



THE REED

Spring 2016



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Denise Tan, 'Flags in Tibet'



In the previous issue of *The Reed*, we had the pleasure of introducing readers to the new professors and postdoctoral scholars who joined the Weatherhead East Asian Institute during the 2015-16 academic year. This spring, we continue to provide you with insight into the research and teaching interests of these new community members. In the following pages, you will find interviews with Yao Lu, an assistant professor of sociology at Columbia who studies migration and social stratification; Justin Reeves, the Dorothy Borg Postdoctoral Scholar in Modern Japanese Politics; Gal Gvili, a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures; and Tucker Harding, the Dorothy Borg Postdoctoral Scholar in the Digital Humanities.

The large number of introductory interviews in the latest *Reeds* attests to how much expansion is taking place at the Institute. It is an exciting time to be here, with new faculty and postdoctoral scholars offering transnational and interdisciplinary courses and expertise. While the Institute remains strong in its traditional fields of East Asian social sciences, we are also growing in the direction of Asian humanities and Southeast Asian studies, and innovating in the areas of digital humanities and big data projects. And, while we remain committed to deep local and regional knowledge, we are also committed to updating traditional area studies by developing support for research and curriculum that link Asia with the world and think about Asia in global terms. I am already looking

forward to next fall's *Reed*, which will include news about further additions to our community of faculty and scholars.

While we welcomed many new members to the Institute, we also honored the retirement of Gerald L. Curtis, the Burgess Professor of Political Science, with an all-day symposium, "Is Japan Really Back?," on December 17. In this issue, you will see images from the widely attended event, which included panel discussions featuring leading professors from around the world—all of whom were once Professor Curtis's graduate students.

A pioneering expert on Japanese politics, Professor Curtis—known by many at the Institute as "Gerry"—has taught for over four decades at Columbia, where he has been instrumental in establishing many of the Institute's programs as well as in bolstering its international reputation. Since Gerry is a beloved teacher, we are all sorry to see him retire from the classroom. Luckily for us, he will still be an active member of the Institute's research community. We are grateful to Gerry for his dedication to his students and to the Weatherhead East Asian Institute. It is a wonderful and fitting honor that the university has established an endowed chair, the Gerald L. Curtis Professor of Japanese Politics, to continue Gerry's commitment to making Columbia one of the world's leading centers for East Asian studies.

Eugenia Lean
DIRECTOR

WEAI NEWS

WEAI Launches Asia for Everyone Website

WEAI recently launched Asia For Everyone, a one-of-a-kind new website that offers the public a bridge to cutting-edge resources for teaching and learning about East Asia. Visitors to Asia For Everyone are greeted with a portal to seven websites that supply free teaching modules, sample syllabi, and learning resources for developing innovative East Asia-related curricula at the elementary, secondary, and collegiate levels.

Visit the website at
<http://a4e.columbia.edu/>

Columbia University Press Publishes Final Book by JaHyun Kim Haboush

Columbia University Press has recently published the final book by JaHyun Kim Haboush (1940-2011), who was a WEAI faculty member and the King Sejong Professor of Korean Studies at Columbia University. Titled *The Great East Asian War and the Birth of the Korean Nation*, Haboush's book explores the Imjin War (1592–1598), which was a grueling conflict that wreaked havoc on the towns and villages of the Korean Peninsula. The involvement of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean forces, not to mention the regional scope of the war, was the largest the world had seen, and dominated East Asian memory until World War II. Haboush offers a compelling counternarrative to Western historiography, which ties Korea's idea of nation to the imported ideologies of modern colonialism, and reclaims the root story of solidarity that helped Korea thrive well into the modern era.

