

CRITICAL HAN STUDIES
Conference
& Workshop

ABSTRACTS

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The Han, a colossal category of identity that encompasses ninety-two percent of the population of mainland China and ninety-eight percent of Taiwan, is the largest ethnic group on earth. The first-ever Critical Han Studies Conference examines the Han from a host of vantage points, featuring presentations by leading scholars and graduate students from Europe, Asia, Australia, and North America.

Keynote Speakers:

Mark C. Elliott, Harvard University
 Dru C. Gladney, Pomona College
 Xu Jieshun, Guangxi University for Nationalities

Paper Presenters:

Nicole E. Barnes	Hsueh-Yi Lin
Sylvie Beaud	Luo Wenqing
Naran Bilik	Haiyun Ma
Erica Brindley	Jeff McClain
Clayton Brown	Thomas S. Mullaney
Melissa Brown	Leo K. Shin
Uradyn E. Bulag	Christopher Sullivan
Kevin Carrico	Sun Jiang
Huaiyu Chen	Donald S. Sutton
Zhihong Chen	Nicholas Tapp
Tamara Chin	Emma Teng
Eva S. Chou	Christopher Vasantkumar
Robert Culp	Florent Villard
Frank Dikötter	Wang Ming-ke
C. Patterson Giersch	Wang Peihua
Hung Li-wan	Scott Writer
Jiang Yonglin	Xie Linxuan
Tong Lam	Gang Zhao
Françoise Lauwaert	Zhao Yongfei
James Leibold	Minglang Zhou

Discussants:

Stéphane Gros, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique
 Stevan Harrell, University of Washington
 John Herman, Virginia Commonwealth University
 Jonathan Lipman, Mount Holyoke College
 Charles F. McKhann, Whitman College
 David Schaberg, University of California, Los Angeles

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 Eric Vanden Bussche, Stanford University

Nicole E. Barnes, Ph.D. candidate, Department of History, University of California, Irvine

Constructing the Race and Revitalizing an Emasculated Nation: Male Intellectuals' Travels in China's Northwestern Borderlands

This paper offers an analysis of the travel journals of ten Chinese intellectuals—nine men and one woman—who traveled in the northwestern borderlands between 1906 and 1938: Xu Bingchang 徐炳昶, Xie Bin 謝彬, Fang Ximeng 方希孟, Yuan Dahua 袁大化, Lin Jing 林競, Zhuang Zexuan 莊澤宣, Lin Pengxia 林鵬俠, Fan Changjiang 范長江, Ma Hetian 馬鶴天, and Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛. Most of them traveled in an official capacity, sent on government request to investigate the railroads, social conditions, educational and fiscal systems of the northwestern frontier. They interacted with, observed, and studied Mongol, Tibetan, Uyghur, and Muslim peoples whom they sought to absorb into the Chinese polity in order to strengthen the nation-state.

I argue that these ten intellectuals ascribed to and aimed to promote a nationalist ideology in which the Chinese nation, gendered specifically male, drew its strength from a Han majority at the political and ideological center, with non-Han peoples playing a supporting and deferent role. Despite small differences in each traveler's conception of the race and nation, these core elements appear in all of their writings. I assert that, although some of the writers encouraged the "minority races" (shaoshu minzu 少數民族) to keep their separate and unique identities, and others supported assimilation, all believed in Han racial superiority.

These ten journals, most of which have been published in multiple redactions, took their place in a long-lived canon of intellectuals' travel journals, while also responding to very contemporary concerns about the nation's borders. Sun Yatsen himself had waxed poetic about Han colonization of the resource-rich northwest in order to guide it into modernity. For the later travelers, such as Gu Jiegang, war with Japan made the material and spiritual resources of the northwest all the more necessary. These ten intellectuals traveled, wrote, and imagined the national borders in a time when the questions of who and what belonged to the nation had immediate political and military significance.

Contemporary preoccupations with the northwest in the PRC demonstrate that these questions of belonging and possession have yet to be resolved. The north- and south-western regions continually appear as vacation playground for wealthy Han businessmen, site of naturalist fantasies for alienated urbanites, and rich source of natural resources for private and public corporations, not to mention military exploits. Completing the historical link, these texts also show that the "Race Classification" project (minzu shibie 民族識別), frequently associated with CCP census investigations in the 1950s, was also an integral part of the Republican state's efforts to preserve the political boundaries of the Qing empire.

Sylvie Beaud, Ph.D. candidate, Department of Ethnology, University of Paris 10, Nanterre

Being Han in a Multi-ethnic Region of the People's Republic of China: an Anthropological Perspective on the Inhabitants of Yangzong valley, Yunnan province

This paper draws on ethnographic material collected in Yangzong county of Yunnan, a province well-known for its ethnic diversity. It deals with how the members of this peripheral Han population are categorized and categorize themselves in relation to minority groups and to notions of Chinese identity. The specificity of the Han of Yangzong is framed by an ongoing tension between two contrasting points of view: they appear both as one local ethnic minority among others, and, notably by means of ritualized theatrical representations, as the legitimate representatives of a national majority.

Thus, for example, Yangzong women's colorful clothing and ornaments, while making them appear in everyday contexts as the members of

a local minority group, are displayed in huadeng dramas as highly significant Han cultural items. In similar fashion, by re-playing the history of the crucial Three Kingdoms period (220-280) every Chinese New Year, the Yangzong people establish the Guan Suo exorcism-opera (nuo) as a local emblem, and paradoxically, it is by emphasizing in this way their local specificity that they lay claim to an overarching Han identity.

The Han people of Yunnan, who represent two thirds of the province's population, have been largely ignored by contemporary research. However, their study, by shedding light on the necessary interplay of different levels of identity, may prove critical for understanding the category of "Han."

**Naran Bilik, Jane and Raphael Bernstein Professor of Asian Studies and Anthropology,
Carleton College**

Han in Three Mirrors: History, Foreigners, and Minorities

"Han" is a fuzzy term. Its meaning changes with the flow of history and is defined by encounters with foreigners and minorities. In the Yuan period, for example, "Han" included Jurchen, Khitan (Qidan), and Koreans; now Han overlaps with Chinese (*Tangren, Huaren*) excluding the 55 officially recognized national minorities. The connotations of "Han" in modern discourses have been shaped by Chinese interactions with foreigners, and ways of dealing with the minorities in the process of state building.

