



# Britain and China: pasts, presents and futures, from the nineteenth century to the twenty-first

ABSTRACTS AND PARTICIPANTS

24-26 August 2011

School of Humanities, University of Bristol



Arts & Humanities  
Research Council



## Contents

Programme .....	2
Abstracts .....	5
Panel chairs and other participants .....	25

This conference is convened by the British Inter-university China Centre, a collaboration between the universities of Oxford, Bristol, and Manchester, funded by the ESRC, AHRC and Hefce to establish a global centre of excellence in Chinese Studies.

# Programme

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> August

9.00 Registration and welcome

9.30 **Panel 1: Canton and the British**

John Carroll, Hong Kong University

'The British and Pre-Opium War Canton'

Songchuan Chen, University of Bristol

'Canton in the British Maritime Public Sphere, 1827-1842'

Shunhong Zhang, CASS, Institute of World History

'British perceptions of China and the Opium War'

11.00 Break

11.20 **Panel 2: Chinese Labour and British Empire**

Rachel Bright, London School of Economics

'The "yellow stain" upon "Britain's honour" and Chinese Empowerment, 1904-6'

Ben Mountford, University of Oxford

'The Open Door Swings Both Ways: The Chinese Question in Australia as an Imperial Problem.'

Paul Bailey, University of Durham

'Chinese Labour Corps'

12.50 Lunch

2.00 Keynote 1: Robert Bickers, University of Bristol

3.00 Break

3.30 *Parallel sessions 1:*

**Panel 3a: Wartime and after**

Tom Buchanan, University of Oxford

'"Shanghai-Madrid Axis"? Comparing British responses to the conflicts in Spain and China, 1936-1939'

Sherman Lai, University of Oxford

'Nationalistic Enthusiasm versus Imperialist Sophistication: Britain in Chiang Kai-shek's Perspective'

Lily Chang, University of Oxford

'The Legal Construction of Childhood: Adjudicating Juvenile Offenders in Wartime China, 1931-1945'

Tehyun Ma, University of Oxford

'Rethinking China: the British influence on transnational welfare'

**Panel 3b: Conflicting Stories: Narrating Anglo-Chinese Contact through War and Witness**

Elizabeth Chang, University of Missouri

'Writing the British Empire on the Imperial Frontier'

Ross Forman, University of Warwick

'China Sent Reeling: The Boxer Rebellion, Early Film, and British Imperialism, 1900-1910'

Jacqueline Young, University of Glasgow

'Seeing Ghosts: Putnam Weale and the 1911 Republican Revolution'

Ann Witchard, University of Westminster

'Lao She, London and China's Literary Revolution'

5.45 Keynote 2: Hans van de Ven, University of Cambridge

6.45 Reception

8.00 Conference dinner

### Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> August

8.30 Coffee

#### 9.00 Panel 4: Britain, Empire, China

Koji Hirata, University of Tokyo

'The Sino-British Relations in Railway Construction: the Modernising State, Foreign Interests and Local Elites, 1905-1911'

Isabella Jackson, University of Bristol

'An Expansive and Defensive Semi-colonial Statelet: The International Settlement of Shanghai, 1900-1943'

Jeremy Taylor, University of Sheffield

'Commercial Hokkien entertainment in British Southeast Asia, 1949-1959'

10.30 Break

11.00 *Parallel sessions 2*

#### Panel 5a: Cultural relations

Sarah Cheang, University of the Arts, London

'Bodies, Fashion, China and Britain, 1890-1930'

Michelle Huang, University of Hong Kong

Anglo-Chinese Cultural Exchanges: The Connection between Chinese Artists and British Curators in the 1920s and 1930s '

Diana Yeh, Keele University

'Entangled Identities: Britain and China and the Politics of Performing Chineseness in Britain, 1930s-1950s'

#### Panel 5b: Britain, China, and the Cold War

David Devereux, Canisius College

'Taming the Tiger: British perceptions of the Chinese Threat to East Asia, 1949-65'

Beverley Hooper, University of Sheffield

'Cold War lives: The British diplomatic community under Mao'

Jon Howlett, University of Bristol

'Radicalism Restrained; the Chinese Communist Party and the end of the British presence in Shanghai 1949-1956'

12.30 Lunch

1.30 Keynote 3 Chen Qianping, Nanjing University

3.00 **Panel 6: Late colonial Hong Kong**

Tai-Lok Lui, University of Hong Kong

'Mind the Gap: Managing Political Inclusion in Hong Kong in the 1970s'

Tak-Wing Ngo, University of Macau/Erasmus University, Rotterdam

'The Fabrication of Hong Kong's Politico-Industrial Elite in the 1970s'

Ray Yep, City University of Hong Kong

'Tackling Corruption: The Turbulent Days for ICAC in the 1970s'

4.30 Round table

**Friday 26<sup>th</sup> August**

9.30 'Visualising China' project presentation and Q & A

10.30 Coffee

11.00 **Roundtable: China and Britain today: Diplomacy and politics**

Jointly organised by BICC & Royal Institute of International Affairs

Chair: Dr Kerry Brown, Head of the Asia Programme at the Royal Institute of International Affairs,  
Chatham House

Nick Dean, Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Su Hsing Loh, Fudan University, and Associate Fellow of the Asia Programme at the Royal Institute of  
International Affairs, Chatham House

Peter Wood, Independent China Strategy consultant

Rod Wye, Associate Fellow, RIIA, formerly FCO

Zhu Hong, Director of the Institute of European Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

12.50 Lunch

2.00 **Roundtable: China and Britain today: Mutual understandings**

Chair: Professor Rana Mitter, University of Oxford

Jasper Becker, writer and journalist

Duncan Hewitt, Newsweek

Professor Frank Pieke, Professor of Chinese Studies, Leiden University, and former Director, BICC

4.00 End

## Abstracts

### Paul Bailey

*“Coolies” or Huagong? Conflicting British and Chinese attitudes towards Chinese contract workers in World War One France’*

This paper explores the significance of the British recruitment of Chinese labour in World War One through the prism of contrasting contemporary attitudes taken towards the Chinese workers by both British and Chinese officials and commentators. The paper argues that although British commentary often resorted to essentialising and racist stereotypes, in many ways it also masked a fear of the 'colonised other' highlighted recently by postcolonial historians. Chinese official attitudes demonstrated an intriguing shift in perception of Chinese overseas labour (hitherto described in very negative terms); the contribution of Chinese workers to the allied war effort was harnessed to the wider Chinese government agenda of enhancing national prestige and gaining international respectability.

*Paul Bailey is Professor of Modern Chinese History at the University of Durham, as well as Co-Director of the university's Chinese Studies programme. His current research interests are in the fields of gender, educational and social history of modern China. His book Gender and Education in China (2007) explores the beginnings of public schooling for girls in early twentieth century China. He is currently completing a book on the sociocultural history of Chinese workers in World War One France, entitled The Sino-French Connection. He has also begun a research project on crime, gender and modern state-building in twentieth-century China. His latest book, Women in Twentieth Century China, will be published by Palgrave Macmillan at the end of 2011.*

### Robert Bickers

*Britain and China, and India, 1830s-1947*

British China was in origin an off-shoot of British India, most notoriously it was the prime market for India opium, and through the tea trade a key factor in British Indian revenues. This lecture explores the **history of this triangular relationship**, and the **ways in which the British story in China was shaped by its Indian roots and connections**. The Indian factor remained a live and prominent one until the end of the treaty era in the 1940s, and remained prominent in Hong Kong after the establishment of the PRC. British consuls administered intestate lascar seamen in Shanghai, while Sir Victor Sassoon charmed the city's elite. Sikhs policed China's two international settlements and several British concessions. British Indian forces were deployed four times on active service to protect the British establishment as it promenaded to tiffin along its bunds. Britons besieged at Peking in 1900 chatted about the parallels with Lucknow in 1857. During the Pacific War a British covert warfare unit established a massive black market operation selling Rupees in unoccupied China. Where precisely, the lecture asks, **did the British in China think they actually were?**

*Robert Bickers is Professor of History at the University of Bristol, and a Co-Director of the British Inter-university China Centre. He is the author of Britain in China: Community, Culture and Colonialism, 1900-49 (1999), Empire Made Me: An Englishman Adrift in Shanghai (2003), and The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire, 1832-1914 (2011), and has edited or co-edited*

six further volumes. He has led the 'Tianjin under Nine Flags' project since 2010, and directs the 'Historical Photographs of China' project.

