

**4th CGA & GPS Young Scholars Symposium
“Asia and the World”
29-30 April 2022**

Jointly Organized by CGA and GPS at NYU Shanghai
Co-sponsor: Asia Research Center, Fudan University

Online

Abstracts and Bios

**DAY 1
April 29, Friday**

Opening Remarks

Tansen SEN (New York University Shanghai)

Tansen Sen is Professor of history; the Director of the Center for Global Asia at NYU Shanghai; and Global Network Professor at NYU. He is the author of *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade: The Realignment of Sino-Indian Relations, 600-1400* (2003; 2016) and *India, China, and the World: A Connected History* (2017). He has co-authored (with Victor H. Mair) *Traditional China in Asian and World History* (2012), edited *Buddhism Across Asia: Networks of Material, Cultural and Intellectual Exchange* (2014), and co-edited (with Burkhard Schnepel) *Travelling Pasts: The Politics of Cultural Heritage in the Indian Ocean World* (2019) and (with Brian Tsui) *Beyond Pan-Asianism: Connecting China and India, 1840s–1960s* (2021). He is currently working on a book about Zheng He’s maritime expeditions in the early fifteenth century, a monograph on Jawaharlal Nehru and China, and co-editing (with Engseng Ho) the *Cambridge History of the Indian Ocean, volume 1*.

Brad WESLAKE (New York University Shanghai)

Brad Weslake is an Associate Professor of Philosophy, NYU Shanghai; Global Network Associate Professor, NYU. Prior to joining NYU Shanghai, he was Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Rochester. He holds a PhD from the University of Sydney, a BA (Hons) from the University of Newcastle, and a BA and BCompSci from the University of Wollongong. Professor Weslake’s central research interest is philosophy of science, especially causation and explanation. He also works on related topics in philosophy of physics, philosophy of biology, and philosophy of mind. His work has appeared in

Australasian Journal of Philosophy, The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science and Philosophy of Science.

Ke ZHANG (Fudan University)

ZHANG Ke is an Associate Professor in the department of History at Fudan University, China. He also serves as associate directors of the International Center for Studies of Chinese Civilization (ICSCC) and the Asia Research Center (ARC) at Fudan. He received his Ph.D. from Fudan University in 2009. His research interests include modern Chinese intellectual history, conceptual history and the global history of cultural exchange. He is the author of *The Conceptual History of 'Humanism' in Modern China, 1901-1932* (2015, in Chinese), the editor of *The Transformations of Ideas and Knowledge in Modern China* (2018, in Chinese), and the co-editor of *The Production of Knowledge and the Politics of Culture in Modern China* (2014, in Chinese), and *Stray Birds on the Huangpu: A History of Indians in Shanghai* (2018, Bilingual, English and Chinese). He has published more than fifty articles, and is currently researching a book project on the Sino-India cultural relations in Late Qing.

Panel One
Mobilities in Modern China

Chair: Lena SCHEEN (New York University Shanghai)

Lena Scheen is an Assistant Professor of Global China Studies at NYU Shanghai. Prior to joining NYU Shanghai, she taught at Leiden University and the University of Amsterdam. She 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. Scheen's second monograph on Shanghai's heritage politics will be published in 2023 as part of the Brill series on "Ideas, History, and Modern China," edited by Wang Hui (Tsinghua University) and Ban Wang (Stanford University).

Yupeng JIAO (New York University Shanghai)

Rediscovering the "Enchanted": The Shanghai Spiritualist Society in Comparative and Transnational Perspectives

Abstract

Influenced by psychical research and new spiritual movements in the West and Japan, the Shanghai Spiritualist Society (SSS) was one of the first new spiritual study groups in modern China. As a critical response to materialism and moral degeneration caused by Western modernity, the SSS proposed to reinvent and revitalize traditional Chinese religious values through the practice of spirit writing. The SSS also believed that the existence of the spiritual world could be proved through scientific and empirical evidence, i.e., spirit writing and spirit photography. New spiritualism, as a global phenomenon, relied on the authority of modern science and social progress to justify its legitimacy. As a countercurrent to scientism and national salvation's dominant narrative, the SSS was rejected and criticized by leading intellectuals from the camp of the New Culture Movement.

Bio

Yupeng Jiao is currently a Global Perspectives on Society Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow at NYU Shanghai. He works at the crossroads of historical anthropology, Chinese political institutions, Chinese religions, and Chinese legal history during the twentieth century. His first book studies the history of popular religion in rural China during the 20th Century. He received his doctorate from University of California, San Diego in Modern Chinese History and was a Postdoctoral Fellow at Stanford University's Center for East Asian Studies.

