ABOUT SOCIAL PROTESTS IN EAST ASIA

How are social protests organized, and what are the historical, political, and cultural conditions that shape counter-hegemonic practices? How can we characterize the dialectic between representation and participation in social movements? And what are the cultural vehicles of protest that animate expressions of dissent and facilitate the mobilization of people? Although constituents such as “the masses/crowd” or “the people” have time and again been construed as privileged categories of resistance, social protests also happen outside the domain of the collective. Are mass protests a type of “weapons of the weak” or does such a characterization run the risk of ignoring or minimizing the hierarchies and pressures within that are also exerting control over the individuals? And what are the social dynamics that prevent practices of dissent from devolving into mob justice and uncontrolled vandalism?

In this series we will explore different types of social protests in East Asia, some historical and some in the present day. Speakers from different regions and diverse disciplines will talk about how social movements gave voices to the marginalized, and how political legacies of the past are appropriated, reconfigured, and contested in protest practices of the present—both locally and cross-regionally.

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SOCIAL MEDIA

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