## Rachel Bright

*The "yellow stain" upon "Britain's honour" and Chinese Empowerment, 1904-6*

The use of Chinese labour on the gold mines of the Transvaal was one of the most widely publicised, divisive events ever in the British Empire. The Chinese government for the first time negotiated with a European power over indenture, marking an important shift in the power dynamics of British-Chinese relations. The result was a contract which enshrined working and living rights which far surpassed the norm in South Africa, Britain or China. The Chinese government, and the indentured Chinese sent to South Africa, demonstrated growing, albeit disjointed, assertiveness. The UK's interest reflected a crisis in national and imperial identity, still reeling from the South African War. It was not a popular move for the British to be 'taught humanitarianism' by the Chinese. This episode provides vital insights into the ways Britain and China imagined each other, and themselves in relation to each other, during this crucial period in both nations' history.

*Rachel Bright is a specialist in modern British imperial and African history. Dr. Bright, completed her PhD at King's College London in 2009 on Chinese Indentured Labour in South Africa and the Formation of a Nation, 1902-10, She has a particular interest in Chinese migration, indentured labour, colonial government, violence, colonial nationalism, white settler cultures, and race. Also more generally imperialism and popular culture, globalisation, and colonial identity.*

## Tom Buchanan

*"Shanghai-Madrid Axis"?: Comparing British responses to the conflicts in Spain and China, 1936-1939'*

The impact of the Sino-Japanese War on Britain has generally been overshadowed by the impact of the Spanish Civil War, which broke out a year earlier. Indeed, the only book on the subject, Arthur Clegg's *Aid China* (1989), is subtitled: "A memoir of a forgotten campaign". Yet, for a few months in the autumn of 1937 and spring of 1938, these two campaigns achieved a kind of parity in British public perception. British opinion was united in condemnation of the Japanese bombing of Chinese cities, and – while brief – the ensuing campaign attracted a far broader range of supporters than the movement in solidarity with the Spanish Republic. For instance, the Archbishop of Canterbury publicly criticised Japan's actions in a way that would have been unthinkable in the case of Nationalist Spain and its foreign backers. Moreover, some acts of solidarity with China (such as the refusal by British dockers to load Japanese ships) went far beyond what the supporters of the Spanish Republic could hope to achieve. This paper will make a comparison of the two campaigns, and examine the interconnections between them. It will conclude with a short series of case studies to show how individuals negotiated this "Shanghai-Madrid Axis". These will include the artist Jack Chen, the writers WH Auden and Christopher Isherwood, David Crook (who went to China after fighting in the International Brigades), the journalist Robert Payne, and Joseph Needham.

*Tom Buchanan is Lecturer in Modern History at the University of Oxford. Most of his research has been concerned with the impact of the Spanish Civil War on Britain. He is currently writing a book on China and the British Left, 1925-1976, and is also working on the history of human rights campaigning since 1945. Publications include Europe's Troubled Peace, 1945-2000 (Blackwell's, 2005) and The Impact of the Spanish Civil War on Britain: War, loss and memory (Sussex Academic Press, 2006).*

## John Carroll

*'The British and Pre-Opium War Canton'*

The Canton System, which regulated China's trade with the West from the mid-1700s to 1842, has often been held up as an example of everything that was wrong with Qing China and its relations with the outside world, and of the fundamental incompatibility of "East" and "West". British greed, opium smuggling, and determination to open China; Chinese corruption, xenophobia, lack of official interest in international trade, and refusal to adapt to the demands of a changing world — these are the themes that have featured in most studies of this first sustained encounter between China and the modern West.

One reason this image has endured for so long is because the Canton System has usually been viewed backwards through the lens of the Opium War, making it difficult not to view Canton primarily as a site of conflict and failure. Based on a range of accounts by Britons who visited or resided in pre-war Canton, this paper attempts to avoid viewing this period through the teleology of the war. Rather than asking "why war?", the paper asks a set of somewhat questions. What knowledge of China did these Britons bring with them, and how did it change along the way and once they arrived in China? How did they form their impressions of China, gleaned almost exclusively from within one tiny section of Canton and with only limited and occasional exposure to the city itself and the surrounding countryside? How did they process and package their knowledge of China, not only for other foreigners but also for their compatriots back home?

The paper concludes by suggesting that, by seeing the post-Opium War period as a break from the Canton System, we have perhaps often overlooked some of the ways in which the complexities and contradictions of the British presence (and indeed the Western presence in general) in nineteenth- and twentieth-century China were shaped during this critical period — among others the repeated calls for punishing China versus the many medical and philanthropic ventures, the condemnation of China's "Oriental despotism" versus the praise for its political stability, and the criticism of Chinese culture for its stagnancy versus the admiration for its longevity.

*John Carroll is Professor of History at the University of Hong Kong. His research interests are modern Chinese history, Hong Kong history and colonialism and imperialism in Asia. His publications include A Concise History of Hong Kong (2007) and Edge of Empires: Chinese Elites and British Colonialists in Hong Kong (2005).*

## Elizabeth Chang

*'Writing the British Empire on the Imperial Frontier'*

Chang examines a murder and diplomatic imbroglio that occurred in Yunnan, far from the treaty ports and international settlements that were the centre of "foreign China." She insists on the need to theorize China's borderlands and its relationship to what elsewhere has been called the Great Game because it offers a corrective to a "traditional sense of western China... as a spiritually replete but epistemologically-empty terrain centred around the temples of Tibet."

*Elizabeth Chang focuses in her research and teaching on the literature and visual culture of nineteenth-century Britain, with a particular emphasis on the cultural productions of the British Empire during the Victorian era. She is the author of Britain's Chinese Eye: Literature, Empire and Aesthetics in the Nineteenth Century (2010), which traces the cultural influences of Chinese places, things, and people, real and imagined, on the development of a modern British literary and visual culture in the nineteenth century. Currently she is at work on a project linking nineteenth-century urban gardens and gardening practices in Britain to the circulations of imperial commodities.*

## Lily Chang

*'The Legal Construction of Childhood: Adjudicating Juvenile Offenders in Wartime China: 1931-1945'*

Drawing upon on a series of penal case files of juvenile offenders adjudicated by the collaborationist Shanghai District Court for the First Special Area from 1940 to 1941 as a case study, this paper examines how the social impact of China's War of Resistance against Japan (1937-1945) on urban juveniles in Shanghai brought about a new legal and social understanding of children and childhood in twentieth-century China. As China's most famous treaty port, it had two foreign zones, the French Concession and the International Settlement (primarily British), and not only was it one of China's largest and most complex metropolises during this period, but it was also one of the earliest cities to experience the onslaught of Japanese troops after the outbreak of total war in 1937. Due to the International Settlement, the circumstances and exchanges of foreign and indigenous actors in wartime Shanghai thus reshaped the way in which law interacted with local society as it provides a new entry point into capturing the lived experiences of ordinary civilians. Through an analysis of previously unexamined archival legal case records of juvenile offenders, the paper shows how the Court attempted to challenge the liminal space occupied by juveniles within the legal sphere that once marked the parameters of childhood. As a collective body, the Court's position on children could clearly be identified through an analysis of its legal reasoning towards juvenile offenders during this two-year window. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate the process by which the Court attempted to introduce the concept of a "legal construction of childhood," which went beyond simply using age as the determining factor for criminal liability under wartime conditions. The paper therefore seeks to fill a visible void in the existing scholarship, by examining the social impact that the war had on the youngest and most impressionable members of society.