Siqi TU (New York University Shanghai)

“Distance Brings Us Closer,” Accelerated Growth, or the Most Familiar Strangers: Parent-Child Relations of Chinese “Parachute Generation” in the United States

Abstract

This paper describes the parent-child relations of upper-middle-class Chinese parents and their adolescent children who were “parachuted” to the United States for private high schools. With parents remaining in China, children in the United States, thousands of miles away, such transnational educational arrangement complicates the already volatile parent-child relations during adolescent years. Through ethnographic interviews of 43 students and 33 parents (7 pairs of them are parent-child from the same family), I demonstrate different types of child-parent relations in a transnational education setting: those who “outsource” parenting to American boarding school, those who found that the further physical distance has brought parent-child relationship closer through frequent communication and children who experienced “accelerated growth.” These types of parent-child relationships are not comprehensive of all the lived experiences of the “parachute generation” yet they shed new light on transnational education and the impact of parental “absence” on children’s well-being. In a transnational context for an economically well-off group, parental absence or separation of children and parents is no longer a clear-cut concept and have different layers of meanings when taking into account of the frequency of

communication, duration of spring and winter break, and the existence of for-profit intermediaries (or educational consultants).

Bio

Siqi Tu is a postdoctoral fellow for Global Perspectives on Society at NYU Shanghai and was a postdoctoral research fellow at the department of Ethics, Law and Politics of the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity in Göttingen, Germany. She obtains her PhD in sociology from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. She is working on a book that documents the lived experiences of the “parachute students” and their upper-middle-class families (under contract with Columbia University Press). She also works on various topics intersecting urban spaces, immigration, and international education.

Yao LIN (New York University Shanghai)

Academic Dependency, Discursive Brokerage, and Spectacularized Postcoloniality: The Case of Social and Political Thought in Contemporary China

Abstract

This paper explores how the language barriers between the hegemonic anglophone academia, on the one hand, and non-anglophone academic communities in the Global South, on the other, complicate the idea of academic dependency. Using contemporary exchanges of social and political thought between the west and the sinophone world as an example, I demonstrate how such barriers, in addition to other restrictions such as China's censorship system on book and article publishing (i.e., “discursive blockage”), give too much gatekeeping power to those who mediate between the two academic worlds, leading to “discursive brokerage” (in pejorative sense) from *both* directions. On the one hand, it leads to academic publishers and translators selectively introducing only a few foreign-language publications into the Chinese market, thus over-influencing the intellectual discourse in China for the next many years. On the other hand, when western academics try to engage with Chinese public/intellectual discourses, most of them have to rely on second-hand accounts provided by a few (mostly) Chinese scholars who are well-connected in the west and fluent in western languages/jargons. This reliance is exacerbated by a search for “relevance” (that is, offering something seemingly novel and culturally diverse to the mainstream liberal democratic mindset in the west); as a result, the western academic perceptions on the Chinese theoretical landscape are also inherently distorted by what I call “spectacularized postcoloniality”. In sum, whereas the concept of academic dependency entails an asymmetric picture in which the western academia exerts power on the rest of the world, but not the other way around, the pernicious effects of language barriers and discursive brokerage are two-way traffic, and are intertwined with anglophone hegemony in global academia. This complicated dynamic calls forth new approaches to global academic decolonization and intellectual liberation.

Bio

Yao Lin is a Global Perspectives on Society Fellow at NYU Shanghai. He holds a Ph.D. in political science (Columbia), a M.A. in philosophy (Peking University) and a J.D. (Yale). His research areas include moral and political philosophy, comparative law and politics, and contemporary China.

Adhira MANGALAGIRI (New York University Shanghai)

South-South Solidarity as a Temporal Construct: China and India's Two Thousand Years of Friendship

Abstract

This talk probes the temporal dimensions of South-South solidarity, understood as expressions of transnational togetherness asserted in opposition to a colonial hegemon. Conceptualizing South-South solidarity as a temporal construct exposes a central contradiction: participants of the Third World project harnessed narratives of shared temporality as a tool for decolonized nationhood, and yet, the teleological demands of modernity and nation-building bore striking resemblance to the linear, progressive notion of time that had bolstered colonial conquest. To what extent can narratives of shared temporality deliver liberation, and inversely, to what extent can South-South solidarity decolonize time itself? The talk explores these questions through the case of China and India, tracking the rhetoric of “two thousand years of friendship” from its heyday in the 1950s to its dissolution following the 1962 China-India war. I argue that, far exceeding its usage in state-led activities of cultural diplomacy, “two thousand years of friendship” opens a radical understanding of South-South solidarity as a form of transnational temporal relation capable of decolonizing not just political structures but also the textures of time. I explore this rich spectrum of decolonial temporal possibilities through a reading of Bhisham Sahni’s Hindi short story, “Wang Chu” (1978), which narrates the life of a Chinese scholar of Buddhism caught in the shifting tides of China-India diplomatic relations before and after the 1962 border conflict.

