



# Finiteness and Chinese

**Professor Rint Sybesma (Leiden University)**

In this talk I want to discuss the sentences which Tsai (2008) calls “incomplete”, like the following:

- |           |                   |           |                       |
|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| (1) a.    | ??tā ná-le shu    | b.        | ??tā chī-zhe fàn      |
|           | 3s take-PERF book |           | 3s eat-PROGR meal     |
| INTENDED: | ‘he took a book’  | INTENDED: | ‘he is having a meal’ |

I will claim that these sentences are incomplete because they are non-finite. Going by a functional definition of finiteness, I will work out the criteria that a sentence has to meet in order to be called “finite”.

Date: November 23, 2016 (Wednesday)

Time: 2:30pm - 4:00pm (Tea reception to follow)

Venue: 2/F, Conference Room, Art Museum East Wing, Institute of Chinese Studies,  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

## ABOUT THE SPEAKER



Rint Sybesma was educated in Leiden, the Netherlands (Universiteit Leiden), and Shenyang, China (Liaoning Daxue). He holds MAs in Linguistics and Sinology (1987; Leiden) and a Ph.D. in Linguistics (1992; Leiden). His publications have been about syntactic phenomena in Mandarin and Cantonese, and occasionally other Sinitic as well as non-Sinitic languages spoken in China. In recent years he has been involved in the compilation and editing of the *Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics* (ECLL) and is one of the editors. He would like to take this opportunity of being in Hong Kong to launch the ECLL and present it to the Chinese linguistics community in Hong Kong, many members of which have contributed to it.

**Co-organizers:** CUHK-BLCU Joint Research Centre for Chinese Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, & Language Acquisition Laboratory of the Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages, The Chinese University of Hong Kong



**All are welcome**