*Lily Chang is reading for a doctorate in History at the University of Oxford. Lily's doctoral research links two major areas of historical inquiry: crime and delinquency with war and social change. By comparing how two competing regimes (Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government and the Japanese-collaborationist regime under Wang Jingwei) handled the issue of crime and social*

*deviance, her study examines how the outbreak of China's War of Resistance against Japan (1937-1945) served as a catalyst to an increase in criminal activities involving juveniles.*

## Sarah Cheang

*Bodies, Fashion, China and Britain, 1890-1930*

This paper argues that the body was an important site of cultural exchange and transformation in Britain and China in the early twentieth century. It explores a set of material and corporeal engagements between British women, ideas about China, and Chinese things, through examples of feminine and fashionable 'Chineseness' that were worn on the body. The first three decades of the twentieth century saw a resurgence of chinoiserie in the West. Flower, butterfly and dragon motifs, lacquered furniture, red tassels and key patterns emerged as colourful and exotic elements of British modernity. For women, this trend included 'Chinese' lounging pyjamas, dresses, capes, and 'mandarin' robes reconfigured as evening coats. Chinese earrings and even Chinese hairstyles were worn; the most modern, most avant-garde women appeared to be 'turning Chinese'.

Fashionable women have been seen as important and sometimes disruptive figures of modernity, subject to both celebration and censure. Clothing and bodies clearly exist in close association, while the fashionable body combines notions of an active production of cultural identity with more essential and 'natural' ideas of self. Unlike Western dressmaking and tailoring, the cut of Chinese traditional clothing does not follow the contours of the body. Beyond mere surface detail, the adoption of 'Chinese' dress in Britain, and, indeed, Westernised dress in China, went hand in hand with changing attitudes towards the female body and the position of women in society. Hair and hairstyles, often treated as primary indicators of race, proved to be curiously transferrable body characteristics and also precious commodities of cross-cultural exchange.

Western women's interest in Chinese fashions has been variously read as a threat to the moral integrity of white womanhood and to the cultural integrity of European society (along the lines of the Yellow Peril), or alternatively, as a fertile site of enunciation for feminine Orientalism. Here, fashionable corporeal indulgences in Chinese things – Chinese clothes placed on the body, the wearing of Chinese pendants and earrings, and hair styled à la chinois – raise key questions about the nature of British modernity in relation to fashion's flights of fancy, the body, and the economic, cultural and imperial relationships between Britain and China in the early twentieth century. In this paper, corporeality is placed at centre stage in an analysis of modern subjectivities, and the problematic yet crucial dualities of East and West, traditional and modern, male and female.

*Sarah Cheang's work focuses on cultural exchange between East and West, with a special interest in Chinese material culture and the articulation of gender. Her current research centres on two projects, both of which enable her to explore histories of cross-cultural identity, fashion and material culture. The first examines twentieth-century fashions for Chinese things in the West, from garments and hairstyles to wallpapers and Pekingese dogs. The second concerns cultural identity, fashion and corporeality, in a study of ethnic identity, dress and concepts of fashion.*

## Songchuan Chen

*'A battle between the nation and the cosmopolitan: the First Opium War revisited from the perspective of global history, 1827-1842'*

This paper revisits the history of the First Opium War by examining the British public spheres of both Canton and London where heated debates about how to engage with the Chinese took place. The participants were not only the advocates of the war, who made the war conceptually possible, but also a group of self-styled "citizens of the world", who campaigned against the war with a universal humanistic outlook. Thus this was not only a war between the two nations of the Chinese and the British but also an information war between the nation state system and the yet to be born cosmopolitan world system. The battle was fought over global political knowledge of how to imagine the self and the other, and the cosmopolitan viewpoint lost. Ascendant after the war was not only British gunboat diplomacy and modern Chinese nationalism, but also the nation as the collective identity, global ideology, war machines, and the field where meanings constructed and power struggles played out. The reappraisal of the war brings the voice of the cosmopolitan back to history and moves toward a perspective of global history.

*Songchuan Chen is a Research Associate in the Centre for East Asian Studies at the University of Bristol. His research interests lie in the field of the history the Qing Empire (1636-1911) and Republican China, especially their foreign relations with the Europeans in the context of global history. He is currently (2008-2011) working as part of the team on the research project "Colonialism in Comparative Perspective: Tianjin under Nine Flags, 1860-1949". In autumn 2011 he will take up a Research Fellowship at Singapore Nanyang Technology University.*

## Qianping Chen

近代外国在华投资的几个问题——以英国在华投资为中心的分析

(摘要) 南京大学 陈谦平

本篇论文以 19 世纪末、20 世纪上半叶英国在华运营的几家企业为案例，探讨了以下几个问题：

第一，外资企业是不是中国现代化的障碍？作者认为给中国民族资本企业发展造成严重阻碍的根源有二：一是国内政治的腐败，二是日本发动的侵华战争。

第二，作者肯定了香港和上海在中国的现代化进程中扮演的重要角色。作者认为，高度国际化或许是香港和上海取得经济奇迹的决定性因素。西方人管理下的香港和上海租界为西方经济生活方式引入中国提供了政治和法律基础。

第三，作者认为在华外资企业的资本，最主要来源于外资在华运营所赚的利润以及中国人、买办、官员的投资和股份。到 20 世纪二三十年代，中外合股建立的工厂、公司和银行比比皆是，中国已融入国际化的经济制度中。

第四，外资企业同中国民族资本企业的关系并不是简单的压迫与被压迫、剥削与被剥削的对立关系。从买办制度发展到外商同中国民族资本企业的直接合作，其动因在于共同的经济利益。欧美企业家同中国民族资本家之间是一种既合作又竞争的共存关系。

*Professor Qianping Chen is the director of the Department of History at Nanjing University. Professor Chen has engaged in joint research projects with leading universities and research institutions, including the East Asian Institute at Cambridge and Fairbank Centre for Chinese Studies at Harvard. His research focuses on the history of the Minguo era and is broadly concerned with the politics, military and international relations of Minguo. His major publications include, The History of Anti-Japanese War (co-editor) and Chiang Kai-shek (co-author).*

## David Devereux

*'Taming the Tiger: British perceptions of the Chinese Threat to East Asia, 1949-65'*

The victory of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) over its Nationalist (KMT) foe in 1949 is widely interpreted as having brought the developing Cold War firmly into eastern Asia. The United States in particular led the way in developing a strategy of containment in both Korea and later in Vietnam that had vast implications for the region and for the deeply hostile relationship between the new Chinese government and the leading Western powers. What is less known are the ways in which the British governments of the period established a more pragmatic strategy designed to suit Britain's unique interests in the region while at the same time retaining and indeed promoting the critical Anglo-American alliance.