Bio

Adhira Mangalagiri is a Lecturer (U.S. Assistant Professor) in the Department of Comparative Literature at Queen Mary University of London. Her book, *States of Disconnect: China-India Literary Relation in the Twentieth Century* (forthcoming with Columbia University Press), studies crises of transnational relation as indexed in Chinese and Hindi literatures (1900-1965). Her research engages questions of world literature, postcolonial studies, and Global South studies, and has recently appeared in *The Yearbook of Comparative Literature*, *the Journal of World Literature*, *Economic and Political Weekly*, *Comparative Literature Studies*, *China and Asia*, and in the edited volume *Beyond Pan-Asianism* (2021). She has held fellowships at the Harvard University Asia Center (2019-2020) and at New York University Shanghai’s Center for Global Asia (2021-2022).

Panel Two
Visual and Material Interaction Across Premodern Asia

Chair: Lala ZUO (New York University Shanghai)

Lala Zuo is an Associate Professor of Art History at NYU Shanghai specializing in East Asian art and architecture. She received her BA in archaeology from Peking University with a special concentration on heritage architecture. She studied East Asian art history in addition to architectural history and theory at the University of Pennsylvania, where she earned both her MA and PhD. Dr. Zuo is the author of *Diversity under the Great Unity: Yuan Regional Architecture*, the first in-depth English-language work to present regional traditions of Chinese architecture based on a detailed study of the timber construction system. In addition to her primary research interest in the architecture of mid-and-late imperial China, she has also published multiple scholarly articles about heritage preservation and digital projects on art and architectural history. She is currently working on her second book project examining Chinese architecture built in the United States since 1800 with a focus on their cross-cultural significance domestically and internationally.

Jinchao ZHAO (New York University Shanghai)

Reinventing Gandhāran Art: Pictorial Programs on Fifth-century Chinese Miniature Pagodas

Abstract

Miniature pagodas commissioned in the fifth century in northern China are among the earliest Buddhist stone carvings with reliefs. Their surfaces feature various Buddhist images popular at the time. Except for the twin Buddhas motif, considered to have originated in China, all images have predecessors in Gandhāra in northwestern India. This paper examines the configuration of Buddhist images on miniature pagodas, to explore the transmission and transformation of Gandhāran Buddhist motifs. On miniature pagodas, one of the most popular themes is Buddhas of the Three Ages, with buddhas of the Past, the Present, and the Future arranged vertically. The Seven Buddhas (six Past Buddhas with Śākyamuni the Buddha of Present) motif in Gandhāran art was replaced with the twin Buddhas in presenting the theme of the Past Buddha on the pagodas, indicating a further development in doctrinal emphasis to Mahāyāna teachings in Chinese Buddhist art. The fasting Buddha, and a number of narrative scenes, also achieved new meanings in the pictorial scheme on miniature pagodas.

Bio

Jinchao is the 2021-22 postdoctoral fellow of Global Asia at NYU Shanghai, as well as a junior research fellow at the Asia Research Center at Fudan University. She received her M.A. in Comparative Literature at Peking University, and her Ph.D. from the University of

Virginia in art and architectural history. She is currently adapting her dissertation into a monograph, which investigates the Chinese reception and appropriation of Buddhist stupa worship in early medieval China. Her other research interests include Buddhist visual narratives and their interaction with textual traditions, Buddhist monk images, and early Indian Buddhist art.

Shiqiu LIU (University of Melbourne)

A New Import or a Resurrection: Paired-animal Medallions on the Yuan Textiles

Abstract

Many studies have been done on the textiles produced during the Yuan period under the Mongols, especially the famous nasij, the gold-silk textile popular across the Mongol Eurasian empire. Researchers usually trace this to the Central Asian influence in regard to the weaving technique. However, there is only limited research on the patterns on such textiles. Most focus on the Chinese patterns transmitted to the West. Two recent publications, respectively by Eiren Shea and Mariachiara Gasparini, have offered an updated discussion on the Mongol costumes. Shea's book talks more on the different forms of the robes and their difference (or similarity) between the Mongol courts across Eurasia, while Gasparini's book focuses more on the medallion patterns used in Central Asian textiles over the eighth to fourteenth centuries. Both have enlarged the discussion on the Mongol textiles from different perspectives. Based on the previous discussions, my paper hopes to clarify the development of a specific kind of the medallion patterns, namely the paired-animal medallions, shared by the nasij and silk textiles produced during the Yuan period. Though this feature has largely been regarded as a continuation of the Central Asian style medallions produced in the earlier period, by combing through the evidence both from northern China and Western Asia in the interval centuries, this paper aims to prove that the appearance of this paired-animal medallions was not solely a heritage from the Tang period, but should be regarded as a second wave of cultural exchange under the Mongols. Further, considering the archaeological evidence discovered in China, the use of textiles with such patterns also seemed to be connected with groups of people who shared a nomad talismanic belief, thus differentiating them from others in Yuan China.