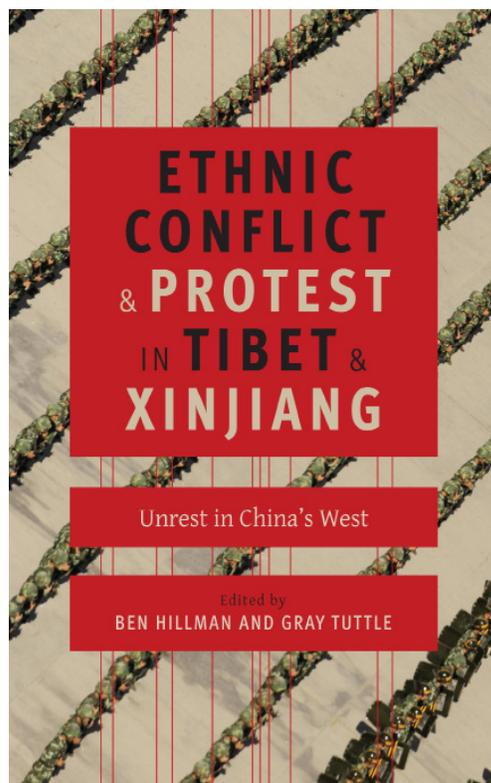
Ethnic Conflict and Protest in Tibet and Xinjiang: Unrest in China's West

In April 2016, Columbia University Press published a book edited by Ben Hillman and Gray Tuttle, the Leila Hadley Luce Associate Professor of Modern Tibetan Studies at Columbia University.

This new publication examines the wave of ethnic unrest that has occurred in China's western borderlands in recent years.

Through on-the-ground interviews and firsthand observations, the international experts contributing to this book create an invaluable record of the conflicts and protests as they have unfolded—the most extensive chronicle of events to date. The authors examine the factors driving the unrest in Tibet and Xinjiang and the political strategies used to suppress them. They also explain why certain areas have seen higher concentrations of ethnic-based violence than others.

Ethnic Conflict and Protest in Tibet and Xinjiang considers the role of propaganda, education, economic growth, and environmental degradation in generating conflict. It captures the subtle difference between violence in urban Xinjiang and conflict in rural Tibet, with detailed portraits of everyday individuals caught among the pressures of politics, history, personal interest, and global movements with local resonance.





On Thursday, December 17, 2015, leading scholars of Japan participated in the symposium

“Is Japan Really Back?”

in honor of the retirement of **Gerald L. Curtis**,
the Burgess Professor of Political Science at Columbia University.

The panelists, all of whom were Professor Curtis’s former PhD students, included: **Victor Cha**, Georgetown University; **Bill Heinrich**, U.S. Department of State; **Takako Hikotani**, National Defense Academy of Japan; **Yongho Kim**, Yonsei University; **Peng Er Lam**, National University of Singapore; **Akitoshi Miyashita**, Tokyo International University; **Megumi Naoi**, University of California, San Diego; **Andrew Oros**, Washington College; **Frances Rosenbluth**, Yale University; **Sheila Smith**, Council on Foreign Relations; **Takaaki Suzuki**, Ohio University; and **Robert Uriu**, University of California, Irvine.

Following the symposium, Professor Curtis was honored during a reception at Faculty House that featured speeches by **Lee C. Bollinger**, President of Columbia University, and **Ambassador Reiichiro Takahashi**, the Consul General of Japan in New York. **John H. Coatsworth**, the Provost of Columbia University, announced that a named professorship—the Gerald L. Curtis Professor of Japanese Politics—will be established at Columbia in recognition of Professor Curtis’s significant contributions to the study of Japan.

The reception also featured tributes by **Andrew J. Nathan**, Class of 1919 Professor of Political Science, Columbia University; **Merit E. Janow**, Dean of the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs; **James W. Morley**, Professor of Government Emeritus, Columbia University; **Susan J. Pharr**, Edwin O. Reischauer Professor of Japanese Politics, Harvard University; **Bill Heinrich and Sheila Smith**; **Hugh T. Patrick**, Director, Center on Japanese Economy and Business, Columbia Business School; **Deborah Bell**, retired Columbia University administrator; **William T. Breer**, Diplomat, U.S. Department of State, Retired; **Nobuyori Kodaira**, Executive Vice President, Toyota Motor Company; **Winston Lord**, former U.S. Ambassador to China and former Assistant Secretary of State; and **Ezra Vogel**, Henry Ford II Professor of the Social Sciences Emeritus, Harvard University.





