

Vienna Taiwan Lecture Series



The Department of East Asian Studies/Sinology and
the Vienna Center for Taiwan Studies are pleased to announce a lecture by

Henning Klöter

Audible and visible multilingualism in Taiwan

Abstract: In the first part of my presentation, I will introduce Taiwan's current language situation, highlighting the variety of languages spoken today, their sociolinguistic roles, and how they are distributed across different communities and regions. I will place particular emphasis on the ongoing process of language shift: the increasing dominance of Mandarin and the gradual decline in the everyday use of regional languages among younger generations. The second part of my talk will explore how these dynamics are reflected in the visible linguistic landscape of Taipei. Focusing on street name signage, I will show that official signs still adhere closely to the language policies and standards established after 1949, leaving little room for alternative forms such as Southern Min or Hakka. Strikingly, the powerful ideological shift toward "nativisation" that gained momentum around the turn of the 21st century has had almost no visible impact on this aspect of the cityscape. By tracing these contrasts between spoken language practices and their public representation, I aim to shed light on the deep entanglement of language, ideology, and identity in contemporary Taiwan.



Henning Klöter (PhD, Leiden University, 2003) is Professor of Modern Chinese Languages and Literatures at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. His research focuses on multilingualism and language planning in the Sinophone world, historical sociolinguistics, and the history of Asian language research and documentation in the West. He currently serves as Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication* and as Series Editor of *Sinolinguitica*. His major publications include *Written Taiwanese* (2005), *The Language of the Sangleys: A Chinese Vernacular in Missionary Sources of the Seventeenth Century* (2010), and *Language Diversity in the Sinophone World: Historical Trajectories, Language Planning, and Multilingual Practices* (2018, co-edited with Mårten Söderblom Saarela).

Date: Thursday, 27 November 2025

Time: 18:30 – 20:00 (CET)

Location: SIN 1, Department of East Asian Studies/Sinology, University Campus, AAKH

Spitalgasse 2, Hof 2, entrance 2.3, 1090 Vienna

Moderation: Agnes Schick-Chen, University of Vienna