Bio

Shiqiu Liu is a PhD candidate now in the University of Melbourne and her current research is on art works produced under the cultural exchanges stimulated by the Mongol rule of Eurasia in the fourteenth century, focusing especially on works made by professional artisans for those ethnically non-Chinese residences or believers of foreign religions in China during this period. She is interested in pre-modern artistic exchanges through cultural communications between China and other places, especially areas around East and Central Asia.

Jiang LEI (Peking University)

The Myth of "Moon Rabbit" and the Early Cultural Exchange between China and India

Abstract

The myth of "moon rabbit" exists in both Chinese and Indian culture, and there have always been different views on the causes of this similarity between them. Some believe that the ancient Chinese mythology was influenced by Indian culture, and others hold opposite views that the Chinese moon rabbit originated in its own mythological system. This paper rearranges the materials of the early culture exchanges between the two civilizations and tries to find out when the two "moon rabbits" came into being in the two systems of mythology to provide new reference evidence for this problem. The first part compares the earliest time that the image of moon rabbit came into being in both ancient China and India. The second part includes the evidence of early cultural exchanges between the two civilizations. And third, the history or timeline of the development of the moon rabbit myth in ancient China from the Pre-Qin times to the Tang Dynasty, -- from the coexistence of toad and rabbit on the moon to representing the moon with the rabbit alone in the literature of the Tang Dynasty.

Bio

Lei Jiang is a PhD student in the School of Foreign Languages, Peking University. Her major is Indian language and literature, and the research area is about Indian Religions & Culture.

Xiaoyun QIU (Peking University)

Buddhistization of Dice Divination in Ancient China

Abstract

Chinese dice divination was greatly influenced by Indian culture, nevertheless, Chinese dice divination started to generate its own style after years of spreading. In the Dunhuang area, local people inherited but also reformed the rules of Indian dice divination, therefore, a new dice divination system was created. This article is aiming at comparing the manuscripts related to Indian and Chinese dice divination systems, and figure out the resemblances and differences between these two systems.

Bio

Xiaoyun Qiu, PhD in School of Foreign Languages, Peking University. Her major is Indian language and literature, and the research area is about Buddhist Art & History and Indian Religions & Culture. Currently, she is focusing on Indian cave-temple art.

Panel Three:
Translation and Communication Among National and Imperial Audiences

Chair: Jiamei ZHANG (Peking University)

Dr. Zhang Jiamei is Vice Dean and associate professor at the Department of South Asian Studies, School of Foreign Languages, Peking University. From 2004 to 2018, she visited Pakistan several times and participated in academic conferences and cultural exchange activities. In 2019, she was a visiting scholar at the Center for Religious Studies, Princeton University, USA. Her major research papers have been published in *South Asian Studies*, *Oriental Studies*, *Area Studies Journal of Peking University*, *Literature and History of Western Region*, etc. At present, she has published translated works such as "Track on Alexander's " and "Selected Poems of Pakistan". She is the chief editor of the book " *Gandhara's Smile: A Tour of Pakistan's Monuments and Relics*". Member of the review group for the second and third volumes of the Urdu translation edition of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*. Presided and participated in a number of research projects at the home country and abroad.

Jia ZHOU (Peking University)

Dashavatara in Athanasius Kircher's *China Illustrata*

Abstract

In Kircher's *China Illustrata*, Kircher recorded Father Heinrich Roth's introduction of "ten special incarnation of God" believed by people living near Ganges River with what might be Father Roth's hand-drew illustrations, which actually refer to Vishnu's ten incarnations, i. e. Dashavatara. By analyzing both the text and illustrations, I wish to present to the readers how the actual description of Dashavatara has been misinterpreted and misunderstood, as well as how Father Roth's records reflect different Vaishnavism beliefs back in the 17th century in India.

Bio

Jia Zhou is a PhD Student of South Asian Studies Department, School of Foreign Languages, Peking University. Her research interests include Persian manuscripts of literature made in India during Mughal Dynasty, Urdu log kahani (folktales), as well as history of Iran-India-China historical culture exchanges from a perspective of global history.

Wei PENG (New York University Shanghai)

Affective Telegraph and Emotionless Informants: Mediating Information in Socialist Spy Films

Abstract

Technologies of communication stay at the center of the postwar espionage fantasies. Telegraph, telephone, mini camera and various gadgets for passing secret messages were fetishized as devices that can transcend the borders and dissolve the boundaries demarcated by the Cold War ideologies. This paper explores how the technologies and networks of information were presented and constructed in the spy films in socialist China, and how these imaginations of transmitting information participated in the formation of the mass-line and the building of the model socialist subject. By examining spy films in the 1950s, this paper argues that the technology of information should not be understood solely as mechanical devices, apparatus, or institutions. Rather, the flow of information relies on a process of mediation. By analyzing *Yongbu Xiaoshi de Dianbo* (Eternal Wave, 1958), this paper reveals how the technology of telegraph constantly transcribes characters, emotions, and personalities. Moreover, this paper also investigates the significant “technology” of information appeared in socialist espionage films—the ubiquitous informants, the people of socialist China. Through a close-reading of *Tianluo Diwang* (The Tight Web, 1955) and *Guoqing Shidian Zhong* (Ten O’Clock on the National Day, 1956), this paper aims to demonstrate how human subject become transmitters of information, and how the model subject of socialist China was constructed in this process.