The notion of "Han" is still undergoing changes and is full of pragmatic fluidity. It can be an ethnocultural category, a racial category, and a civilizational category at the same time, all depending on the context of usage, intentions of

the interlocutor, and cross-lingual indexicality. The well-symbolized images of invasions by the Eight-Power Alliance serve to maintain and kindle the flame of xenophobic Han nationalism, and, often times, transform "barbarian, foreign Chinggis Khan" into "our Chinggis Khan" who conquered the world. "Han" is a category to distinguish "Han" from "non-Han" when language and codes of conduct are involved; "Han" is a category to be used to explain differences in phenotypical look and "inner quality" of various "racial" groups. "Han" can also be used to provide grounds for the necessity and responsibility on the part of the "Han" who represent "civilization" to help those non-Han groups to be "cultivated," "tamed," and "upgraded" into civilization.

**Erica Brindley, Assistant Professor, Religious Studies and History, Pennsylvania State
University**

Han, Yue (Viet), or Something Else? Constructions of Identity in Several Ruling Families of the Yue, 220–110 BCE

Historical scholarship of the early imperial Han period tends to be premised on a model of "sinification" that views Han identity as fixed, dominant, and victorious, without recognizing the particular, local contributions of the indigenous Southern cultures and interests to the creation of such identity. In this paper, I question the extent to which various Yue identities in ancient Southern China were constructed in terms of processes of sinification. Focusing on two chapters in the *Shiji* dedicated to the early Han kingdoms of Southern

Yue and Eastern Yue and incorporating archaeological data unearthed from a king's tomb in Southern Yue, I compare different types of elite responses to the Han imperial government and culture. In particular, I show how members of three great families chose different modes of asserting and expressing their identities, and I delineate how each mode of expression may have eased or aggravated relationships among the various Yue kingdoms and Han imperial powers.

**Clayton Brown, Ph.D. candidate, Department of History and Asian Studies Center,
University of Pittsburgh**

Han Defined: China's First Anthropologist and the Search for a Chinese Archetype

In 1923 Li Chi (Li Ji) received China's first doctorate in anthropology with a Harvard dissertation exploring *The Formation of the Chinese People*, a national metanarrative that became Chinese anthropology's *raison d'être*. Drawing from his extensive training in Western science and traditional sinological studies, Li used sources ranging from classical texts to biometrical statistics in defining the Chinese geographically, genealogically, culturally, and biologically. His division of the Chinese people into Han and barbarians, derived from tradition and

revolutionary rhetoric, became the foundation for subsequent ethnology and archaeology in China: while ethnologists focused on the study of minorities in the remote frontiers, assuming continuity from barbarians of the classical literature, Li Chi searched for Han racial and cultural origins in the Yellow River valley of the Central Plain, the fabled homeland of the Yellow Emperor and the cradle of Chinese civilization.

In 1925 Li conducted the first Chinese archaeological excavation, for which he is now

ABSTRACTS

regarded as the “father” of Chinese archaeology, and beginning in 1928 he directed the famous excavation of the Shang dynasty capital at Anyang. This discovery enabled the linking of prehistoric and historic China in a linear sequence culminating with the modern nation. As a pioneer of physical anthropology, Li compared the unearthed Shang human remains

with Peking Man and studies of living Han and minorities to determine the Han somatotype. Thus while ethnologists imposed a legacy of barbarism on contemporary minorities, through archaeology modern Han assumed the role of ethnic Chinese, custodians of historic Chinese civilization, and the heart of the modern Chinese nation.

Melissa Brown, Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, Stanford University

Han as Product of a State-Supported Kinship-Labor System

Han is often considered an ethnocultural category, a group with common ancestry showing cultural unity. However, there was far more cultural variation among the Han than previously thought. The notion of Han cultural unity was an ideology useful to the Chinese state because it promoted the idea that a single state should rule a unified China. Thus it provided justification for the political and economic measures the state undertook to hold China together. The late imperial Chinese state promoted one kinship-labor system and labeled it “Han.” This patrilineal system gave senior males in a family (*jia*) authority over the labor of all females and junior males. The state enforced parental authority in their right to sell, rent out, and buy junior members (even as adults) for the profit of the household, in return holding out the

potential for junior males to come some day to senior status by requiring that brothers inherit equal shares of patrimony when they became head of their own household. It is this kinship-labor system that came to define what it meant to be Han.

Han is comparable to Christian in medieval Europe because the Church also dictated a kinship-labor system. Moreover, Christianity also encompassed much cultural and linguistic variation, marriages were necessarily monogamous and only the Church could approve them. The Han kinship-labor system, although disrupted in the Maoist period, has returned with capitalism. However, it is increasingly problematic as the defining aspect of Han identity due to government-imposed limitations in the number and control of children.

Uradyn E. Bulag, Reader in Social Anthropology, Department of Anthropology, University of Cambridge

“We are Good Han!”: The Class and Moral Parameters of Ethnopolitics in China

Recent studies of Chinese ethnicity have usefully posited that Han identity - indeed, all ethnic identities - is either constructed by the state or constituted by the psychic power of self and other. The task remains, however, to imagine ethnopolitics in China, a task requiring us to inquire into ways of inter-ethnic collaboration and/or contestation.

In this paper I revisit the CCP representation of themselves to the (Inner) Mongols and other groups as being “good Han” in contrast to the allegedly bad GMD “Han chauvinists” in the 1930s-40s. Similarly, the Inner Mongols were split categorically into “good Mongols” and “bad Mongols” in class terms. The emergence of the

categories of “good Han” and “good Mongols,” I argue, paved a way for Han-Mongol collaboration, ultimately leading to Mongol integration into China.

This “foundational fiction” points to an uncanny fact that China's post-revolutionary ethnicity involves not diametrically opposed ethnic groups, but “good Han” and “good” minority peoples with their common internal enemies defeated or eliminated. The negotiation between the imperatives of class-based national unity and ethnic boundary maintenance thus constitutes the moral field of ethnopolitics in China with unpredictable outcomes.

Kevin Carrico, Ph.D. candidate, Department of Anthropology, Cornell University

Recentering China: The Cantonese In and Beyond the Han

While Guangdong is reportedly a 99% Han province, the people of Guangdong have traditionally referred to themselves as “Tang people” rather than “Han.” This curious anomaly raises important issues, not only for the concept of *Guangdongren* but also for the study of identity in general: who are the people of Guangdong Province? Why are they designated as part of the Han, despite differences even according to the traditional Stalinist measures of ethnicity employed by the Party-state? And, more generally, how are ethnic identities and the concept of identity itself created and reproduced?