YAO LU Assistant Professor of Sociology

Professor Lu received her BS from Fudan University in China and her MS in public health and PhD in sociology from UCLA. Her research focuses on how migration and immigration intersect with social and economic processes across diverse contexts including China.

What led you to choose the specific field of sociology to study China?

I was a statistics major in college, and that subject made me interested in using data to make sense of the world. This led me to spend a year at China's census bureau, where I worked on several social surveys that produced useful information. Sociology appealed to me because I felt that the discipline allowed me to explore a broad, unrestrained range of topics, whether on individuals, society, or the intersection between the two. It also allowed me to choose

from a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods as appropriate for the research undertaken.

What questions about contemporary China are you currently pursuing in your research?

Part of my current research focuses on understanding the consequences of social and demographic transformations in contemporary China. I am especially interested in the ways in which China's massive internal migration influences migrant-sending areas (i.e., rural China) socially and

politically. For example, my current projects examine how migration affects the political consciousness and collective action of people who remain in rural China; how the feminization of migration reconfigures gender attitudes and practices in rural areas; and how the migration of parents shapes family dynamics and the well-being of left-behind children. Although my work has focused primarily on China, I also study several other societies. I believe that a comparative perspective is useful for understanding how China's distinct institutional context gives rise to the emerging social phenomena we observe today.

Have patterns in Chinese migration been changing in recent years?

Internal migration in China is marked by both change and continuity. For example, the new, second generation of migrants have come of age, who differ systematically from their parents; an increasing number of women are migrating; a greater proportion of migrants are now moving to urban areas closer to their hometowns; and another group of migrants are beginning to return home in large numbers because of retirement and the economic slowdown. In cities, we see an increasing collision between migrants and urban workers in the labor markets, and surging political activism among migrant workers asserting their rights. These changes have taken place alongside institutional barriers confronting migrants, which have been resistant to fundamental change. The confluence of these patterns in shaping the lives of migrants and the patterns of inequality, as well as in spurring sociopolitical change

in places of origin and destination, is a growing area of research.

What are the particularly noteworthy political and social developments that you have seen occurring recently in China?

One development is the rise of social protests that have swept both urban and rural China. These protests have become increasingly organized and proactive, often leading to non-institutionalized street action. Labor protests staged by migrants have become the primary source of unrest in urban China. In the countryside, collective action has also grown steadily as peasants organize to defy official malfeasance on issues such as abusive land grabs and unauthorized taxation. Protests in China have been perceived to lack both an organizational basis and an urban-rural linkage. My recent work takes a new look into these issues and finds that social organizations play important but distinct roles in collective action, and that rural and urban

activism is increasingly linked with migrants acting as agents of diffusion.

What courses are you planning to teach in the coming semesters?

I will be teaching courses on contemporary Chinese society at both the undergraduate and graduate level. These courses will cover the major social, demographic, and political issues facing China. I will also teach an introductory statistics course with an emphasis on real-world applications.

What events and conferences are you planning for the spring?

I am organizing a seminar series on the social, demographic, and political development of contemporary China, and a half-day conference on China's population trends and challenges to be held in early April. I hope to be able to continue bringing in more social scientists to share their work and perspectives at WEAL.



JUSTIN REEVES

Dorothy Borg Postdoctoral Fellow in Modern Japanese Politics

Justin Reeves holds a B.A. in both Japanese and Political Science from the University of California, Los Angeles and recently obtained his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California, San Diego. His research interests include comparative governmental institutions, voting behavior, and Japanese politics.



Could you tell us, in brief, about some of the questions and issues regarding Japanese politics that your research has explored?