Bio

Wei PENG is currently a second-year GPS postdoctoral fellow at NYU Shanghai. She received her PhD in Chinese Literature from Stanford University. She specializes in modern and contemporary Chinese literature, film, and popular culture, with a focus on how popular literature contests the production of knowledge and power in global modernity. Her research interests include the study of law and literature, crime literature, science and technology in popular culture, and media studies. She is currently working on her first book manuscript about the culture of crime detection in modern China.

Ritwik RANJAN (ShanghaiTech University) Gandhi and the “Untranslatables” of Indian Nationalism

Abstract

Gandhi, as a prolific chronicler of the movements he led, and as the editor of the many newspapers that communicated his ideas to his political allies and followers, had been acutely aware of the crucial role that translations play in political communications. Gandhi's translation of “Civil Disobedience” as “*Satyagraha*” was a major achievement. *Satyagraha* soon became inalienably attached to the natinoalist lexicon and later came to be used successfully in vastly different political and social contexts. Such empathic presence of translation as a theme in Gandhi's life and work may motivate us to look for the “untranslatables” in Gandhian vocabulary. Barbara Cassin, Emily Apter and several other scholars have recently discussed the significance of the presence of “untranslatables” in the

history of ideas. In view of such recent scholarship, this paper will briefly discuss Gandhi's early career in India and the importance of untranslatables, like the concept of *Swaraj*, in nationalist political communication and mobilization in this early phase. How did Gandhi and his interlocutors, friends and foes alike, negotiate the complicated process of translating liberal idioms like "Home Rule" into concepts acceptable to the political milieu of the late colonial India? This and other related questions will be discussed.

Bio

Ritwik was educated in India and the United States. After obtaining a doctoral degree from Princeton, New Jersey, Ritwik taught history at the Indian Institute of Technology, in Assam. Ritwik's association with Shanghai began in 2017 when he worked, during the Fall semester, as a teaching fellow at NYU. After this brief spell in Shanghai, Ritwik moved to India and taught Indian undergraduates in 2018 and the early months of 2019. Ritwik returned to Shanghai in 2019 Fall and was employed at NYU until mid 2021 as a postdoctoral fellow. Since the summer of 2021, Ritwik has been teaching courses on Indian Civilization and Gandhi's life and political career at the Institute of Humanities, Shanghai-Tech University. Ritwik's current academic interests encompass: History of South Asia, Intellectual History, the History and Theory of Historiography, the emerging debates on the Anthropocene in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Ying CHENG (Peking University)

Ying CHENG is an assistant professor in the Department of Asian and African Languages and Cultures, Peking University. Her research interests include youth and popular culture in Africa, African visual and performance arts, cultural interactions between China and Africa, and so on. Dr Ying Cheng is an editorial board member of *Journal of African Cultural Studies*. She has also been a research associate (Arts of Africa and the Souths) of Rhodes University, South Africa since 2017. In recent years, she has published articles in *African Arts*, *Routledge Handbook of African Literature*, *African Theatre*, *Journal of African Culture Studies* and so on.

M. Yunus RAFIQ (New York University Shanghai)

M. Yunus Rafiq is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology, NYU Shanghai; Global Network Assistant Professor, NYU. His research and practice centers on cultural anthropology and ethnographic studies. Prior to joining NYU Shanghai, in 2017 Rafiq performed an ethnographic study in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania with the Ifakara Health Institute on Wazazi Nipendeni--text messages for a maternal and child health campaign implemented by Tanzania Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and funded by the Presidents Emergency for Aids Relief (PEPFAR). From 2015 to 2016, Rafiq performed another ethnographic study

in Tanga, Tanzania on the community's reception of a maternal and child health project with the Transparency for Development and ASH Center, Kennedy School of Governance. Rafiq is also served as a Research Affiliate at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania between 2014 and 2016.

DAY 2
April 30, Saturday

Panel Four
Deconstructing Civilization and Expertise

Chair: Yifei LI (New York University Shanghai)

Yifei Li is an Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies at NYU Shanghai and Global Network Assistant Professor at NYU. Prior to joining NYU Shanghai, he taught sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In the 2020-2021 academic year, he is also a Residential Fellow at the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society in Munich. Professor Li's research concerns both the macro-level implications of Chinese environmental governance for state-society relations, marginalized populations, and global ecological sustainability, as well as the micro-level bureaucratic processes of China's state interventions into the environmental realm. He has received research support from the United States National Science Foundation, the University of Chicago Center in Beijing, and the China Times Cultural Foundation, among other extramural sources. He is coauthor (with Judith Shapiro) of *China Goes Green: Coercive Environmentalism for a Troubled Planet*. His recent work appears in *Current Sociology*, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, *Environmental Sociology*, *Journal of Environmental Management*, and other scholarly outlets.