This paper argues that through opening diplomatic ties with Beijing soon after the Communist victory, Britain hoped to keep a channel of communication open and to influence potential Chinese expansionism towards Hong Kong and also its support of the insurgency in Malaya. Although Britain was an active participant in the Korean War, both Labour and Conservative governments attempted a more nuanced approach than the hard line perspective of their American allies. Through its diplomacy at the Geneva conference in 1954 and measured support of American initiatives in south-east Asia and Taiwan, Britain hoped to retain a significant diplomatic and strategic presence in the region while managing carefully the process of decolonization. Britain was in the process of winding up its imperial presence by granting independence to Malaya and Singapore and yet hoped to retain a network of strategic bases. The Commonwealth still acted as a significant force in binding Australia and New Zealand to the defense of the region and Britain also maintained important relationships with India, Pakistan and Ceylon. Simultaneously, the US was attempting to support pro-western governments around the perimeter of Communist China, from South Korea to Pakistan.

The paper therefore examines the differing Anglo-American perceptions of Communist China from the point of view of both decolonization and the Cold War. Through the use of primary and recently published secondary sources, the perceived role of the Chinese threat to India, Hong Kong and the Laotian and Vietnamese conflicts will be studied. It is the contention of the paper that Britain did not fully share the harsh anti-Communist views of their colleagues in Washington but attempted a more careful and practical approach both to safeguard its remaining interests in the region and to avoid the outbreak of a full-scale regional war with China.

David Devereux is Associate Professor of History at Canisius College. His publications include *The Formulation of British Defence Policy Towards the Middle East, 1948–1956*; and *State Versus Private Ownership: The Conservative Governments and British Civil Aviation 1951–62*. He is currently researching British attitudes towards China and East Asia in the 1960s.

## Ross Forman

*'China Sent Reeling: The Boxer Rebellion, Early Film, and British Imperialism, 1900-1910'*

This paper centres on Beijing after the arrival of the allied troops to suppress the Boxers, examining the way in which the localized geography of China's capital was meant to stand in for new power relations between China, Britain, and her allies. Forman's contribution also looks at literal theatres, in that he considers newsreels of troop movements following the Boxer Rebellion that would have been shown in British, American, and imperial cinemas and that exposed the so-called Forbidden City to Western eyes.

Ross G. Forman is a specialist in imperialism and in the history of sexuality. His book, *China and the Victorian Imagination: Empires Entwined*, is forthcoming with Cambridge University Press. His essay, "Nineteenth-century Beefs: Britons and the Brazilian Stage," recently appeared in *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*.

## Koji Hirata

*'The Sino-British Relations in Railway Construction: State, Imperialism and Local Elites, 1903-1911'*

On 9 May 1911 the Qing government declared a new policy of nationalising major railway lines on its soil, many of which had been run by private or semi-private companies. On the 20<sup>th</sup> the Qing signed the agreement of a large loan called the Huguang railway loan with a consortium of British, French, German and American banks. These government policies evoked a nation-wide outcry against the Qing selling out China's sovereign rights to foreign powers. The protest was especially intense in Sichuan, and the tension there was transmitted to its neighbouring province, Hubei, where an uprising by soldiers launched the 1911 Revolution.

The events of 1911 obviously influenced early historical works on the railways in late Qing China. Many early scholars shared with the 1911 activists and revolutionaries the assumption that the railway was a tool for foreign imperialism to exploit China and that the Qing government was collaborating with foreign interests. Later studies cast doubt on the assumptions held by these early studies, implicitly or explicitly. The late Qing railways have been studied by historians of imperialism as well. In their *British Imperialism*, Peter Cain and Anthony Hopkins argued that from the late nineteenth century to the First World War the main agenda of British policy in China was to promote British financial interests by 'maintaining the credit-worthiness of the Chinese Government', especially by supporting central state authority in China. In their argument railway loans played an important role. But China historians and historians of imperialism rarely refer to each other, even though both of them study the same railways.

In this paper, I would like to such a discrepancy between Chinese history and imperial history by focusing on the interactions between foreign imperialism and Chinese politics. To do so, I will study the Qing government officials, the local elites in Sichuan and other provinces, and British and other foreign diplomats and bankers.

I argue three points. First, the Qing officials tried to carry on their last modernising project, at least partly, through collaboration with foreign imperialism. Second, the policy-making of Britain and other Western powers were much responsive to Chinese politics. Third, the local elites were increasingly frustrated by the Qing's modernising-centralising project and by the seemingly-aggressive foreign encroachment in China, and the Qing-Western collaboration on the railway through loans bolstered the tension between the Qing state and those local elites, thus paved way for the 1911 Revolution.

*Koji Hirata graduated from the University of Tokyo (B. Law in 2005 and L.L.M. in 2009) and the University of Bristol (M.Phil in History, 2007) under the supervision of Prof. Robert Bickers. He also studied in National Cheng-chi University and Peking University, and studied Russian in Moscow. He will be starting a PhD in History at Stanford University in fall 2012. His research interest lies in foreign relations of modern China, especially those with Britain, Japan and Russia.*

## Beverley Hooper

*'Cold War lives: The British diplomatic community under Mao'*

Britain was the only Western nation with a sizeable diplomatic community in Peking throughout the Mao era. Without US recognition of the PRC, the British continued their role as 'leaders of the Western diplomatic community', as one journalist expressed it, at least until France established diplomatic relations in 1964. As more Western nations recognised China from the early 1970s, the British became only one of many Western diplomatic communities in Peking, though a number of their diplomats already had substantial experience of living and working under Mao.

This paper examines the British diplomatic community in the context of the political environment of the Mao era, as a case study of Western diplomatic life under communism during the Cold War. It argues that China's communist government had a substantial impact on diplomats' abilities to fulfil their customary working role. In contrast, it had only a limited direct influence on the social life, and more generally the lifestyles, not just of diplomats but of the broader British diplomatic community. While these features were largely shared by other Western diplomatic communities in Peking, the British were more politically vulnerable because of their government's 'imperialist activities', particularly in Hong Kong.

The Mao regime's controls on diplomats' access to information, officials and other Chinese people made their working lives difficult and frustrating. They shared a number of features with their colleagues in Moscow – China-watching paralleled Kremlin-watching and there were awkward relations with the host government – though there was not quite the same level of Cold War security concerns and fears of attempted 'entrapment'. All contact with Chinese people, apart from locally-engaged staff, had to be arranged through the Foreign Ministry. The only exception was a handful of

'licensed contacts', usually intellectuals with former Western links who, like the diplomats, reported afterwards on their discussions.

In contrast, the British community's overall lifestyle, including its self-contained social life, was mostly indirectly influenced by the Communist government, notably through the reduced number of Western diplomatic missions and the disappearance of the expatriate community with its clubs and other accoutrements. As in other 'hardship posts', maintaining personal morale was of major concern, with the head of the diplomatic mission speaking of the whole British community as a 'family', to be looked after and kept busy with everything from Scottish dancing to organising English-style village fetes. Behind the 'family' image, though, there were strong social divisions which, while characteristic of British diplomatic missions, were magnified in post-revolutionary Peking because people were thrown together much more than was usually the case.

Regardless of the social divisions, all bore the brunt of being seen as representatives of British imperialism and had to contend with regular 'spontaneous' demonstrations outside the diplomatic mission. These culminated in the invasion of the compound by Red Guards on 22 August 1967, with twenty-three Britons being beaten and abused as they emerged from the burning Chancery building. While the British media praised the victims' heroism, there was another picture behind the discourse of resilience and stoicism, particularly when staff and their families became pawns in the diplomatic standoff between Britain and China.

