The aim of this conference is to examine expressions of optimism and scepticism regarding civilizational progress as they appeared within the circles of the Chinese intellectual and political elite.

Following crisis response strategies from the end of the 19th century, conceptions of civilizational progress, in the broad sense, social evolution and modernization quickly gained a great degree of influence in political and intellectual circles in China. Even though ‘Western’ ideas played a central role to varying degrees in the development of such conceptions, the evaluations, assessments and prognoses of ‘progress’ were by no means concurrent in China and Western societies. While optimistic views on civilizational progress tended to lose importance in Europe and North America from the late 19th century and sceptical findings were increasingly emphasized, optimism regarding progress continued to predominate in China in various forms. Fundamentally optimistic positions, in China, referred to the temporal aspects of civilizational advance: it was thus thought to be possible that progress/modernization could occur in an accelerated mode in China. This attitude reflects notions of a present and future China in which a catching up with, overtaking and surpassing of supposedly more advanced Western societies might take place. Moreover, a multifaceted and frequently ethically based diagnosis of China’s current situation appeared which recognized a lack of simultaneity from an explicitly universal historical perspective and was associated with predictive statements. Here, China appeared as a historical entity that was stuck in a historically ‘backwards’ era in comparison to Western societies and therefore, facing considerable time pressure, needed to undertake targeted steps toward an accelerated process of development. Such optimistic assumptions can be found in a broad intellectual and political spectrum that is not adequately understood in terms of the usual classifications like ‘progressive/conservative’.

Please register until October 20, 2013 via our website www.ikgf.fau.de

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### Tuesday, October 29, 2013

<table>
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<th>Time</th>
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| 9:15 a.m. | Welcome addresses  
Thomas Fröhlich (Vice Director IKGF, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg)  
Antje Kley (Vice-President, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg) |
| 9:45 a.m. | The Chinese Concept of “Progress”  
Kai Vogelsang (University of Hamburg)  
Respondent: Rui Kunze (University of Erlangen-Nuremberg) |
| 10:45 a.m. | Coffee Break |
| 11:00 a.m. | Despair and Utopianism in Modern China: Abolishing Boundaries  
Peter Zarrow (University of Connecticut)  
Respondent: Leigh Jenco (London School of Economics and Political Science) |
| 12:00 p.m. | Lunch Break |
| 1:30 p.m. | The Idea of Progress in Modern China. The Case of Yan Fu  
Li Qiang (Peking University)  
Respondent: Thomas Fröhlich (IKGF, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg) |
| 2:30 p.m. | Coffee Break |
| 2:45 p.m. | Against the Specter of (Modern) Time: Critique of Progressivism in Modern Chinese History  
Axel Schneider (University of Göttingen)  
Respondent: Li Qiang (Peking University) |
| 3:45 p.m. | Coffee Break |
| 4:00 p.m. | Fantasizing Science: 科學小說 in Early Twentieth-Century China (1902-1920)  
Rui Kunze 王瑞 (University of Erlangen-Nuremberg)  
Respondent: Takahiro Nakajima 中島隆博 (University of Tokyo) |
| 5:00 p.m. | End |

### Wednesday, October 30, 2013

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| 9:15 a.m. | Prospect Optimism and the Temptations of Expertocracy in Republican China  
Thomas Fröhlich (IKGF, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg)  
Respondent: Peter Zarrow (University of Connecticut) |
| 10:15 a.m. | Coffee Break |
| 10:30 a.m. | The Contingency of Culture: Westernization and Cultural Construction in the 1930s  
Leigh Jenco (London School of Economics and Political Science)  
Respondent: Hsiau A-chin 萧阿勤 (Academia Sinica) |
| 11:30 a.m. | Coffee Break |
| 11:45 a.m. | Science and Religion between Optimism and Skepticism: Minakata Kumagusu in Japan and Hu Shi in China  
Takahiro Nakajima 中島隆博 (University of Tokyo)  
Respondent: Axel Schneider (University of Göttingen) |
| 12:45 p.m. | Lunch Break |
| 2:15 p.m. | When Revolutionary Optimism Encountered Local Particularity: The 1947-49 Literary and Cultural Debate in Post-Colonial Taiwan  
Hsiau A-chin 萧阿勤 (Academia Sinica)  
Respondent: Carsten Storm (University of Erlangen-Nuremberg) |
| 3:15 p.m. | Coffee Break |

### Thursday, October 31, 2013

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<th>Time</th>
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| 9:15 a.m. | Talking about Science and Technology in Late Imperial and Early Republican China  
Iwo Amelung (University of Frankfurt)  
Respondent: Kai Vogelsang (University of Hamburg) |
| 10:15 a.m. | Roundtable |
| 11:00 a.m. | End |