Emilie TAKAYAMA (New York University Shanghai)

Selling "Civilization and Enlightenment": The Modern Beauty Industry and Empire in Early Twentieth-Century Japan

Abstract

Japan was the first non-Western country to possess a modern beauty industry, and by the 1920s, cosmetics formed an integral part of modern consumer culture. Studies exploring the history of the Japanese beauty industry have primarily focused on the business activities in the metropole. Scholars have paid less attention to how cosmetics firms simultaneously expanded into Japan's growing sphere of influence in East Asia throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This paper will examine how beauty entrepreneurs sold the Meiji-era slogan of "civilization and enlightenment" exerted considerable influence on Japan's imperial ambitions by serving as the "middlemen" of modernity. Beauty companies cemented new ideals and norms surrounding the body by

introducing new commodities such as soap, toothpaste, and facial creams. Firms developed various marketing strategies to educate Chinese and Koreans to think of their bodies as a “malleable project”- something that could and should be constantly worked on for the sake of advancing individual and collective welfare. This paper discusses how the sales of beauty products and services contributed to the debate over the extent to which the bodies of imperial subjects resembled Japanese ones and how they could change. It also shows how the circulation of these goods served as a powerful means that shaped norms about gender, health, beauty, and bodies in early twentieth-century East Asia.

Bio

Emilie Takayama is a postdoctoral fellow at New York University Shanghai. She is working on a manuscript on the history of the beauty industry in East Asia, which is based on her 2018 dissertation from Northwestern University, entitled "Civilizing Japanese Bodies: A History of Self-Improvement and the Beauty Industry in the Japanese Empire, 1868–1945."

Erica MUKHERJEE (New York University Shanghai)

Land, Water, and Salt: The East India Company's Efforts to "Improve" the Sundarbans

Abstract

Because of its position between Calcutta and Britain's imperial shipping lanes, the East India Company (EIC) had long been invested in improving the mangrove swamp known as the Sundarbans. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Lockean idea of “improvement” meant that land should be shaped by human labor into a visually legible and economically prosperous territory. Untouched or illegible landscapes were, conversely, considered “waste.” From the 1780s, the EIC offered revenue incentives to landholders willing to clear, drain, and cultivate the Sundarbans. By the early 1800s, it sought to map and tax this improved landscape. In 1829, on one such mapping expedition, W. Dampier left his post as Commissioner of the Sundarbans in advance of the hot season, claiming that too much of the purportedly improved land had gone to waste to make his survey practicable. Initially, high ranking members of the EIC censured Dampier for dereliction of duty and questioned his interpretations of improvement and waste. Dampier then explained that the improved landscape had gone to waste when protective embankments had broken and salt water inundated the soil. The EIC immediately accepted this explanation and made no further effort to settle, map, or tax what they so clearly understood as a waste-land. While the EIC's relationship with the Bengali environment was often malleable and determined by economic considerations or cultural beliefs, such as geographic morality and civilization, these interpretations come up against a hard boundary when salt is introduced into the landscape. This case then illustrates how material conditions delineate possible social and economic interpretations of the environment.

Bio

Erica Mukherjee is an environmental historian of South Asia, working on the relationships between watery landscapes and large-scale infrastructure projects in Bengal. Research for her current book project, *The Impermanent Settlement: A History of the Actual Water and Soil of Imperial Bengal*, has been supported by two consecutive Fulbright fellowships. Her

most recent publication, “The Impermanent Settlement: Bengal’s Riparian Landscape, 1793-1846,” demonstrates how the East India Company failed to maintain a permanent land tax regime because of the material instability of Bengal’s riverine topography. She is currently a postdoctoral fellow at NYU-Shanghai and prior to that appointment, taught courses in South Asian, environmental, and world history at UNC-Chapel Hill, Stony Brook University, and Bronx Community College.

**Shelley Tuazon GUYTON (New York University Shanghai)
Experts, Advocacy and Disaster Infrastructures in the Philippines**

Abstract

Disaster infrastructure in the Philippines (such as media alerts, disaster mitigation offices, sea walls, etc.) are entangled with the country’s goals to mitigate the effects of climate change. Experts (such as meteorologists, engineers, technicians, etc.) play a central role in designing, constructing, maintaining, these infrastructures for public protection. In this capacity, experts operate or mediate between the government, the environment, and the public. Experts, therefore, often find themselves in the position of using their expertise to advocate for change to the government on behalf of the public. This project brings an ethnographic focus to the experts involved in disaster media infrastructure. How do experts understand their work in relation to the infrastructure, the environment and the public? What challenges do experts face as they navigate relationships with their superiors and with the public they serve as they produce an infrastructure that works for all? How do experts conceptualize and actualize innovative and inclusive infrastructure for community resilience against climate change?