This paper examines varying modes of identifying the self and the other, drawing out the tensions between different levels of seemingly natural identification. Following a brief overview of the development of a Southern Yue or Lingnan identity through the lens of Guangdong’s complex historical relations with the political center, syncretism and tensions are elaborated between this Southern identity and the latter rise of a nominally unified “Han ethnicity” across the traditional areas of Chinese civilization’s reach.

Building upon this historical foundation, an analysis of the growing (re)creation of regional identities in China’s reform era focuses upon three cases of identification: (1) “Northern” perceptions of a “wild capitalist frontier” in the Cantonese periphery, with particular reference to morals and culinary and trade practices; (2) “Southern” resistance to the North’s designation as the cultural and political center of the nation, voiced through rising claims to a superior Cantonese identity and even marginal Cantonese nationalism; as well as (3) a countermovement of Southern appropriations of “Han-ness,” represented by an embrace of official nationalism and the externalization of identity through the recent “Han dress” trend.

I conclude by examining the repercussions of these diverse forms of identification and projection for the state-cultivated image of a homogenized Han, considering the inherently man-made, relational, and power-laden nature of ethnic labels while also analyzing the emotional investments driving the perpetual reproduction of this often quite counterproductive form of “understanding” the self and the other.

Huaiyu Chen, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, University of the West

Languages, Robes, Bodies, and Sages: A New Perspective on Han Identity in Early Medieval China

This paper aims to shed new light on the terminological category of Han in early medieval China from a religious studies perspective. It will examine how the concept of “Han” was formed after the collapse of the Han Empire in Buddhist sources. In particular, it will examine how Han identity was portrayed in various ethnic, cultural and linguistic contexts in medieval Chinese sources, by focusing on four discourses used in Buddhist literature: languages, robes, bodies, and Sages. In tracing when and why *Hanyu* (Han Language) or *Hanyan* (Han dialect) became the *lingua franca* in central China for the translation of Buddhist texts, this paper suggests that *Hanyan* experienced a transformation from a dynastic language (temporal taxonomy) to a national language (ahistorical entity).

This paper also discusses the different concepts of robes and bodies among the Han Chinese and the Buddhists in the early medieval period, as well as the concept of Sages in Chinese and Buddhist discourses at that time, which came to categorize the writings of foreign monks, Chinese domestic monks and local Han elite literati in terms of their regional, linguistic, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. It will also differentiate the regional diversity (South and North China) in the discourses concerning Han identity, looking at how local elite clans and northern diasporas in South China articulated their different images of Han. This study attempts to cast new light on the complexity in the formation of Han identity in a critical era when the Chinese empire had fallen apart.

ABSTRACTS

Zhihong Chen, Ph.D. candidate, Department of History, University of Oregon

"Climate's Moral Economy": The Role of Geography in Ethnic Identities in Republican China

The idea that geographical environment (especially climate and topography) has stamped its indelible mark on racial constitution (physiologically, psychologically, and even morally) has its roots in both Western and Chinese intellectual traditions. It was developed into a systematic, influential geographical theory—called "environmental determinism"—by Western geographers such as Friedrich Ratzel and Ellsworth Huntington during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Despite its racist connotations, which drew increasing criticism (Huntington, for example, suggested that white people in northwest Europe ranked the highest in the scale of civilization because of their temperate climate), its representative works, especially those by Huntington, became extremely popular among Chinese scholars during the Republican period.

This paper examines the effect of this popularity and investigates how, and to what extent,

geography matters in the construction of "Chineseness" and "Hanness" during the Republican period. Relying on the writings by early Chinese geographers including Zhu Kezhen, Zhang Qiyun, Ding Wenjiang, and the eugenicist Pan Guangdan, among others, the paper demonstrates that while common ancestry or blood was often emphasized by Chinese scholars to include the minority peoples in the construction of a unified Chinese race/nation (*zhonghua minzu*), difference in geographical environment was also employed to account for and maintain an "internal difference" between the Han and non-Han peoples within China. While refuting white racial superiority inherent in environmental determinism, they nonetheless used "whiteness" (such as white complexion) as one of the important parameters to gauge the scale of social and racial development of various groups.

Tamara Chin, Assistant Professor, Department of Comparative Literature, University of Chicago

Before Han Ethnography

In examining modern discourses of race and ethnicity in China, scholars have often attempted to trace continuous traditions stretching back into antiquity (often following the lead of late imperial and modern participants in the construction of Han identity). This paper lays out some of the methodological dangers of this retroactive pursuit, before turning to the example of Han historiography and its appropriations. The beginnings of Chinese imperial ethnography are

generally found in Sima Qian's Han dynasty *Shiji* and his influential account of the Xiongnu in particular. Drawing on comparative analyses with other received and excavated Han dynasty texts, and on methods of literary interpretation commonly used for other parts of the *Shiji*, I explore how Sima Qian's account undermines the imperial project of differentiating Han and non-Han, despite shaping a tradition that clearly sought to do so.

Eva S. Chou, Associate Professor, Department of English, City University of New York, Baruch College

Han Identity at the End of the Qing Dynasty: the Experiences and Recollections of Lu Xun (1881-1936)

The first three decades in the life of the writer Lu Xun saw key changes in the way the term "Han" was used, particularly the turbulent decade or so that led to the overthrow of the Qing dynasty. His recollections of "Han" as an identity category in his life under the Qing dynasty are relatively little known, but they are provocative and, by virtue of his giant stature in modern letters, of unusual interest.

The paper examines the contemporary and retrospective views of an articulate and subtle individual on the Han-Manchu dichotomy during an important historical shift in identity consciousness. The view of an individual, especially one with Lu Xun's historical knowledge, is of interest to cultural history and provides an anthropological view of these changes as they operated on the ground. Lu Xun's recollections of

the Han phenomenon has a further interest in that in the 1900s, he had some connection to two of the central figures in the late Manchu rhetoric on Han, Zhang Binglin and Zou Rong. Zhang was his teacher for a time in Japan, a relation he valued all his life, while Zou Rong's fiery trajectory through Japan in 1903 was one he witnessed and did not forget. This analysis of Lu Xun's

experiences will address a number of the questions raised in the symposium's prospectus: the discourse of the turn-of-the-century anti-Qing revolutionaries; the operation of the category of Han in everyday life; and the question of the categories represented by the use of "Han," whether they are "ethnocultural, racial, or civilizational or something else."

