

CHINA CROSSROADS

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Church and Temple Life in Old Pudong: A Hidden History of Modern Shanghai

Lena Scheen

Associate Professor of Global China Studies
NYU Shanghai

Author of [Shanghai Literary Imaginings](#) (2015)

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Today, Pudong is best known for its spectacular skyscrapers. But for centuries, the landscape east of the Huangpu River was dotted with Catholic churches and Daoist temples whose communities lived side by side. This talk uncovers this forgotten world through the story of one village's church and temple, tracing their coexistence and rivalry from the 17th century to the modern era.

[Lena Scheen](#) is the Director of the Center for Global Asia, an Associate Professor of Global China Studies at NYU Shanghai, and a Global Network Associate Professor in the Faculty of Arts and Science at NYU. Prior to joining NYU Shanghai, she taught at Leiden University and at the University of Amsterdam. Professor Scheen holds a PhD from Leiden University and was a Postdoctoral Fellow with the International Institute for Asian Studies. Scheen is a member of the Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA). Scheen's research explores the social, cultural, and mental impact of fast urbanization, focusing on Shanghai and storytelling. She is the author of [Shanghai Literary Imaginings: A City in Transformation](#), the first book-length study that gives a full overview of literary culture in Shanghai since 1990, critically engaging with Chinese-language scholarship. The book analyzes literary imaginings of the city, its past, present, and future, in order to understand the effects of Shanghai's rapid urban transformation on both the psychological state of its citizens and their perception of the spaces they inhabit. Scheen's second book on Shanghai's heritage politics will soon be published and examines the role of storytelling and place-based historical memory in heritage politics. It is based on seven years of archival research and field studies of historical sites and museums, as well as the collection of oral histories from citizens about demolished places.

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