Bio

Shelley Guyton is a Cultural Anthropologist specializing in disaster, media infrastructure, the Philippines and Southeast Asia. She has recently completed her dissertation which analyzes how unequal experience with the disaster media infrastructure in the Philippines create vulnerabilities rather than solutions for marginalized users. Her work contributes to our understanding of what media and communication technologies are to people socially in a range of human experiences.

Panel Five
The Art of Being Overseas Chinese in China

Chair: Guanmian XU (Peking University)

Guanmian Xu is assistant professor in Peking University. He previously studied at Shanghai Maritime University, Chinese University of Hong Kong, and Leiden University. He works on the history of taste and commodities. He is also interested in colonial and global history and post-colonial theories.

Yi Meng CHENG (Peking University)

The Devil in the Details: A Bottom-up Perspective of Mainland China's "you dai huaqiao" Policy during the 1950s and 60s

Abstract

Implemented in the mid-1950s, mainland China's "you dai huaqiao" policy was aimed at rectifying the excesses of the Land Reform, which left many overseas Chinese disillusioned and bitter towards the new regime. The remedial nature of the policy meant that winning the hearts and minds of the overseas Chinese and their dependents was often an uphill struggle for the cadres involved. In the event, the "you dai huaqiao" policy fell far short of its aims. Most of existing scholarship on the overseas Chinese has focused on one or more of the following: the impact of the overseas Chinese on the *qiaoxiang* (Shelly Chan, Ong Soon Keong), the weakening of *qiaoxiang* ties (Yow Cheun Hoe), the shift in national consciousness of the overseas Chinese (Fujio Hara, Chui Kwei Chiang), international relations (Zhou Taomo), and the impact of mainland China's *qiaowu* policy on remittances (Lim Jin Li). Drawing on district and county level archives in the *qiaoxiang*, this paper proposes a fresh perspective which is centered on the implementation of the "you dai huaqiao" policy, which characterized mainland China's *qiaowu* policy during the mid-1950s. This paper examines four aspects of the policy, namely, the return of confiscated landed properties to overseas Chinese and their dependents; the authorities' ambiguous and ambivalent stand towards feudal and superstitious practices; the changing of class labels; the authorities' reception of overseas Chinese sightseeing tours to China. It ultimately argues that the policy failed due to three reasons: first, the lingering concerns of grassroots cadres responsible for implementation; second, the lack of coordination between the various departments involved; third, inherent contradictions in the policy which policymakers were unwilling or unable to address.

Bio

Yi Meng Cheng received his undergraduate degree from the History Department of Peking University in 2012 and a master's degree in Modern Chinese Studies from St Cross College of the University of Oxford in 2013. After working as a middle school teacher in Singapore from 2013 to 2018, he returned to Peking University for my doctoral studies. His current research interests include the overseas Chinese policy of the People's Republic of China and modern Chinese history in general.

Zhiqing CHEN (Peking University)

Fake Overseas Chinese Associations and the Pacific War

Abstract

Organizing Overseas Chinese Association (OCA) after returning home was once a fad for "Huaqiao" (华侨, Overseas Chinese) in Republic China. However, when Japanese invasion

turned the Chinese southeastern coastline and the hometown of millions of huaqiao into a resistance frontier, it was also transforming “Huaqiao” from a seemingly self-evident identity into a category which entailed a strict validation process. During this time of crisis, OCAs were appropriated by local governments as an instrument to calculate and relive “huaqiao”, but it also caused “epistemic anxieties” (as put forward by Ann Stoler) among central officials of Overseas Chinese Affairs and local governments over the essence of these OCAs and the authenticity of “Huaqiao”. This article explores what this anxiety was and how OCAs were related to it. By revisiting the history of an OCA in the bay area of Xiamen, which was accused by local governments as an illegitimate association organized by “fake Huaqiao” in the 1940s, this article aims to question how the category of “Huaqiao” was perceived and practiced by different parties in wartime and in the making of the modern state of China.

Bio

Zhiqing Chen is a third-year MA student in the Department of History at Peking University. She is interested in Chinese diaspora history, Southeast Asian history and historical anthropology, especially the migration network of Hokkienese people in the modern era. Her current project looks at the life story of an Overseas Chinese Association in Fujian of Republic China. Drawing upon the method of historical anthropology and micro-history, she hopes to examine how the concept of “Huaqiao” (Overseas Chinese) was practiced by local people in China, and how it was entangled with the state-making process and global crises from the Great Depression to the Pacific War.

Panel Six

From the Himalayas to the Indian Ocean **Circulatory Histories of People, Goods, and Ideas**

Chair: Yin CAO (Tsinghua University)

CAO Yin is Associate Professor in the Department of History, Tsinghua University. He works on Modern Indian History, Global History, and India-China Connections. He is the author of *From Policement to Revolutionaries: A Sikh Diaspora in Global Shanghai* (Leiden: Brill, 2018) and *Chinese Sojourners in Wartime Raj, 1941-45* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, under contract).

