

COLLOQUIUM BY DAVID MOSER

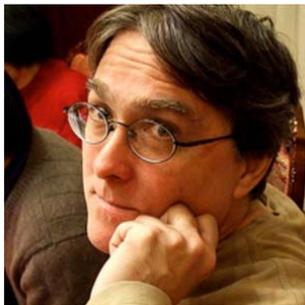
A BILLION VOICES: CHINA'S SEARCH FOR A COMMON LANGUAGE

TIME: 4:00-5:00 PM, WEDNESDAY, 22 FEB 2017

VENUE: ACADEMIC BUILDING 1079

A Billion Voices: China's Search for a Common Language

Speaker: David Moser, Academic Director at CET Chinese Studies at Beijing Capital Normal University



ABSTRACT:

Hundreds of millions of people, Chinese and foreign, are learning a version of Chinese called *Putonghua*. But where did this language come from? Since the turn of the twentieth century linguists and politicians were on a mission to create a common language for China. From the radical intellectuals of the May Fourth Movement, to leaders such as Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong, all fought linguistic wars to establish a national language for a linguistically fractured country. In the process, many May Fourth intellectuals actually advocated abolishing the Chinese language itself and replacing it with Esperanto, and Chairman Mao came close to eradicating the Chinese characters altogether. This talk traces the remarkable story of China's language unification agenda and its controversial relationship with modern politics, covering the current language policy in China, and the future of Chinese in cyberspace and the Internet.

BIO:

David Moser holds a Master's and a Ph.D. in Chinese Studies from the University of Michigan, with a major in Chinese Linguistics and Philosophy. He has been based in Beijing for over 25 years, active in academic and media circles.

Moser was a visiting scholar at Peking University in 1987-89, and a visiting professor for five years at the Beijing Foreign Studies University, where he taught courses in Translation Theory and Psycholinguistics. He is currently Academic Director at CET Chinese Studies at Beijing Capital Normal University, an overseas study program for U.S. college students, where he teaches courses in Chinese history and politics.

He appears often on BBC radio as a commentator on the daily program *Business Matters*, and is also a frequent China analyst on Al Jazeera television. He has worked at China Central Television (CCTV) in Beijing as a program advisor, translator, and host, and continues to be active on Chinese television as a commentator in both Chinese and English on news shows such as *CCTV Dialogue and World Insight*.

Moser is also co-host of the *Sinica Podcast*, an influential China current affairs podcast widely listened to by journalists and China watchers throughout the world. Moser is author of the book *A Billion Voices: China's Search for a Common Language*, published by Penguin.

This event is open to all and entry is on a first come, first served basis. For any queries email y973@duke.edu or call 3665 7149.