My research has mostly focused on general comparative questions about voting behavior and the effect of different institutions in the context of elections. Owing to its particular institutional arrangements and reforms, Japan was an ideal case study for exploring these questions, but a deeper understanding of Japanese politics itself was never really the primary endgame. That said, there are several Japan-specific puzzles that the research helps to shed some light on. Probably the most conspicuous of these puzzles is why Japanese voters consistently support famous amateur candidates in actual electoral races in spite of their well-documented disapproval of “celebrity candidates” on national surveys.

Another question deals with how Japanese voters reconcile their desire to punish political corruption with

the sometimes conflicting incentive to support incumbent political parties that serve their district and/or ideological needs.

Aside from questions of voter behavior, I have also looked at the performance of legislators in Japan. A common assumption in Japan, and elsewhere, is that the backgrounds of legislators (whether they have experience in office, what kind of job they held in the past, etc.) has some predictive value with respect to their quality as legislators. I test these assumptions by combing through decades of data on a variety of different legislative activities to see if any discernable patterns arise.

How did you become interested in specifically studying Japanese politics?

As an undergrad at UCLA I was double majoring in Japanese language and

political science but for years there was little to no overlap between these two academic interests. When I was afforded the opportunity to take a Japanese politics course in my senior year with Mike Thies, the two finally came together. I realized then that many of the subtle and sometimes not so subtle differences that made me fascinated with Japan from a cultural standpoint also extended to the country’s politics.

Are there some distinctive aspects about Japanese politics that make it particularly fascinating to you ?

Japan is a pretty interesting case whether you’re a comparative political scientist or someone who’s mostly just familiar with politics in the US. In most of the world’s advanced industrialized democracies you have broad divisions along issues of class, religion, and



ethnicity that roughly define the political landscape, but which are comparatively much less salient in Japan. The long history of single party dominance under LDP (Liberal Democratic Party) rule and the impact of using a variety of voting rules in Japanese elections over the years has captured a lot of attention from scholars. For me the question of how voters come to identify themselves politically in Japan and the criteria they use to make ballot decisions becomes more interesting because of all these aforementioned conditions.

What is your spring 2016 class about?

It's a seminar course on US-Japan relations that focuses on the postwar years. Thematically it's organized around issues of trade and security that have defined the nature of the bilateral relationship from the Occupation years to present. Within these issues we look

at points of overlap between the two countries' goals as well as points of tension, with an eye towards the role that domestic interests, different institutions, and other international forces and actors play in these interactions.

What aspects of U.S.-Japan relations are particularly interesting to you?

In spite of the trade friction that evolved out of Japan's miracle growth period the relationship itself has been remarkably stable over the years. But of course the international environment has not remained static. The end of the Cold War, the rise of China, nuclear threats from North Korea, and a perceived waning of US capabilities in the region have placed new pressures on Japan to reevaluate its role. Meanwhile the future role of the United States, while ostensibly in the midst of a "pivot to Asia" and the recent TPP success notwithstanding, is

not totally clear – with wildly different foreign policy views being espoused by front-running candidates for the upcoming presidential elections.

What's most interesting to me at the moment is how Japanese leaders are going to deal with this uncertainty, and whether domestic political conditions are going to allow for any substantial changes beyond the recent security legislation (for which Abe received a lot of push back). For now the LDP remains unrivaled and the party system is in disarray, but it can't really boast a very strong mandate as fewer citizens seem to identify strongly with one party or the other. It faces some difficult challenges in managing issues such as its aging society and fiscal woes, and to some extent its ability to redefine the country's security role in the region will also be tied to its success or failure in handling these other issues.

GAL GVILI

Postdoctoral Fellow in East Asian Literatures and Cultures



Gal Gvili received her PhD in Modern Chinese Literature with a concentration in Comparative Literature and Society from Columbia University in 2015. Her current research investigates how modern literature came to be perceived as effective in ushering social change during the late Qing and the Republican era, with an emphasis on interactions between religious thought and literary realism.

Could you tell us, in brief, about some of the topics and questions regarding Chinese literature and media that have interested you?

