



Institute of Chinese Studies

WEDNESDAY SEMINAR

*The Legend of Nezha, Its
Cinematic Adaptations and
the Loong*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Speaker:
Madhurendra Jha

11 June 2025

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Speaker: Dr. Madhurendra Jha, Assistant Professor, Department of Chinese Studies, School of Languages, Doon University, Dehradun.

Chair: Prof. Sabaree Mitra, Professor, Centre for Chinese and Southeast Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University; and, Honorary Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi.

Date: 11 June 2025

Venue: Zoom Webinar

- The seminar focused on the evolving cinematic portrayals of the legendary Chinese figure Nezha 哪吒. The speaker traced the development of the legend across three major film adaptations, spanning the pioneering 1979 version by the Shanghai Film Studio to the recent 2025 adaptation, which has propelled the Nezha legend to international recognition.
- The speaker highlighted how each cinematic iteration reflects the social, cultural and political environment of its time, with particular emphasis on how the latest adaptation marks a significant departure from the values and narrative structures of earlier films. Dr. Jha also explored the ideological messages embedded in each portrayal, examining how Nezha is cast as a symbol of rebellion, redemption, and national strength.
- The seminar also examined the evolving iconography of the Dragon King 龙王 and the Dragon Clan 龙族, offering insights into how their representations reflect changing conceptions of power, morality, and identity.
- In conclusion, the speaker addressed the politics and cultural implications of translating the term *loong* in a global context, suggesting that such linguistic choices reflect China's broader strategies in shaping international cultural discourse.

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