Robert Culp, Associate Professor, History & Asian Studies, Bard College

Learning to be Han: Constructions of Ethnicity in Early Republican Geography Textbooks

Any effort to understand popular conceptions of Han identity, and to test their putative hegemony, must take account of how the category was defined in pedagogical materials and mass publications that transmitted the ideas of elite intellectuals and policy makers to a broader public. This paper accordingly explores the definitions of Han community presented in the human geography sections of secondary-level geography classes during the Republican period.

Through analysis of textbooks and curricula, it will reveal how associations of culture, history, language, and race were mobilized in an effort to construct a normative conception of Han ethnicity and teach it to students during the fluid period of nation formation between 1912 and 1937. It will focus on Chinese geography textbooks' accounts of Han/non-Han distinctions within the nation and demonstrate the

fundamental instability of the category Han in the early twentieth century. For textbooks' accounts of multiple differences in language, custom, and even phenotype within the Han ethnicity cast serious doubt on the ostensible unity and homogeneity of that community. These perceived fissures, paradoxically, underwrote strident calls for cultural standardization and efforts to assimilate all peoples within the territorial state to a common, though constructed, norm of Han culture.

Significantly, critical readings of student nationalists' writings during the 1920s and 1930s suggest that they seldom invoked the ethnocultural category of Han to give substance to their calls for national mobilization. The final section of the paper seeks to explain why this was the case and to introduce briefly the other national imaginaries with which students worked.

Frank Dikötter, Professor of Modern History, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and Chair Professor of Humanities, University of Hong Kong

The Racialisation of the Globe: Historical Perspectives

There is considerable confusion about what constitutes "race" or "racism," in particular in debates about parts of the world outside Europe and the United States - most notably China. A historical perspective which focuses on common elements at a global level rather than on specific case studies alone might help elucidate some of these issues. This paper will argue that racist belief systems are global although they are neither uniform nor universal. They share a common language derived from science and a common politics based on a vision of equality for racial insiders, but they can also diverge considerably according to local cognitive traditions and political configurations: flexibility explains why racial discourse has been appropriated in many

different historical contexts since the eighteenth century.

The paper will offer not only a detailed discussion of the emergence and evolution of racial discourse in China, but will also make many systematic comparisons with other parts of the world, from native Americans to the Bakongo along with better known examples from Europe to Southeast Asia: this should introduce much needed clarity in a field marred by an exclusivist approach which reduces 'racism' to the culturally specific case of Europe on the one hand and a universalist view which deems "race" to be a "natural" category widely shared across the world on the other.

ABSTRACTS

Mark C. Elliott, Mark Schwartz Professor of Chinese and Inner Asian History, Harvard University

The Northern Other and Han Ethnogenesis

It is a dictum subscribed to by most students of ethnicity that identity is created transactionally. Another way of saying this is that ethnic identity emerges only when there is interaction between two groups, one identified as Self and one as Other. Assuming that the group presently calling itself the Han is no exception to this general rule, the question arises: Who is or was the Other to the Han Self? Seeking an answer to this question must be regarded as an important part of developing a critical approach to the study of the formation of Han identity. My paper will therefore undertake a consideration of this question, and will suggest that among the various possibilities the most likely candidate is what I will call the Northern Other, the horse-riding pastoralist, in early times known in the Chinese language generically as the Hu 胡 (and by other names as well, such as Fan 蕃, Da 韃, Yi 夷, etc.).

The history of relations between the Hu and Central Plains dwellers – known from the third century CE collectively as Hua 華—is of course long and complex, and cannot be covered in its entirety. Therefore I plan to focus on the later imperial period, specifically on the evolution of the term Hanren before, during, and after the

Yuan dynasty, when its meaning underwent, it seems, an important transformation. On the basis of its appearance in the different dynastic histories and other contemporary sources, I will argue that the category of Hanren as we now understand it came into use for the first time at least by the Liao, but, as is well known, was then reinterpreted by the Yuan much more broadly. In the early Ming (i.e., late 14th century) Hanren was again redefined, part of an effort by the Ming founder and his successors to escape the general meaning of “northerner” assigned to it by the Mongols and re-establish it as a category existing alongside, but in clear distinction to, the Northern Other. This process – which can be thought of as the abandonment of culturally defined terms such as Hua and Hu and their replacement by ethnic labels such as Han, Menggu 蒙古, and Manzhou 滿洲 in ordinary discourse—was complete by the time of the Qing dynasty, even though the membership of the Han group continued to change. I will conclude the paper with a complementary examination of the terms that emerge in the languages of those peoples (e.g., Jurchen, Mongolian, Manchu) to describe Central Plains dwellers, and ask what those terms can tell us about the formation of Han identity.

C. Patterson Giersch, Associate Professor, Department of History, Wellesley College

Critical Han Studies? The Late Imperial Southwest as Case Study

Critical Race Theorists (CRT) makes bold assertions about the nature of racial identity in the United States: race is constructed, but differences between white and non-white are significant and reinforced through everyday actions woven into the fabric of American institutions. White behaviors and whiteness is considered normative, non-whiteness is implicitly considered deviant. Nevertheless, historians have argued that whiteness was historically changeable, its boundaries adjusted, based on various contingencies, to include new groups and individuals. Given these understandings, a major question that has driven CRT and Whiteness studies is how whites came to create their identity.

Might these insights apply to China and its majority Han nationality? One way to address this complex question is by probing “Han-ness” in late imperial Southwest China. The paper draws on

new and older methodologies to provide a multifaceted approach. First, it evaluates the patterns of everyday encounters between “Han” and “non-Han.” Based on these patterns, can we identify processes through which a collective Han identity was forged and embedded in local institutions? How easy was it to cross the divide from “barbarian” to Han? What did one have to do to cross it? Second, the paper examines the state’s classification, administration, and treatment of various subject peoples. Through the creation of multiple political-legal systems did the Qing state—like its modern successors—help create broader ethnic or racial identities? In its response to nineteenth-century violence, did the Qing state help crystallize an emerging Han identity? The paper will conclude with an assessment of CRT/CHS and its potential for advancing our understanding of China.