Broadly speaking, I am fascinated by the question of what happens to us when we read: How does narrative, either in literature or cinema, work on its readers, and how, historically, were different perceptions of the nature of literature harnessed by social agents? These concerns have sparked my long lasting interest in the Chinese Republican era (1911–1949), because during that time literature was reconceived as the bearer of national salvation and the ultimate solution to China’s weakness on the international stage. The late nineteenth century through the first half of the twentieth century was a period of an intensifying global exchange of ideas. Chinese writers were engrossed in a conversation on the best ways to represent human life in literature, engaging with authors and texts from all over the world, especially India, in their pursuit of the perfect realism. My dissertation, which I am now revising into a book manuscript, traces these exchanges in fiction, poetry, and critical writing, to offer a new perspective on how literature became the most effective vehicle for social change in modern China. Beyond this work, I am also developing a new project, which will explore the role magic and superstition plays in Chinese modern and contemporary literature and cinema. The focus of this study will be what I call “the disobedient woman” – I am looking at how the literary presence of such women challenges the project of women’s liberation, which remains a landmark of the revolution introduced by the Chinese Communist Party.

How did you become interested in specifically studying Chinese literature?

Purely by accident. I majored in comparative literature for my undergrad in Israel, and had to fulfill a language requirement. Since everyone was taking French or German, I decided to try a language that no one in my class was taking, simply to see if the comp lit traditionalists would go along with it. I fell in love almost immediately with the Chinese language and its literature. When I graduated, I received a Chinese government scholarship to pursue advanced language studies in Beijing. That first trip to China way back in 2005 got me completely hooked. Something about the hectic Beijing culture was simply irresistible. My background in comparative literature has served me well as I was able to draw upon a broad perspective to situate questions pertaining specifically to Chinese literature in relation to transnational

literatures and their development. This was ultimately what led me to pursue my PhD at Columbia.

What is your spring 2016 course on "Revolution" about? What kinds of texts will students be looking at to understand revolution?

"Revolution in Modern China" is a seminar in which we examine the unfolding of the Chinese revolution through reading canonical works in literature, cinema, art and music from the early twentieth century up to this day and age. Throughout the semester we discuss many different revolutions in Chinese modern history, such as the feminist revolution, the birth of Chinese cinema, recruiting literature to the task of awakening the people, and of course, the Communist revolution. We read and watch influential works and talk about how they adhere to ideology and how they subvert it. From the early

twentieth century author Lu Xun to the contemporary artist Xu Bing, we focus on how texts mediate social revolutions and raise the question of why fiction is so important for this task.

How has it been like to be teaching at Columbia after being a PhD student here?

Columbia and Barnard students are a terrific bunch: they are genuinely interested in intellectual questions and are never afraid of venturing into unfamiliar territories. I have several students in my class who major in engineering or economics, and they are just as enthusiastic and thought provoking in their readings as the EALAC or literature majors. I did know how hard working the students are since I worked as a TA here for the past seven years, but there are new challenges in engaging with students as the sole teacher of the class, which makes this semester a very exciting one for me.



A piece from a series of brush paintings by Qing Dynasty artist Sun Wen, depicting a scene from the novel "Dream of the Red Chamber."

TUCKER HARDING

Dorothy Borg Postdoctoral Fellow in the Digital Humanities

Tucker Harding is an educator and theorist working on questions pertaining to the nature, qualities and consequences of educational thought and forms of study.



As the Dorothy Borg Postdoctoral Scholar in the Digital Humanities, how do you envision using digital tools to enhance East Asia-related research and teaching?

I take a broad perspective on the matter of “digital tools” for research and teaching. In educational progress, I definitely believe in, and argue for, exploration as a fundamental act of “study.” It’s a significant characteristic of what it means to be a growing person—emotionally, socially and intellectually. I’ve seen the results of progressive pedagogies many times now, over almost ten years of working with faculty and in my own courses, and another five years of working in private industry. That’s not to say traditional pedagogies are ineffective—quite the contrary. It’s all a matter of the three variables involved: the unique attributes of the student, instructor, and environment of study. It might be noticed I left content out of that, and that’s on purpose.