*Beverley Hooper is Professor Emeritus of East Asian Studies at the University of Sheffield. She is currently writing a book on Western residents in the People's Republic of China during the Mao era (1949-1976): the remnants of the Pre-revolutionary Western community, long-term residents (China's 'foreign comrades'), the small group of Korean War POWs who settled in China, the diplomatic community, correspondents, short-term 'foreign experts', and students. The project focuses on the identities of the individual communities and the dynamics operating within and between them.*

## Jon Howlett

*'Radicalism Restrained; the Chinese Communist Party and the end of the British presence in Shanghai 1949-1956'*

This paper presents the conclusions drawn after five years of BICC-funded PhD research and language study. The paper focuses on my thesis topic, the elimination of the British presence in Shanghai in the years following the Communist takeover of the city in May 1949, but it also has a broader appeal in that it draws on themes familiar to many of those who study China, radicalism and nationalism, pragmatism and the search for stability. Although the Chinese Communist Party viewed the takeover of Shanghai as their anti-imperialist moment, and treated what followed as a form of decolonisation, they did in fact have to moderate their radical anti-imperialism in order to achieve short term economic stability and avoid political crises. While it seemed to many at the time that foreigners treated harshly by these rough peasant ideologues and were the subjects of a cunning 'master-plan' to strip them of their assets what actually happened was more complicated.

The paper uses three main case studies. Firstly, there is the case of Matheson, an employee of the Shanghai Tram Company who came to be portrayed as a living embodiment of imperialism after

being arrested for viciously assaulting a Chinese worker. The CCP used the Matheson case and others like it to demonstrate the fact that foreigners were no longer immune to Chinese justice and to channel anti-imperialist anger towards a small number of individuals while taking a more moderate policy towards foreign organisations businesses. The second case study is based on the CCP's entry into the formerly British-owned **Orient Paint Colour and Varnish Company**, although the imperialist exploitation of the past was loudly denounced to spur the workers to increase production it is clear from the takeover work team's reports that their first priority was to ensure a stable take over. They only encouraged anti-imperialist rhetoric, not anti-imperialist action. Finally, it is demonstrated that in despite their hostility towards British businesses the CCP adopted **a long term strategy which allowed for the stabilisation of the economy**, they created a situation where foreign firms were unable to function without CCP approval and were later manoeuvred into a position where they could be taken over. The case of the China Engineers is used to demonstrate that the existing narrative of this period, created by influential opinion-formers and British government officials, is too neat. While large firms such as Jardine, Matheson & Co. switched 'from trade in China to trade with China' the China Engineers were unable to remove their fixed assets from Shanghai and so lost everything. Examples like that of the China Engineers demonstrate the chaos and complexity behind what has previously been dealt with as quite a simple historical narrative. In the Matheson and Orient Paint cases as well as in the CCP's overall approach to British business we can see that **pragmatism was valued over ideology** and that **anti-imperialism was used in a targeted and controlled manner**.

*Jon Howlett is a PhD student at the University of Bristol. His research focuses on the foreign, especially British, presence in China, and on the Chinese Communist Party's interactions with foreigners. His thesis project uses newly available Chinese language archival sources to examine the ending of the British presence in Shanghai, and the transformation of the city in the years following its takeover by the Chinese Communist Party in 1949. The thesis is based on research conducted in Shanghai and Beijing while affiliated to the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences in 2009-2010.*

## Michelle Ying Ling Huang

*'Anglo-Chinese Cultural Exchanges: The Connection between Chinese Artists and British Curators in the 1920s and 1930s'*

The 1935-6 International Exhibition of Chinese Art held at the Royal Academy of Arts, Burlington House in London was an important event showing the early collaboration between British and Chinese museums. While the Western conception of Chinese art was largely shaped by Japanese and European expertise in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, numerous works of art brought from China's national collections and the advice from Chinese experts in the International Exhibition helped enhance the British understanding of Chinese art and culture with fine specimens and native views from the original country.

**A dedicated curator of Oriental Prints and Drawings from the British Museum, Laurence Binyon (1869-1943) who was among the pioneering art historians and collectors of Chinese art benefited from scholarly exchanges with Chinese artists and scholars in Britain.** Although Binyon had widely been regarded as the authority on Chinese painting in Europe, America and Japan around 1900-1940, he had not come into contact with Chinese experts and learned about their native views of Chinese

art and history until the late 1920s. Binyon's correspondence with and writings about his Chinese friends, such as Kung-pah T. King (1878-1926), Liu Haisu (1896-1994) and Chiang Yee (1903-1977), provides valuable resources to reconstruct the early history of curatorial exchanges between Britain and China.

This paper presents for the first time a focused study of cultural exchanges between Laurence Binyon and Chinese artists and scholars in the 1920s and 1930s. With reference to Binyon's legacy as found in several archival resources scattered in different countries, I will reconstruct the itinerary of Binyon's only trip to China and Japan with his colleague Robert L. Hobson (1872-1941) in 1929 on searching for fine works of Oriental painting, ceramic and sculpture. I will also investigate the interaction among Chinese artists, ambassadors, British curators and collectors in order to show how Chinese connoisseurship influenced the Western perception of Chinese art, and how Chinese scholars considered Binyon's contribution to the appreciation and study of Chinese art in the West. The impact of the 1935-6 International Exhibition of Chinese Art on nurturing Anglo-Chinese cultural exchanges will also be evaluated.

*Michelle Ying Ling Huang is Visiting Assistant Professor at the Department of Fine Arts, University of Hong Kong, 2010-11, and has been appointed to the post of Assistant Curator (Art), Leisure and Cultural Services Department, HKSAR government. Her article "British Interest in Chinese Painting, 1881-1910: The Anderson and Wegener Collections of Chinese Painting in the British Museum" has just appeared in the Journal of the History of Collections, Vol. 22, Issue 2, November 2010.*

## Isabella Jackson

*"Good Fences Make Good Neighbours": Expansion and Defence in the International Settlement at Shanghai'*

The International Settlement of Shanghai expanded dramatically during the nineteenth century. It originated in a small area established in 1843 according to the provisions of the Treaty of Nanjing, where it was anticipated that British traders would settle on a temporary basis in order to conduct trade. By 1900, it occupied 5,500 acres at the heart of the most bustling, prosperous and cosmopolitan city of East Asia. The Shanghai Municipal Council, which managed the settlement, was not satisfied with this territory, however, and continued for decades to seek further expansion of the settlement limits. Meanwhile, it also quietly expanded the area under its control by building municipal roads external to the settlement and providing services such as policing to their residents in return for the payment of slightly reduced rates. As Chinese nationalism strengthened in the 1920s and the extraterritoriality on which the settlement's existence depended became increasingly untenable, the council eventually, grudgingly conceded that the settlement would never again expand its boundaries, and many recognised that its days were in fact numbered.

At the same time as seeking the expansion of the settlement, the council's primary concern remained defensive. Annual reports began every year with an account of the strength of the Shanghai Volunteer Corps, followed by the Shanghai Municipal Police report, and municipal budgetary allocation reflected the priority given to defence. The settlement was perceived as an

isolated island in the midst of a hostile and chaotic China, and whilst this was an exaggeration, the upheaval witnessed in the region during this period did threaten the settlement's security on more than one occasion. As international pressure built, Shanghai became a focus of Japanese aggression in China and the settlement's defensive position was tested to the limit in the Sino-Japanese conflicts of 1932 and from 1937.

This paper will analyse the expansive and defensive nature of the Shanghai Municipal Council in order to better characterise the precise nature of the anomalous International Settlement. It locates the history of Shanghai in this period in its regional political setting and establishes that the settlement functioned as a semi-colonial statelet, comparable to the colonial states to which it was linked and which it in many ways emulated. Despite remaining at all times Chinese sovereign soil, the settlement was treated as a territory in need of expansion and defence, and the Shanghai Municipal Council did not tire of pursuing these goals.