Hung Li-wan, Assistant Research Fellow, Institute of Taiwan History, Academia Sinica

Reconsidering the Meaning of Han and Its Implications as Seen through the Old Household Registration

In order to control Taiwanese society, Japanese colonists started the household registration system in 1896 and carried out the first population census in 1905. Following the system of ethnic classification used by the Qing, which classed native Taiwanese as *Fan* 番 and their Han counterparts as *Hanren* 漢人, Japanese colonial officials also sorted native Taiwanese into *Fan* and *Han* categories. In order to be counted as being civilized, paying taxes, and being on active duty, *Fan* were classified by the Qing government into *Shu Fan* (cooked, plains aborigines, 熟番), *Sheng Fan* (uncooked, mountain people, 生番), and *Hua Fan* 化番 (situated between *shu* and *sheng*). In addition, Han Taiwanese were also classified on the basis of their native place, such as *Fu* (coming from Fujian province) and *Guang* (coming from Guangdong)" due to.

Drawing upon household registration data, travelogues, expedition records, and field work, this study examines the context of Han from ethnic categorization by household registered during Japanese colonization. It also discusses the

diverse context of Han in colonial Taiwan (1895-1945).

In the light of the household registration system, this paper describes the original categorization of ethnic groups and how Qing governing policies affected the classification of residents in Taiwan. It also highlights the fact that *Shu Fan* (and few *Sheng Fan*) had unceasingly joined Han families through blood ties or became Han by changing their ethnic identity.

This perspective challenges the prevailing conception that the Taiwanese came from southeast China, with cultural connections and blood ties. Rather, the influence from *Shu Fan* played a significant role in blood relations and composition among Han Taiwanese. In sum, reviewing the historical process of ethnic categorization, intermarriage, and ethnic identity changes of Taiwanese natives sheds light on our understanding of the development of Han society and the factors affecting the composition of Han in Taiwan.

Jiang Yonglin, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Oklahoma State University

Constructing Han Legal Identity in Yuan, Ming, and Qing China

Late imperial China—during the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties—witnessed extensive interaction between Han Chinese and other ethnic groups. Each dynasty, established respectively by the Mongols, Han, and Manchus, made considerable efforts to construct a legal identity for the Han Chinese.

The Mongols in the Yuan not only separated Han from the Mongols and peoples of miscellaneous categories (*semuren*), but also legally differentiated Han into *Hanren* (Han people) and *nanren* (southern people). During the Ming, the indigenous Han regime expanded the legal concept of *Hanren* to include all ethnic Chinese, whose legal rights and obligations differed from those of *turen* (aboriginal people) or *yiren* (barbarian people) within the empire. In the Qing, although the ruling Manchus deliberated greatly

on Manchu-Han relations in political, ethnic, and social discourse, they eliminated *Han* as a legal category. Instead, they created legal groups of *qiren* (banner people, including Manchu, Mongol, and, literally, Han personnel) and *minren* (civilians, i.e., ethnic Han Chinese). And, in the last decade of the Qing dynasty, facing enormous pressures from both the revolutionaries and constitutionalists, the imperial court revised the law to minimize the difference between "banner people" and "civilians" and created a broader legal identity—*Zhongguo ren* (Chinese people). By examining the construction of the legal status of Han Chinese, this paper demonstrates that Han, as a legal category, changed drastically during late imperial times; and, Han legal identity, which differed from its political, ethnic, and social counterparts, played a unique role in empire-building enterprises.

Tong Lam, Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Toronto

Recolonizing the Frontiers: Assimilation and the Making of an Amorphous Nation in Late Qing China

As a polycentric empire, the strength of the Qing rested on its ability to knit the different territories and peoples together for political and military purposes, and, at the same time, to rule them as separated zones and categories using different statecraft techniques. Yet, under the colonial gaze of nineteenth-century imperialism, the Qing Empire appeared to be fragmentary and incoherent, and therefore vulnerable to deterritorialization. In light of the new threats, the Qing launched a set of new initiatives to solidify its geobody and social body.

This paper examines how the census reforms introduced during the final years of the Qing dynasty broke down the hierarchical order of the empire and constructed a new conception of the population made up of autonomous units of

individuals and households. It also examines how these enumerative categories enabled non-Han bannermen to imagine themselves as the statistical minority but nevertheless part of the amorphous social body. The reluctance to emphasize ethnic differences provided a shape contrast and indeed alternative to the ways in which the nation was conceptualized under the Nationalist and Communist regimes, when new classificatory technologies were being deployed to identify the differences among groups. Nonetheless, this paper also shows that the statistical imagination of minority and majority enabled by the new enumerative practice ultimately provided a framework for an essentialist politics of identity that would shape the social and political imaginaries of twentieth-century China.

Françoise Lauwaert, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Université libre de Bruxelles

A Law that Conforms to Reason and Sentiment: Sketch of a Judicial Definition of the jia in Late Imperial China

To initiate a discussion on Han identity, we need to reopen the extensively debated subject of the existence of a common culture, which would have been imposed, at least as reference and ideal, on the vast majority of the subjects of the Empire. These points have been reworked in a recent edition of *Modern China* focused on a re-reading of the model of standardization elaborated by James Watson. In this approach, the proponents of the initial thesis as well as the opponents underline the role played by ritual and local elites in the constitution of an orthopraxy. Less is said on how the imposition of a common culture was carried out by the state. The domain of the judiciary constitutes a privileged example of an interface between state thinking at its highest level of elaboration and standardization, and the communities, families and individuals to which this thinking is applied, and this in the most concrete manner and carrying the heaviest

consequences. Under the Qing, family law reached an advanced level of technicality, while still being based on the doctrinal rites of the official compilations and a particular vision of “reason” (li) and “sentiment” (qing). The study of jurisprudence cases in the collection *Xing’an huilan* reveals simultaneously this standardizing force being applied at the highest level through the provincial courts and the Ministry of Justice, and the local and individual tensions—most prominently when an unambiguous definition of the *jia* needs to be enforced. I hope to bring out these aspects through my analysis of two laws: on one hand, the law concerning assault, and on the other hand, the one concerning the murder of three people from the same family. Finally, I will show, supported by Pierre Legendre’s theory, how the bold opposition between law and ritual needs to be overturned.