I would add that I take teachers and researchers to fundamentally be students first—much as all people have the potential

to be throughout the lifespan— but teachers and researchers have had at least some success at learning in specific ways. Thus their first responsibility as educators is to help students become better students using whatever experiences they can share.

To be more specific in response to your question, I also consider both research and teaching to be first and foremost acts of communication. The means and modes of human communication have historically, arguably, had everything to do with humanity’s possibilities for understanding itself better. I believe our current communication environment is important to recognize as both emergent and potentially transformative for society, particularly as it pertains to human potential for growth. Our research and other educational engagements cannot be separated from how we communicate with each other, and how we might collect and make sense of the data representing facts of our world. One of the most important and difficult areas of inquiry and experience for coming to terms with what it means to be human is the study of foreign culture. I am incredibly lucky to

be studying the intersection of Asian Studies and communication technology right now. It is this intersection I wish to emphasize and integrate with purpose into Weatherhead and EALAC at Columbia. We’re in the dawn (or perhaps even post-dawn) of a new communication era, and the possibilities for human growth as pertains to culture and understanding humanness are endless—though not without conscious attention and care. As a leading community in East Asian Studies, we have an opportunity and arguably a responsibility to focus on this intersection to bring our work to higher, deeper, and more valuable levels for everyone who has asked that very human question: why are things the way they are?

How did you become interested in the role that digital tools might play in pedagogy?

As a communication technology consultant in China, working under the director of business development for what was at the time Sony-Ericsson. I was involved in building training tools for Chinese telecom operators, and designing professional

development modules. I saw the potential of educational technology there that far exceeded what I had been exposed to as an undergrad or earlier in formal schooling. Issues of culture and worldview began to surface as I worked with Chinese counterparts to create educational experiences. I knew I wanted to dive deeply into that area— human development, culture, and educational technology. I found Columbia’s Center for New Media Teaching and Learning through a good friend who worked as a programmer there, and coming to NYC to take that job (in 2007) was a great decision. My boss, the late Dr. Frank Moretti, who later became my doctoral advisor, had a huge influence over my capacities to perceive and take seriously the impact of communication technology on the human condition generally. I’ve been deeply involved in this world since, and I can’t imagine feeling ready to move on from it. It’s too important, and far too interesting and exciting.

What are some of the courses that you have been developing about the history of East Asian educational thought and experience?

Two of the most important graduate courses I ever took were History of Communication, and Theories of Communication, both designed and taught by my late advisor Frank Moretti, and with his doctoral advisor from decades ago, the great education and philosophy historian Professor Robert McClintock (who is now retired for the third time and counting...). I co-taught those courses with Robbie, and recently have begun teaching them on my own. The History of Communication course has recently evolved to be what might be called the History of Western Educational

Thought. It begins in Greek antiquity, and proceeds through every communication and education era, concluding in the present with a hope of helping students orient themselves to the present circumstance, and finding positive ways forward for all of us. Along the way we hit oral culture, the alphabet and codex, printing press, telegraph, and onwards through the internet. My goal now is to create a similar course in the history of East Asian educational thought, following similar developments in the Far East as it has had its own sequence of orality, script, a different form of moveable type and the resulting social changes, and so on and onwards. Though the courses I have taken and taught have been highly transformative and important for my own education and breadth of awareness, I think it’s a problem that most courses in communication history are Western-centric. My background and passion for Asian Studies and education have now practically compelled me to balance that track out. In my ideal communication and education program, there’s a History of East Asian Educational Thought to at least run in parallel with that of the History of Western Educational Thought. I’m excited at the idea of that being a significant contribution I can make to both East Asian studies and communication and education for people everywhere. I’m now working on making the History of East Asian Educational Thought an open course online—free to the public and anyone interested, either as a supplement to other courses, or a standalone to be taken for credit.

How do you think the digital humanities might change the ways we teach East Asia-related topics to future generations?