*Isabella Jackson is in the final year of her PhD at the University of Bristol. Her dissertation investigates how the Shanghai Municipal Council managed the International Settlement from 1900 to its demise in 1943, charting its evolution in response to the rapidly changing political environment. This allows an analysis of the precise nature of the foreign colonialism present in China in this period as it was implemented on the ground. Isabella read History at the University of Bristol for her BA and MA, and completed an MPhil in Modern Chinese Studies at the University of Oxford before returning to Bristol to continue working under the supervision of Professor Robert Bickers.*

## Sherman Lai

*'Nationalistic Enthusiasm versus Imperialist Sophistication: Britain in Chiang Kai-shek's Perspective'*

Arthur N Young, a prestigious financial specialist from the United States and a financial advisor of the Chinese Nationalist government during the Second Sino-Japanese War, pointed out that Chiang Kai-shek, China's national leader, was so biased against Britain that he did not appreciate latter's valuable assistance, which proved essential to China's war effort against the Japanese invasion. This bias not only increased Chiang's frictions with Britain but also affected his relations with the United States. Based on recently opened Chiang Kai-shek diaries, this paper will outline Chiang Kai-shek's perception of Britain and analyze the tragic outcome of the interactions of Chiang's nationalistic enthusiasm and Britain's sophisticated imperialistic diplomacy. It will argue that these interactions not only enabled China to stay in a protracted war of resistance against the Japanese invasion but also sowed the seeds of the collapse of the Nationalist government in 1949. Young's observation reflected not only the clashes of the opposing trends of Britain's sophisticated imperialistic diplomacy and Chiang's nationalistic enthusiasm to recover China's sovereignty and restore its past glory but also latter's lack of confidence in foreign affairs. Britain's mishandling of Burma campaign in 1942 cost Chiang's best troops and remaining trust. Chiang found that Britain's diplomacy was too sophisticated to identify its real intention. He thus minimized contacts with British authorities and began pursuing his agenda of cosmopolitan de-colonization by publicly supporting Indian nationalists under the leadership of Mohandas Gandhi. This policy provoked Britain's suspicion as well as worries from the United States who became increasingly anxious with Anglo-Chinese relations in a common front against Japan. When Japan launched offensives into India in the spring of 1944, the United States pressed Chiang to diverge the Japanese through offensives from China into Burma when the

Japanese were slicing through Free China during Operation *Ichigo*, destroying the public trust to the Nationalist government, a prelude of the Communist takeover in 1949.

*Sherman Lai joined the Chinese army after his studies. He worked at the Academy of Military Sciences as a translator, sub-editor, and analyst of US security policy in the Western Pacific (1995-96). He moved to Montreal in 2000, and obtained an MA in the War Studies from Royal Military College of Canada (2002) and a PhD from Queen's University at Kingston, Canada (2008). His doctoral thesis concerns the growth of the military and financial strength of the Chinese Communist Party in Shandong province during Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945). He has published broadly, mostly in Chinese, on history and the military.*

## Tai-lok Lui

*'Mind the Gap: Managing Political Inclusion in Hong Kong in the 1970s'*

This paper is an attempt to take a look at how the colonial government dealt with the question of political reform in the mid-1970s. The so-called the 'MacLehose era' was widely perceived as a decade of social reforms. Yet, despite the governor's recognition of the existence of an anachronistic political system, little had been done about reforming the political arrangement. Political reform was once brought up as an issue of discussion and possible action in the communication between London and Hong Kong. But the governor decided to appoint members with a grassroots background and/or with connection of labour services to the key decision-making bodies instead of introducing unionists into the formal political system. This was a compromise that accommodated both the call for some form of political inclusion and the resistance to an opening of political participation to organized labour. This constituted MacLehose approach to the question of political representation. It was an improved version of the so-called consultative democracy under the colonial rule and largely stayed intact until the beginning of the Sino-British negotiations over Hong Kong's future and subsequently the initiation of political reform in the face of decolonization.

*Tai-Lok Lui is Professor of Sociology at the University of Hong Kong. His research interests are class analysis, economic sociology, urban sociology, and Hong Kong society. Publications include Hong Kong: Becoming a Chinese Global City (with Stephen Chiu, 2009) and Hong Kong, China: Learning to Belong to a Nation (with G. Mathews and E. Ma, 2008).*

## Tehyun Ma

*Rethinking China: the British influence on transnational welfare*

The Nationalist government considered ambitious plans for social welfare reform at the end of the Second World War. Among the sources of inspiration for Nationalist planners was Britain's famous Beveridge Report. This paper considers the transnational links via NGOs and the flow of ideas that linked ideas of social welfare in the very different circumstances of Chiang's China and Churchill and then Attlee's Britain.

*Tehyun Ma completed her Ph.D. in History at the University of Bristol. Her research probes the ideological and administrative preoccupations of Chinese Nationalist leaders as they strove to mobilise Taiwan for conflict with the Communists after 1945. Her current project explores how the Nationalist Government planned the rehabilitation and reconstruction of territories occupied by the Japanese during the Second World War. Tehyun has taught at the University of Bristol and has held an Overseas Research Studentship and a Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation dissertation fellowship.*

## Benjamin Mountford

*'The Open Door Swings Both Ways: The Chinese Question in Australia as an Imperial Problem.'*

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, it seemed to a number of observers that the British Empire's 'Chinese Questions' (as they were sometimes called) were becoming entwined. As British officials worked to preserve regional pre-eminence and secure mercantile expansion on the China coast, colonial authorities in Australia were taking steps to insulate their fledgling populations from the prospect of large-scale Chinese migration. This paper explores the interconnection between Chinese migration to Australia and the protection of British mercantile and strategic interests in the Far East as imperial issues. More generally, it considers the notion that colonial Australia constituted an important point of contact between the British and Chinese Empires.

*Benjamin Mountford's doctoral research at Oxford explores the importance of colonial (particularly Australian) relations with China within British Imperial history in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. This project reflects a broader interest in British foreign and colonial policy, the British World and histories of migration, trade and cultural exchange.*

## Tak-Wing Ngo

*'The Fabrication of Hong Kong's Politico-Industrial Elite in the 1970s'*

The industrial economy of Hong Kong took off after the Second World War. The economic transformation led to the emergence of industrial interests. Unlike the long-standing commercial elite who comprised mainly of British merchant houses, the industrialists were almost exclusively Chinese in origin. Political accommodation of such increasingly prominent interests posed a challenge for the colonial government, especially after the social unrest in the late 1960s. This paper examines how the ruling strategies undertaken by the colonial administration before and during the MacLehose era shaped the formation of an industrial elite class. It shows how the colonial authorities exercised its power of state licensing in granting a selected group of industrial oligarchs the right of political representation and the access to oligopolistic rents. In exchange for their privileges, these politico-industrial oligarchs became a strong supporter of the colonial order throughout the 1970s.

*Tak-Wing Ngo is Extraordinary Professor of Asian History at Erasmus University Rotterdam and Professor of Political Science at the University of Macau, China. He holds a PhD in politics from SOAS, University of London. He worked as an anti-corruption official and journalist before joining Leiden University, where he taught for 15 years. Tak-Wing's research interest focuses on state-market*

*relations and the political economy of development. He is currently undertaking comparative studies of rent seeking and institutional voids in Asia. His publications include Rent Seeking in China (2009, co-edited with Yongping Wu) and Political Conflict and Development in East Asia and Latin America (2006, co-edited with Richard Boyd and Benno Galjart).*

## Jeremy Taylor

*'Commercial Hokkien entertainment in British Southeast Asia, 1949-1959'*

Much has been written about the cultural side of Emergency in colonial Malaya—the role of colonial British interests in banning the production, import, exhibition or broadcast of overtly pro-communist films and music by and to the various ethnic Chinese communities which lived in British colonial Southeast Asia.