James Leibold, Lecturer, Asian Studies and Politics Programs, La Trobe University

Between a "Snowball" and a "Snowflake": The Early 20th Century Discourse on Han Origins

For most Chinese the category of "Han" (汉族, 汉人, or 汉民族) is conceived as a rolling snowball, a primordial identity which organically expanded and consolidated as it naturally rolled across "Chinese" territory. Outside of China, however, recent academic literature has set its sights on the "deconstruction" and "dislocation" of this "imagined community," seeking to reveal the fragmented, hybridized, and multiple "snowflakes" which conceals the factious unity of the Han snowball.

Seeking a historicized middle ground between these two extremes—one that treats identity as both the transmission and dispersal of cultural memory and epistemic categories through space and time—this paper explores the early 20th

century discourse on Chinese origins. By examining the narratives, categories and assumptions with which Chinese male elites sought to locate the birth and evolution of the "nation" (minzu), I seek to flesh out some of the latent tensions embedded within their ideological work: (1) between a narrowly conceived Han appellation and a more inclusive Zhonghua minzu (中华民族) ethnonym; (2) between a cosmopolitan, transnational origin and an indigenous, firmly bounded creation myth; and finally (3) between a singular, arrow-like homogeneity and a multiple, arabesque-style heterogeneity.

Lin Hsueh-yi, Ph. D. candidate, Department of History, Princeton University

To Have or Not to Have the Queue?: Shifting Cultural-Political Identities of the Han Chinese from the Mid-Seventeenth to Early Twentieth Century

In 1644, when the Manchu regent Dorgon entered the Forbidden City in Beijing and established Qing rule (1644-1912), he immediately gave the order that all Han Chinese males must adopt the Manchu hairstyle by shaving the forehead (tifa). As the Manchu hairstyle differed from Han custom, this order was resisted with great defiance. The Manchu prince had to eventually revoke the order of shaving the forehead, or the Queue Order. Only after the Qing empire consolidated its rule over China Proper, was the Queue Order re-enforced. The same Manchu hairstyle, after nearly three hundred years, became an issue again for Han Chinese literati in the early twentieth century—ironically, this time, many of them struggled to keep it.

The first part of my examination is an analysis of how hairstyle served as a cultural marker of different ethnicities, namely the hua/yi distinction, in ancient Chinese texts, and how non-Han hairstyle was received in the seventeenth century under different contexts. In the second part, I

explore different attitudes associated with the queue during the turn of the twentieth century, and seek to explain their implications. The final part is a further study on another government regulation regarding hairstyle, namely the cutting of the queue, during the twentieth century. By contrasting the attitudes toward the queue, a Manchu hairstyle, in the mid-seventeenth and early twentieth centuries among Han Chinese literati, I explore how the Manchu consolidation reshaped the cultural-political identity of the Han Chinese, rendering the queue not only a "national" but also a "traditional" hairstyle. Further, by investigating the history of the queue in China Proper and different attitudes associated with the queue, I also analyze how this cultural symbol, served as a token of subjugation and at times a sign of humiliation during cross-cultural encounters, and expound how attitudes toward the queue corresponded with changing political realities. This study, in my view, will also shed new light on the "otherness" of Manchu rule in the Han Chinese perception, and have a more critical examination of the Han mentality.

Luo Wenqing, Associate Professor, College of Foreign Studies, Guangxi University for Nationalities, Ph.D. Student, Vietnam National University, Hanoi

Xie Linxuan, Research Associate, College of Foreign Studies, Guangxi University for Nationalities

Zhao Yongfei, Ph.D. Student, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, Research Assistant, Confucius Institute, Asian Studies Center, University of Pittsburgh

Identity, Culture and Language Change of Ethnic Chinese (Hoa) in Vietnam

Some anthropologists believe that Han ethnicity in the form of the Chinese minority groups in many Southeast Asian countries has only a very loose connection, if not totally disconnected, with their Chinese identity. This group of scholars, based on their personal experiences and close observations, conclude that the locally born Chinese ethnic minorities merely consider China and Chinese culture and language the origin of their ancestry, and already have nothing to do with the country of China in all respects. On the other hand, some Chinese scholars think that it is true that due to political pressures over the last quarter of the twentieth century, Han ethnicities in Southeast Asia were reluctant to recognize their Chinese identity. However, with the fast development of the Chinese economy and the expansion of political power in the region over the past decade, Chinese culture and language learning are now being pursued by a large number of Chinese descendants in the region. Consequently, these Chinese scholars assume that Han cultural influence is still profound.

Both groups of scholars conduct their research mainly in Southeast Asian island countries, such as

Malaysia, Philippine, Indonesia, and Singapore. Very few scholars have focused their research on the Hoa minority—Han Chinese ethnicity—in Vietnam. Actually, the Hoa minority provides a more unique case than any other country in the region because of the comprehensive and sophisticated historic and cultural relationship between China and Vietnam. This relationship is distinctive from any other Southeast Asian country.

In this paper, the authors are going to explore Chinese language, culture and identity recognition and connections among the Hoa minority through in-depth field research and interviews with 15 to 20 Hoa families in Vietnam. A snowball sampling methodology will provide the authors with initial understanding of the culture and identity of the Hoa as it relates to their Chinese origin in Vietnam. The authors are expecting to find different behaviors and reactions among the Hoa to their Chinese identity and to explain the possible reasons for these differences in relation to other Han ethnicities in Southeast Asia.

Haiyun Ma, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Fort Lewis College

Hui-Min as Hui or Min? Han-Hui Politics in Qing China

Anthropologists and historians have recently begun to question the homogenous nature of China's largest ethnic groups, the Han. The problem of using "Han" as a cultural-ethnic category referring to the population of China proper has been underlined by the presence of many "Hanified," yet distinct, groups such as Chinese-speaking Muslims (Huimin 回民) during the Qing, when the Han and Hui elite debated the legitimacy of non-Han cultures in China.

My paper focuses on discourses on Islam and Muslim from the Han, Hui, and the Qing court in the early-to-mid Qing. It identifies two distinct representations and identifications of Hui subjects (and by extension, Qing population subjects of China proper): namely those by the Han, on the

one hand, and the Qing court and Muslims, on the other hand. Han political and cultural elites equated the ethnic Han (汉) with the Qing's legal commoner subjects (民) and associated Han culture with a political ideology that largely relied on Confucianism in an attempt to accuse Muslim subjects of practicing non-Han and non-legitimate cultures in China proper.