At the risk of being trite: perspective building. I believe there is great potential for current technologies to improve and enhance our ability to broaden and

deepen cultural perspectives, through different forms of content immersion and interaction, for transforming how Asia can be both taught and experienced. Nothing will replace living and studying there in person, but our tools have almost unlimited potential for growing and empowering the inquirer to really grapple with central themes or concepts of culture that are too often reduced to textual theories, ideas, and products, rather than mental experiences of the breadth of humanness that can be brought to reality through East Asian Studies.

Do you have any plans for the spring semester for furthering the WEAI community’s understanding of the digital humanities?

Absolutely. We already have a few plans in place. I have had good conversations going with a number of faculty, definite plans for some (Tibetan Studies probably the most concrete). I’m excited about the possibility of working with Roberta Martin on the Asia for Educators project, and helping connect some of those incredible resources to other research and courses. But more broadly, we want to create an ongoing series of conversations and workshops with faculty trying different—and hopefully innovative—ways of engaging students using the tools we have available, particularly at the disposal of our imaginations. It will be partly invention on our part, but there’s a lot of action right now in Digital Humanities with Asian Studies, so a big part will also be just growing awareness of the experiences already had, potential for new engagements, and facilitating and guiding real explorations of how some of the tools and techniques might drive these studies into a very positive future in the academy and beyond.

Chien Wen Kung

Weatherhead Ph.D. Training Grant Summer 2015

Chien Wen Kung is a PhD student at Columbia's Department of History. He works in the international and transnational history of East and Southeast Asia after the Second World War.

The funding I received from Weatherhead East Asian Institute helped cover living and research expenses for dissertation research in Taipei on anti-communist relations between the Republic of China (ROC, or Nationalist China) and the Chinese in the Philippines after the Second World War. My project asks how each of these non-nation-state entities – an ethno-cultural community on the one hand, and (after 1949) a government-in-exile pretending to be a nation-state on the other – exploited anti-communism as a form of transnational symbolic capital in order to survive in a world divided along ideological lines and characterized by the internationalization of the nation-state.

While in Taipei from March to July, I worked chiefly at the Institute of Modern History archives at Academia Sinica, the Academia Historica, and the archives of Taiwan's long-time ruling party, the Kuomintang (KMT). The majority of sources that I read at the first and second of these archives consisted of internal memoranda, correspondence, and reports generated by the ROC's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its embassies and consulates in the Philippines. Although I ended up accumulating nearly a thousand pages of physical documents, restrictions on printing and photocopying forced me to spend most of my time painstakingly type-copying sources. The sheer slowness of transcribing Chinese characters, the tedium involved in deciphering obscure bureaucratic expressions, and bad handwriting made for many long, lonely



Chien Wen Kung second from left, having Xinjiang food in Taipei with fellow PhD students

days in the archives. (For researchers venturing into Chinese-language archives for the first time and who are non-native speakers, I would highly recommend working through a book like Fang-yü Wang's *Chinese Cursive Script: An Introduction to Chinese Handwriting* before you do so.)

Fortunately, a lot of what I've gathered appears to be exceptionally rich and directly related to my project. Among my materials are detailed reports on investigations done by the Philippine police and military on suspected Chinese communists and other "undesirable Chinese nationals" in the Philippines, and the role of the Nationalist Embassy, KMT agents, Chinese informants, and the Taipei authorities in shaping this entire legal process. I also have intelligence that sheds light on tensions between the factions within the loosely-constituted "Nationalist Chinese bloc" in post-colonial Philippines.

My most significant finding has to do with the 1970 arrests, deportation to Taiwan, and trial of Quintin and Rizal Yuyitung on false charges of printing communist

propaganda in their newspaper, the Chinese Commercial News (CCN). Overnight, the Yuyitung affair became a media sensation and cause for free speech and human rights activists both in the Philippines and worldwide. Filipino journalists have contended for a long time that the KMT was behind their arrests, but until today have not been able to uncover any documentary evidence of KMT involvement. My research shows that in January 1969, the Philippine KMT, its newspaper the Great China Press, and the ROC Embassy worked together to collect articles from the CCN that "proved" it was propagandizing for Maoist China, and thus fanning the flames of unrest that were then sweeping the Philippines.