Lingjing WU (Renmin University of China)

The Generation of Imperial Knowledge: The Indian Ocean Sandalwood Trade and the Dispute over the Sandalwood Botanical Taxonomy in the Early Twentieth Century

Abstract

At the beginning of the 20th century, the decline of the Chinese sandalwood market and the rise of European and American sandalwood markets led to changes in the Indian Ocean sandalwood industry. The two international largest sandalwood producing areas--India Mysore and Western Australia, successively turned to the European and American markets. As a result, the competition between the two sandalwood industries had become increasingly fierce. Even the dispute over the sandalwood botanical taxonomy recurred and became the discourse of the commercial debate between the two sides. The focus of the dispute was initially the different quality of Mysore and Western Australian sandalwood and later converted to whether Western Australian sandalwood belongs to the *Santalum* genus. Within the British Empire, the business, political, and scientific communities in London, Mysore, Western Australia and other places had been involved in the debate. The debate ended in an unprecedented "compromised way", which was adding the words "syn. *Santalum*" to Western Australian sandalwood. Although this helped Western Australian sandalwood gain recognition in the European and American markets, it also intensified the competition between Indian and Australian sandalwood industries. This dispute resulted from the colonial expansion of the British Empire, global trade competition and the spread of modern science. It revealed that the knowledge of modern botany was generated in the context of imperial colonization and influenced by the trade competition between the imperial colonies in turn.

Bio

Lingjing Wu is currently a postdoc fellow at the History Department of Renmin university. Her research field is the environmental history of the British empire, and History of Indian Ocean commodity circulation.

Mashuang TIAN (Tsinghua University)

“Leisure Imperialism”: Fossil Power, Place-Branding and Tourist Migration of Ceylon in the Early Twentieth Century

Abstract

In the early twentieth century, Ceylon emerged as a popular destination for international tourists and acquired the accolade as an ‘island with magic’. The legends of tea and the longing for an untampered natural paradise imbued profound imagination into the minds of international travelers that suffered from urban challenges at home. The birth of modern tourism in Ceylon witnessed combined influences of steam-powered infrastructure, the place-brand of Ceylon tea, and the urge to escape from polluted cities. Steamships and railway networks provided cheaper and safer transport for an enlarged community of travelers. The flourishing Ceylon tea industry since the late nineteenth century stirred an imagination of the Oriental natural terroir. In the meantime, urban dwellers from the polluted cities of England sought rehabilitation through the ‘fresh air’ and ‘pure water’, a ‘complete change’ from the accustomed industrial life at home. The full merit of travel in

Ceylon was the recurrent theme within various publications during this period, including industrial and travel guidebooks, newspapers and advertisements, which contributed to the building of tourist imagery and place-brand of Ceylon. The history of tourism in Ceylon indicates the significance where traditional cosmopolitanism and modern transformation merged into vibrant dynamics of global connectivity and cultural diversity.

Bio

Mashuang Tian is a student of South Asia Plantation history at the Department of History, Tsinghua University. His thesis focuses on the global or 'glocal' history of Ceylon tea through the botanical garden network, fossil fuel infrastructure, global banking and brand building, to understand how the plantation economy industry took off in late 19 century, revived Ceylon 'cosmopolitanism' and built the 'national economic identity' of modern Sri Lanka.

Zhiting CHEN (Tsinghua University)

Between Home and Hospital: Mobility of the Pregnant and Midwives

Abstract

High maternal and infant mortality rates had always been a pain for the British officials in the Straits Settlements. Be it among the Europeans, Eurasians or the local community (Malays, Chinese or Indians), high mortality rate during childbirth flashed a warning sign at the population of the colony. In 1905, the infant mortality was about 20% of the total death rate in the Colony, causing great concern. The medical authorities were convinced that ignorance on the part of the mothers and guardians regarding infant care had a great deal to do with the high infant mortality. Added to this was the lack of qualified midwives practicing among the poor. Under such circumstances, following the implementation of the Midwives Ordinance, Kandang Kerbau Maternity Hospital (now Kandang Kerbau Women and Children's Hospital, KKH) was established in 1924. This research aims at the mobility of pregnant women and postings of midwives after Maternity Hospital had been set up in Singapore. it will highlight three scenarios during childbirth: 1) What were the modes of transportation of the pregnant women upon giving birth? 2) How were the midwives being posted to the homes upon being called and what equipment did they bring along with them? Given the situation that not all the trained midwives/nurses were situated at the Hospital. 3) If the pregnant was unable to reach the Hospital, how did the pregnant/midwife react to unforeseen circumstances?

Bio

Sophia Chen is a second year MA student who majors in World History at Tsinghua University. Her research interests are in Food History, History of Medicine in the Tropical region, History of Christianity as well as Overseas Chinese from 19th to 20th Century in Southeast Asia, particularly focusing on the Straits Settlements.