While Han views on Islam and Muslims reflect Han culturalism, the Manchu-dominated Qing state adopted a political, geographic, and legalist approach towards the Hui subjects, in addition to other subject populations of China proper. The Qing deliberately employed a larger geographic designation, Zhongguo ji ("中国籍" or Ming domain) or Zhongguoren ("中国

人” or Ming’s population) to critique Han cultural centralism and accommodate the ethnic and religious (族, 教) diversity within the subject populations by using uniformity in political-legal status as equal commoner subject (民). In other words, the Qing state employed a combined cultural-legal (e.g., Han-Min) framework to categorize its subject population of China proper into various cultural political subjects such as Hui-min and others, particularly utilizing legal connotations. This framework will provide a better understanding of the early-mid Qing policies towards Muslims and Islam.

The Han and Manchu discourses on Islam and Muslims exerted a great impact on Muslim subjects, especially Muslim intellectuals, in their interpretations of Islam and Muslims. This paper argues that the development of the Islamic literature in the Han (Chinese) language during the early Qing, or the so-called Han Kitab (Han “books,” or writings 汉克塔布), was in many ways a response to ongoing Han-Hui ethnic politics. One major task

of Qing Muslim literature was to distinguish “Muslim” from the historical Hui (Turkic tribes) and “Islam” (Pure-and-True) from the Hui religion (Turks’ religion). Furthermore, Muslim intellectuals attempted to present a coherent Zhongguo history that goes beyond Han history, by bridging Han-ruled dynasties and non-Han regimes with eminent historical Muslims. All these efforts were to demonstrate the “Zhongguo-ness” of non-Han populations in China proper, in accordance with the Qing identification of all peoples as Zhongguoren. All these discourses centered on the key question of how to identify the Qing subject populations with diverse cultural backgrounds within China proper, as well as the nature of that identification. The Han-Hui ethnic politics illuminate multiple understandings of Chinese history, Han ethnicity and culture, Qing political subjects, and Zhongguo-hood by different cultural elites at a time when the basic political and social structure of China was under transition and re-formation.

Jeff McClain, Ph.D. candidate, Department of History, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Barbarian Caves 蛮子洞 or Han Tombs 汉墓? Republican Archaeology and the Reassertion of Han Presence in Ancient Sichuan

The modern discipline of archaeology has recently come to the attention of historians for its important role in making claims for the authenticity of emerging nation-states. Nationalist propagandists often seized on the discipline to help locate both the ethnicity and the geo-body of the nation in the remote past. Archaeologists in early twentieth-century China often participated in such projects that abetted the Guomindang state’s efforts to unify the country as they searched for and found Han presence in areas far removed from the central plains.

This paper looks at one such case from Sichuan, where for centuries the view prevailed that the numerous man-made caves along so many rivers in the province belonged to barbarians in the

distant past, ancestors of the contemporary Yi, Qiang and others, who once used them as residences. However, with the arrival of modern archaeological methods, first missionary archaeologists and then Chinese archaeologists jettisoned this view and the caves were found to be Han dynasty tombs. This interpretation quickly became almost unanimous and buttressed claims for ethnic Han presence in large swaths of ancient Sichuan, thus discursively moving the ethnic minorities even further to the edges of both time and space. This paper primarily uses the published accounts of archaeologists to trace the evolution of this interpretation.

Thomas S. Mullaney, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Stanford University

Han, Non-Han and Non: The Logic of Majority, Minority and Miscellany in the Study of Chinese Ethnicity

In this paper, I will argue that the study of Han and Non-Han by scholars in the twentieth century has been governed by separate and incommensurable logics. The study of Han has been governed by what I term Han Logic, the goal of which has been to explain the ethnogenesis of a group defined a priori as a singular unit despite observable heterogeneity. It depends upon a particular understanding of ethnogenesis grounded in assumptions of convergence, confluence, and flowing together.

In contrast to this fluvial logic of majority ethnogenesis, the study of the Non-Han minority has been governed by an arboreal logic of minority ethnogenesis. Within Non-Han Logic, ethnicities are assumed to form through processes of divergence, disintegration, and branching apart.

In addition to examining the logic of Han and Non-Han, I will also broach the essential – yet essentially overlooked – issue of China’s “ethnic miscellany.” Unlike Han and Non-Han, the “Non” has been governed by an absence of logic. Irreducible to taxonomy, Non has been resigned to the realm of invisibility within a system that is fundamentally incapable of rendering it legible.

In examining the logics of Han, Non-Han, and Non, I will focus on three cases from the twentieth-century: the foundational text by Li Ji, *The Formation of the Chinese People*; the early twentieth-century history of language-based ethnotaxonomy in southwest China; and the “yet-to-be classified ethnicities” (weishibie minzu) of the PRC period.

Leo K. Shin, Assistant Professor, History and Asian Studies, University of British Columbia

The Trouble with Yue Fei

In the winter of 2002–2003, a minor uproar erupted in both China and many overseas Chinese communities after it had been rumored that the Ministry of Education in China was considering stripping Yue Fei (1103–1142) of the title of “national hero.” The status of the twelfth-century martyr was apparently at issue because China is, officially, a unitary multinational state in which the Han majority is reckoned to have long lived alongside fifty-five “minority nationalities.” Yue Fei was no doubt a hero, according to the Curriculum Outline for Chinese History for Regular Full-day Senior Secondary Schools, from which the rumors concerning Yue’s revised status had evidently originated, but the Song-dynasty general should not be deemed a “national” (minzu) hero because the Jurchens he was fighting against were not an external enemy but were in fact a brotherly minority group within China.

What is fascinating about this controversy is of course not whether Yue Fei should or should not be considered a “national hero.” What is significant about the uproar, I would argue, is that it places into sharp focus the tension inherent in the modern

nationalist discourse. To be sure, participants in the debate disagreed on what constituted a “nation.” But, despite their differences, almost all still seemed to take for granted that “Han” as a nationality was ultimately a natural, meaningful building block for the reconstruction of China’s past. My goal here is not simply to point out that “nation” is imagined. Through a detailed examination of the uses of—and trouble with—Yue Fei in modern China, I argue in this paper that although we should “dislocate China” and strive to “rescue history from the nation,” we must recognize that memories and imaginations, whether in the case of China or of other parts of the world, are ultimately what we rely on to reconstruct the past. I do not share the optimism that we can now write a history of China that is completely outside the influence of the discourses of the “imagined nation.” What we can do, I believe, is to make explicit such imaginations and to place them within the broader contexts of state- and nation-making in Chinese and world history.

