologie 7

Hans Ruelius

The Technology of Magic and the Magic of Technology:
Prolegomena to a Theory of Ritual and Magic
With Reference to Modern Technology 21

R.K. Bhattacharya

Ethics and Technology: An Interpretation from the Perspective of Tribes 55

Kumkum Bhattacharya

Understanding and negotiating issues of ethics
in the application of knowledge 61

Section Two
Techno-Ethics: Historical Aspects

Marion Meisig

Technology and Ethics: The Advent of Buddhism in Ancient India 73

Masako Sato

Seide als die Quelle der Technologie und Techno-Ethik in der japanischen Kultur und Gesellschaft: Die Entwicklung der Textilverarbeitung durch die staatliche Organisation seit der Einführung des Staatsmodells der Tang-Dynastie

Summary: Silk as the source of technology and techno-ethics in Japanese culture and society: The development of the textile industry by the state organization since the introduction of the state model of the Tang Dynasty 83

Lương Văn Kế

Ho Chi Minh's Ideas of the Relationship between Technology and Ethics 129

Section Three
Techno-Ethics and the Media

Do Thu Ha

Ethics of Entertainment Media in Vietnam The Socialite Phenomenon 139

Kasturi Dadhe

Impact of Television on Distance Education in India: Insights on Literacy 163

Marcus Stiglegger

Cyborg Ethics: The anti-utopian cinema of Shinya Tsukamoto 183

Ivo Ritzer

Media – Culture – Theory: Myth – Genre – Hybridity 193

Volker Küster

The Work of Art in Times of its Mechanical Reproduction: Some Preliminary Remarks on the Representation of Religion in Contemporary Asian Art 211

Abhijit Gangopadhyay

The Impact of Advances in Internet, Social Media and M-Commerce Technology on Ethics in Select Asian Countries 221

Section Four
Techno-Ethics and Literature

Sonja Wengoborski

"Vagekīma"– The responsibility of the writer in the context of modern Sinhalese literature, and the question of responsibility from the example of literary texts of Sinhalese and Hindi literature 237

Trân Hinh

Le Clézio
The Spirit and Morality of a Writer in the Modern World 253

Konrad Meisig

Viśvakarmā: The Hindu God of Technology 263

Illustrations – Color Plates 269

Editor's Preface

These are the papers read during a two-part symposium on *Techno-Ethics: Humanities and Technology*, organised by the ASIATICUM – Society for the Promotion of Studies East and West (ASIATICUM – Gesellschaft zur Förderung west-östlicher Forschungen e.V.) in collaboration with the Vietnam National University, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Hanoi, and the Institute of Indology, Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz (Germany). The first part of this symposium took place on September 2, 2012, in Mainz, and the second leg was held on March 28-29, 2013, in Hanoi, directed by the University of Social Sciences and Humanities, and presided over by its Vice Rector, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pham Quang Minh.

Both congresses were the fourth and fifth, respectively, in a series of symposia and workshops *in memoriam* of the Japanese entrepreneur Momoyo Okura, a committed sponsor of cultural events in humanities, who died in 2008; the part in Mainz was co-sponsored by Gutenberg Buchhandlung Dr. Kohl. For particulars of the previous symposia *in memoriam* of Momoyo Okura, I refer to our website (www.indologie.uni-mainz.de).

The papers of this international, intercultural and interdisciplinary symposium on Techno-Ethics were presented by scholars from Japan, Vietnam, India, and Germany. They combine disciplines as different as Japanology, Japanese and Vietnamese Historical Studies, Indology, Indian Anthropology, History of Religions, Buddhology, Sociology of Vietnam and India, Film Studies, Modern South Asian and Mauritian Literature, Sinhalese Studies, South East Asian Arts, Management and Media Studies.

My thanks are due to the sponsors whose support made this two-part congress possible. I am most grateful to our host in Vietnam, the Vice Rector, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pham Quang Minh, for his generous hospitality and his welcome address. I also wish to express my special thanks to all who contributed to this volume, and to the lively and fruitful discussions during the sessions of our congress.

Mainz, May 1, 2013 *Konrad Meisig*

Welcome Address
For the International Symposium on Techno-Ethics

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pham Quang Minh
Vice Rector of Vietnam National University
University of Social Sciences and Humanities

Hanoi, March 28-29, 2013

Good Morning,
Dear Professor Meisig,
Dear colleagues, friends and students,

First of all, on behalf of professors and students of the VNU University of Social Sciences and Humanities, I would like to welcome all of you to our university, the most well-known university of Vietnam. Our mission is to be a leader in creative training and research to serve the national industrialization and modernization. Our symposium "Techno-Ethics" today once again is clear evidence of our endeavor.

Using this opportunity, I would like to express my special thanks to Professor Konrad Meisig, Director of the Institute of Indian Studies, Johannes Gutenberg University, for his excellent idea to bring the Asiaticum and professors from Germany, India and Japan to Vietnam. This is a really great chance for all of us to learn from each other, to share our points of view and knowledge on this field. My next thanks go to the sponsor, Mrs. Yoko Okura-Mieli, of this *Asian Impact Activity in memoriam of Momoyo Okura,* and the co-sponsor *Gutenberg Buchhandlung Dr. Kohl,* without whose support we would not be able to conduct the symposium.

Ladies and gentlemen, all of us today understand that techno-ethics is an interdisciplinary field concerned not only with all the ethical aspects of technology, but also with the human practices related to technology. The field examines and covers all of the social and ethical aspects of the design, development, utilization, management, and evaluation of science and technology in society. Techno-ethics is also very close to the practice. We all know, for example, the story of "Heinz

Steals the Drug in Europe" in Kohlberg, whereby a man was in a dilemma to help his wife from a fatal situation. It is still under debate whether Heinz should break into the laboratory to steal the drug for his wife? Why or why not?

Ladies and gentlemen, from a university perspective, I would like to emphasize that techno-ethics is an important and necessary aspect of education. As a developing country, Vietnam is facing a challenge between growth and social responsibility. How can a university contribute to the development of the country through its education? How can a university train the graduated with a high quality of knowledge as well as high social responsibility? How can a university fulfill its tasks as they are very diverse and the world is changing dramatically? I do hope our symposium will be a first step in our long-term cooperation among scholars from different societies and cultures. I think we share the same problems of technology and ethics in a globalized world.

In closing, I would like to wish all of you good health, good luck and good discussion. Enjoy your time in Hanoi! Thank you.