Far less has been written, however, about the equal colonial reluctance to restrict the spread of pro-Nationalist Chinese sentiment amongst these same communities. Based on sections of my new book *Rethinking Transnational Chinese Cinemas: The Amoy-dialect Film Industry in Cold War Asia* (Routledge 2011), this paper seeks to explore this field by examining the ways in which commercial entertainment in the Chinese dialect of Hokkien (one of the most widely spoken of Chinese dialects in Malaya and other British possessions in the region)—and produced either in Nationalist Taiwan or by pro-KMT émigrés in Hong Kong throughout the 1950s—was subject to political restrictions and censorship.

In many regards, Hokkien commercial entertainment in British Southeast Asia was in a uniquely unusual position. Hokkien-speaking audiences on the Malay Peninsula, in Singapore and in the British territories on Borneo represented a substantial market for producers in Taipei and Hong Kong. At the same time, however, a traditional British distrust of Nationalist China meant that this industry was essentially required to disguise its origins from the censors. Indeed, colonial censorship played a defining role in ensuring that Hokkien entertainment in the immediate postwar years remained largely void of political content.

*Jeremy E. Taylor works on the social, political and cultural history of the Chinese-speaking world. He is the author of *Rethinking Transnational Chinese Cinemas: The Amoy-dialect Film Industry in Cold War Asia* (London: Routledge, 2011). His work, on topics ranging from the Chiang Kai-shek personality cult to Hong Kong historiography, has been published in leading Area Studies and History journals. He is also the author of a number of book chapters and encyclopaedia entries.*

## Hans van de Ven

Title TBC

Hans van de Ven's paper analyzes the role of the Customs Service in the emergence of a Chinese domestic bond market and the rise of modern Chinese banks, and the changing political role of the Customs Service that was a consequence of this development. It further analyzes Francis Aglen's policy, which was based on the idea that the disciplines of sound finance, including honesty, reliability, and regularity, could provide a cure for China's ills. He finally examines the emergence of a powerful public discourse in which tariff autonomy became a key ingredient of Chinese nationalism.

*Hans van de Ven is Professor of Modern Chinese History at the University of Cambridge. His research interests are history of the Chinese Communist Party before 1949, the history of warfare in modern China from the Taiping Rebellion to the Civil War between the Communists and the Nationalists, the history of Chinese globalization in the 1850-1950 period. Currently I am working on a book about the Chinese Maritime Customs Service, which managed much of China's waterborne traffic between 1850 and 1950 and helped build such modern cities as Shanghai. I am also one of the editors of the Cambridge History of Modern Warfare.*

## Anne Witchard

*'Lao She, London and China's Literary Revolution'*

This paper sets out to consider some of the ways in which Chinese cultural and intellectual texts engaged with Western constructions of modernism at the beginning of the twentieth century. Of these exchanges and encounters, actual as well as textual, my particular focus will be on the early life and work of the Chinese novelist Lao She (February 3, 1898 - August 24, 1966). Lao She was uniquely positioned in his engagement with specific conditions of modernity and nationhood both in Britain and in China. By birth a disenfranchised Manchu, he lived and worked in London during the late 1920s, a period seen as the apex of high modernism and his writing registers this interaction in ways that demand we rethink his work beyond the parameters of the socialist realist tradition to which it has been confined. Reading Lao She as an incipient modernist, initiating in China new subjects and new styles of writing in the endeavour to remake the sensibility of the Chinese people, serves also to unsettle Eurocentric considerations of modernism as exclusively Western, its place of origin unquestionably the metropolitan West.

*Anne Witchard's research and teaching interests are in Gothic, the Fin de Siècle, London Studies and Modernism. She is currently working on a book project Lao She, London and China's Literary Revolution for HKUP and two other projects: A Forbidden Passion: China and the Gothic Imagination, is an examination of the role of chinoiserie in the modern construction of the Gothic, and The Modernist Muse: Women in the Artist's Studio 1890-1914 which examines the innovations of modernist women, both as models and artists, roles which in many cases were simultaneous.*

## Diana Yeh

*'Entangled Identities: Britain, China and the Politics of Performing Chineseness in Britain, 1930s–1950s'*

Despite the growth of scholarship on Sino-British encounters over the last decade, there remains a severe lack of research on the cultural activities and interethnic relations of the Chinese in Britain. As a result, the British Chinese are still often perceived as an invisible and insular community who, by contrast to African Caribbean and South Asian groups in Britain, have had little social, cultural or political impact on British society. This paper challenges such assumptions by discussing original research on the lives and works of the husband and wife, Shih-I and Dymia Hsiung, two once highly visible but now largely forgotten writers who lived and worked in Britain from the 1930s onwards.

Shih-I Hsiung, the playwright, shot to worldwide fame with his play *Lady Precious Stream* in the 1930s, while Dymia Hsiung was possibly the first Chinese woman to publish in the 1950s a fictional autobiography in English of her life in Britain.

By exploring **how the Hsiungs negotiated their position in British society**, this paper analyses specific encounters between Britons and Chinese, and **the entangled formation of British and Chinese identities between the 1930s and 1950s**. These were shaped by the historical legacies of racial ideologies and Britain's informal empire in China as well as the unfolding circumstances of the Sino-Japanese war, British domestic politics in the interwar and post-war period and the rise of Communism. I discuss how the Hsiungs navigated multiple, co-existing discourses of 'Chineseness', which entwined with those of gender, class and age as well as dominant conceptions of 'art' and the moral and sexual principles of the British nation.

First, I illuminate how the Hsiungs and their works become caught up in uses of culture as a political tool in both international diplomacy and the management of domestic social relations. Second, by examining how they navigated the institutional structures of the British cultural sphere, I bring to light the mediating role of theatre producers, publishers and critics in the production, distribution and reception of Chinese culture in Britain. Thirdly, by exploring the media reception of their works, I map out and analyse heterogeneous responses to their works as a means of highlighting the variegated relations between the British and the Chinese at the time. In doing so, I trace the shifts and slippages in meanings attached to the works from the Hsiung's intentions through to sites of production, apparatuses of distribution and finally into the lives of audiences.

This paper draws on three years of fieldwork, involving ethnographic and biographical interviewing as well as participant observation among the Hsiungs' familial and social networks in London, Beijing, Taipei and Washington and extensive archival research.

The stories of the Hsiungs in Britain highlight the politics of identity formation in Britain between the 1930s and 1950s. By showing how they had to negotiate acceptance in British society by performing particular types of Chineseness, I suggest that their works are as informative about British identity and culture at the time as they are about the Chinese.

*Diana Yeh is Sociological Review Fellow at Keele University. She is working on a book, *Art and Migration: Chinese Identities, Global Lives* based on her doctoral research, completed at the University of East London in 2009. The book presents a multi-sited ethnography of belonging among four Chinese migrant artists in Britain from the 1930s to the present day in light of their histories in South Africa, Italy, China and Taiwan. Her new research examines pan-ethnic identity formation in Chinese, Vietnamese and other East and South East Asian youth cultures in Britain. She is also a course leader on Birkbeck's MA in Culture, Diaspora and Ethnicity.*

## Ray Yep

*'Revisiting the Golden Era of MacLehose: Hong Kong on the eve of Sino-British Negotiation'*

**Independent Commission against Corruption (ICAC)** has been cherished as one of the major institutional legacies inherited from the British rule. The campaign against corruption was however, hardly a smooth ride. This paper attempts to trace **the colonial administration's changing approach**

in tackling corruption between 1960s and mid 1970s and revisits the turbulences faced by the Commission during its early days. In the 1960s, it was always assumed that there existed an ethnic divide as corruption was mostly confined to local Chinese at junior level and expatriates were by and large detached from these shady affairs. The case of Godber was a wake-up call as it shown that British officers were hardly invulnerable. The Commission's accelerated effort in erasing corruption against local police however backfired. The police mutiny and the consequent pronouncement of partial mutiny had resulted in intense pressure on the Governor as London was not entirely convinced with his handling of the episode. Concerns with the morale and loyalty of the local security force also rendered a serious reflection on the approach of ICAC and its relationship with the police.