Coming across this kind of "smoking gun" information, randomly tucked away in a much lengthier report within a much larger folder, more than made up for all the dead ends, punctuation-free bureaucratic language, and illegible handwriting that I had to contend with in my time here.

Sebastien R. Le Morillon

Weatherhead Undergraduate Training Grant Summer 2015

Sebastien R. Le Morillon is a rising senior at the School of General Studies majoring in Anthropology and History.

The generous funding I received from the summer 2015 Weatherhead Undergraduate Training Grant allowed me to spend roughly one month and two weeks surveying residents of Baitou Town in Sichuan Province, China, for my independent study project titled “An Ethnography of Religion in Contemporary Rural China”. While I had initially set out to accomplish studying the deification of Mao Zedong within the context of Chinese popular religion, I broadened my research to the study of religious transformations in Mainland China, understanding how these changes either complement or detract from social patterns in China’s past, and analyzing today’s power struggles between state and local society concerning religion’s organizational structure and influence on domestic affairs.

After an unexpected research collaboration began with a retired high school Chinese teacher whose many contacts and extensive knowledge of local history made fieldwork possible, I spent three weeks living in Chongfu Temple in Baitou Town in order to investigate what I had heard about the local government’s complacency over the unlawful presence and expansion of this new Chinese Buddhist temple. When I was there, I was fortunate enough to interview most of its principal inhabitants, who spoke about their personal lives with remarkable candor. Some of these lay Buddhists were former prisoners, widows, and even cadres of the Communist Party of

China during the Maoist era. Others had disabilities, limited resources combined with old age, and a recent history of drug addiction. Indeed, Chongfu Temple’s inhabitants belong to Mainland China’s growing religious revival, marked by a rapidly changing society in which there are fewer kinship ties and more anonymity in the population.

When I interviewed town officials about tolerating Chongfu Temple’s existence, they showed passivity towards having a 10,000m² religious edifice with an active community inside their administrative jurisdiction. This place of worship functions as an anti-poverty institution without posing a politically subversive threat to the state. Assemblies are not routine, congregational boundaries are loosely defined, and there is virtually no centralized hierarchy. Meals are also free of charge and housing is available at a nominal cost, although donations are encouraged and made frequently by its inhabitants and visitors from far and near. It is also useful to note that the two monks who help facilitate Chongfu Temple’s daily activities, such as morning and evening ceremonies, are licensed by the State Administration for Religious Affairs.

Although more details can be shared about the intriguing story of Chongfu Temple, it is also important to know about the social framework that holds residents of Baitou Town together. Thus, I spent the next three weeks of fieldwork outside of Chongfu Temple. Throughout this time, I lived with a local host family that introduced me to Han Chinese folk practices ranging from community religion festivals, such as the Hungry Ghost Festival held on July 14th

of the Lunar calendar, to more family-based traditions that include the post-birth ritual known as Hongdan Jiu in Sichuan dialect. Lastly, I was able to witness two separate mortuary rites firsthand. One was for a former barefoot doctor who once provided health care services to residents of Baitou Town when there was limited access to urban-trained doctors. The other mortuary rite that I observed was for a former agricultural cooperative worker whose rich life experiences are included in a recent Chinese publication that devotes much attention to rural life in Sichuan Province during the Great Leap Forward.

Nonetheless, all of these Han Chinese folk practices commemorating life and death are among the many ways in which locals affirm their various social roles. Through them, one knows their responsibilities within the family and society at large. While my research touched upon the simplification and sometimes outright abandonment of these traditions native to rural China by residents who have moved to urban communities for better employment or educational prospects, there is still more fieldwork to do. Here are some questions that I am left with as I conclude my independent study project: How is the rural-urban divide affecting religion in contemporary rural China? Will institutional religions, such as Christianity and Buddhism, replace many of the social protections that were once offered by family or government? Perhaps another summer of fieldwork might provide answers to these pertinent questions.



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