*Ray Yep joined the City University of Hong Kong in 1998. Previously he worked as Researcher in Phibro Energy HK Ltd. and Senior Research Manager in CIM (HK) Ltd. He took his bachelor (B.Soc.Sc) and postgraduate degrees (MPhil) at University of Hong Kong, and his doctorate degree in politics at Oxford University. He was a Visiting Fellow at the Brookings Institution (2001-2) and a Visting Professor at Bristol University (2005).*

## Jacqueline Young

*'Seeing Ghosts: Putnam Weale and the 1911 Republican Revolution'*

Young's survey of novels by Bertram Lenox Simpson (Putnam Weale) about the 1911 Revolution charts the contradiction between Simpson's literary awareness of the irrelevance of expatriates in China—what she calls their role as “ghostly onlookers”—and the writer's own interference in China affairs. She pinpoints the tensions between Simpson's identification with the republican cause—his sense of being born in China, his creation of a literary alter ego who is a republican soldier, etc.—and his distance from the changes in China that surround him.

*Jacqueline Young's doctoral work at Glasgow University focused on nineteenth-century Western residents of China who wrote fiction set in the country, among them Mrs Archibald Little, Paul and Veronica King, 'Putnam Weale' (the pseudonym of Bertram Lenox Simpson), and Charles Welsh Mason.*

## Shunghong Zhang

*'British perceptions of China and the Opium War'*

This paper tries to reveal the relations between British perceptions of China and the Opium War. Before the outbreak of the War, Britain had already had a long time of communication with China, mainly trading at Canton. This was also a period of British observation on China. In this course, British views on China underwent great changes. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century and early eighteenth century, British views and comments on China were generally favourable, while the society experienced a China vogue. From the mid eighteenth century, British estimation of China continued to go down. But for some time, the China vogue was still prevalent. The Macartney embassy of 1792-1793 marked a milestone in the evolution of British perception of China. For the first time, British diplomats got to this remote oriental country and became the direct observers. The embassy

brought out publications on China and roused great interests among the British public. The failure of the embassy to realize its objects added to an increasing criticism on China by the British writers. The mission greatly promoted British studies of China. In the coming decades, some British writers mastered the Chinese language and a number of Chinese works were translated into English. Publications on China were widely introduced to the readers in Britain. A leading magazine, the *Quarterly Review*, paid the greatest attention to the publications related to China. The second British embassy to China, the Amherst embassy, further encouraged British enquiry into China. The members of the embassy wrote a few books on their travels and observations. In the 1830s, there appeared a number of books on China which were based on wide research. So to the eve of the Opium War, Britain had established a strong information advantage over China which was still very ignorant of the former.

It is suggested that one country's knowledge and perceptions of another country had an identifiable influence upon its attitude and policy towards the country. Before the dispatch of the Macartney embassy, it was an accepted view that it would be absurd to send troops to conquer so distant a country like China protected by so numerous people. So it was considered to be the right choice to open the door of China through diplomatic means. This was why the British government sent successively two embassies to China. But after the complete failure of the second mission, a common view was that Britain could not do so through diplomatic means and the alternative was to use force. An examination of the *Quarterly Review's* ideas on China before the outbreak of the Opium War shows that British perceptions of China had a concrete impact on British action towards China. The suggestions made by the *Review* helped largely to shape the way and process of British military operations against China.

*Shunhong Zhang is Professor in History at the Graduate School of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. His research focuses on the history of the British Empire, mainly on the period of British imperial retreat.*

## Panel chairs and other participants

**Jasper Becker** is a frequent speaker on Chinese affairs and runs the Legend Strategic Consultancy Ltd. He has been writing on Asia for 25 years and is the author of seven books. Jasper Becker spent 18 years reporting from Beijing and worked as a correspondent in Brussels, Geneva and Frankfurt. He is currently researching a book on China's richest families.

**Kerry Brown** is Head of the Asia Programme at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House. He is an expert on Chinese politics and culture, relations among East Asian countries, China's private sector, as well as Mongolia, Cambodia, Indonesia and North Korea.

**Nick Dean** works for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

**Duncan Hewitt** is Newsweek correspondent based in Shanghai. He is the author of *Getting Rich First: Life in a changing China* (Chatto & Windus). He is also affiliated with the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford.

**Daniel Hopper** is working towards a PhD in History at the University of Bristol, supported by the BICC. His thesis is entitled '*Social Darwinism and Britain in China, 1860-1937*'.

**Su Hsing Loh** is based at Fudan University. She is also an Associate Fellow of the Asia Programme at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House. Her areas of expertise are China's foreign policy, domestic politics in China, East Asian security and China-ASEAN relations.

**Rana Mitter** is Professor of the History and Politics of Modern China at the University of Oxford. His research interests are contemporary Chinese nationalism, Republican era Chinese history, the Sino-Japanese War, 1931-1945, and its legacy, and comparative Cold War social and cultural history.

**Emma Newport** is a PhD student at King's College, London.

**Frank Pieke** is Professor of Modern China Studies at Leiden University. His research revolves around two long-term themes. The first theme of his research is the anthropology of the state and socialism in modern Asia, investigating the rule and organization of the Chinese Communist Party in the context of China's globalization and market reform. The second theme revolves around international migration, transnationalism and cultural diversity, including a long-term interest in Chinese migration and ethnicity in Europe and, more recently, the emergence of international immigrant groups in China. He is the author of *The Good Communist: Elite Training and State Building in Today's China* (Cambridge University Press).

**Robin Porter** has thirty-five years experience as an academic China specialist in Canada and the UK, and in Australia. In the late 1970s he was sub-editor of English-language news at Xinhua News Agency in Beijing, and in the 1980s was for four years full-time adviser on China to a major British industry. From 2002 to 2005 Robin was Counsellor for Science and Innovation at the British Embassy in Beijing, responsible for setting up the UK's network of thirteen science attaches around China. Robin's doctorate, from SOAS, focused on China's early industrialization and publications include books and articles on the modern development of both China and Hong Kong.

**Sara Shipway** will be starting her PhD at the University of Bristol in October.

**Peter Wood** worked for the British intelligence service in Asia for many years before becoming HSBC's Chief Business Advisor for China. He is now an independent China Strategy consultant, based in Hong Kong.

**Rod Wye** is an Associate Fellow at Chatham House working with the Asia Programme there. He is a specialist on China and East Asia, having worked on the area for many years in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, including two postings to the Embassy in Beijing in the 1980s and 1990s.

**Hong Zhou** is Professor of European Politics and Modern History, and Director of the Institute of European Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). She also chairs the Chinese Association for European Studies. Her recent publications include: *European Union as a Power* (2008), *EU Governance Model* (ed.2008), *China-Europe Relations: Perceptions, Policies and Prospects* (ed. 2007), *Donors in China* (2007), *Whither the Welfare State?* (2006), *EU and American Models Compared* (ed. 2003).