**Christopher Sullivan, Ph.D. candidate, Graduate Group in Sociology and Demography,
University of California Berkeley**

Genetically Modified Ethnicity: The Changing Logic of Ethnic Classification in China

In the mid-1950s, a gathering of preeminent Chinese social scientists and Communist Party cadres was given the task of partitioning China's diverse population into distinct ethnic categories using explicitly non-biological criteria. The result of this initial project was the assignment of Chinese residents into one of 56 ethnic groups. Yet less than 50 years later, the initiation of the Chinese Human Genome Project has spurred a flurry of medical, physical anthropological and genetic research on ethnicity in China, and potentially offered a new means of categorizing ethnic groups in China. First, I seek to demonstrate how the changing logic of ethnic classification in China has resulted in new tensions in ethnic categorization. Second, I examine how this shift in the logic of ethnic

classification has led to new understandings of ethnicity in China.

I explore the importance of these two ethnic classification projects and the "modernization" of scientific practices more generally, in building and shaping the Chinese nation, and in shaping contemporary ethnic relations. I pose several interrelated questions: why was (and is) it necessary for the Chinese government to distinguish between who is and who is not Han Chinese? Why has there been a move towards justifying ethnic categorization in biological and genetic terms, and away from social science ones? How are the resulting tensions between the two logics of ethnic classification to be resolved?

Sun Jiang, Associate Professor, Shizuoka University of Art and Culture

"Continuity" and "Discontinuity": The Narratives of Huang Di in History Textbooks during the Early 20th Century

In the study of the origins of Chinese civilization, the identity of Huang Di, or the Yellow Emperor, is debatable. There are two approaches: one is to emphasize that the memory of Huang Di was broken by the influence of the nationalism; and the other believes the memory has been continuous.

By discussing the narratives and images of Huang Di in the history textbooks published during the early 20th century, this paper shifts the focus of studying Huang Di from a man in the political world to the one in the everyday world.

Donald S. Sutton, Professor, Department of History, Carnegie Mellon University

China Outside In: Uses of the Minority Other in Defining "Han" and "Chinese" in Late Socialist China, with Some Late Imperial Comparisons

People do not inherit fixed social identities, it is widely agreed, but construct them, and this self-construction requires the presence of an Other. For "Han" identity, and also the more inclusive identity "Chinese," a key Other has been the peripheral peoples dispersed around China's frontiers. Examining Han and Chinese self-construction on these boundaries with the Other is not a straightforward matter, for at least three reasons: (1) As we encounter them in image, speech and the written word, and even in their self-presentation, these Others are also partly an imagined construction of the (Han) Chinese, as Edward Said showed with 19th century Europe and its orientals; (2) the "imaginary" itself is plural, varying for local Han, Han officials, and Han Chinese from metropolitan China; and (3) the effect on the (Han) Chinese imagination differs according to power relations on the frontier in question, notably the degree and direction of cultural influence.

Taking these complexities into account, this paper focuses on the single frontier region of Songpan in northern Sichuan, a place opened to tourism since the 1980s. After considering five attributes of identity formation that are applicable to this case, I deal with the principal images that serve, or rather create, the various Han selves in the age of tourism: more generally with "self *via* other," including the "lumping" of national minorities as non-Han; and, as a form of domination, "self *over* other," comparing these constructions with local ethnic and regionalist sensibilities. I conclude with a section "self *around* other," which examines examples of the production of Chineseness through the encompassment or absorption of local Tibetan symbolisms. Throughout this paper, I incorporate selected historical evidence on Chineseness and Han-ness from late imperial times.

Nicholas Tapp, Professor, Department of Anthropology, Australian National University

Jokers in the Pack: Han Marginality and Minority Centrality (Some Issues of Nationality and Identity from the Literature)

This paper is a discussion of ethnicity in China and the neglected concept of Han marginality—that is, the contexts and regions where Han constitutes, not the dominant ethnicity, but the ethnic Other. I will relate understandings of ethnicity to current theories of nationalism, in terms of contrasts between state-sanctioned discourses of difference and local sentiments of identity. Arguing that classification must be understood as a socially embedded activity, it will draw attention to the construction of a “radical otherness” in

classification projects, as opposed to the construction of common evolutionary essences through five-stage socialist models, and trace these back to Enlightenment projects of universalism. In regard to construction, maintenance, and iteration of the “Han/Hua” essence, it examines Hmong/Miao notions of alterity, and also the position of the Yunnanese Chinese (Muslim/non-Muslim) in mainland Southeast Asia.

Emma Teng, Associate Professor of Chinese Studies, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Chinese Eurasians/Eurasian Chinese: Does “Mixed-Race” De-Center Han from Chineseness?

The emergence of “Han” as a racialized category at the end of the Qing Dynasty was related to a drive for national purity, with both anti-Manchu and anti-Western impulses. Yet, at the same time, leading intellectuals of the late-Qing and early-Republican periods, including Kang Youwei and Wu Tingfang, advocated Chinese-White racial amalgamation as a means of improving the Chinese race through Eurasian hybridity. How did these disparate notions of Chineseness, one emphasizing a putative racial purity, and one emphasizing the idea of racial and cultural “mixedness,” coexist in the production of modern conceptions of Chinese identity?

This paper will examine the notion of Chinese “mixed race” and the historical experiences of

Chinese Eurasians in order to consider whether “mixed race” subjects challenge the Han-centered discourse on Chinese identity, or whether these marginalized subjects simply confirm the privileging of “Han” identity as “authentically” Chinese. Can Eurasian Chinese be considered “Han” (by virtue of paternal heritage)? Or are they Chinese, but not “Han”? What makes someone “Han”? Is it “blood,” or cultural practices? I will examine racial theory, Chinese nationality laws, and debates on interracial marriage, as well as memoirs and other texts written by Chinese Eurasians themselves in order to discuss the implications of “mixed race” for our thinking on questions of Chineseness.

Christopher Vasantkumar, Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, Hamilton College

Merely Minzu?: Han on the Grassland as "Local Minorities"

My proposed paper has been inspired by recent attempts to rethink notions of white privilege through studies of marginal members of majority categories in the contemporary US. John Hartigan Jr.'s work on the "racialness of whites as a local minority" in Detroit provides the touchstone for this paper's attempts to deal with the ambivalent presence of marginal Han in China's "Little Tibet" (Gannan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu, northwest China). Hartigan notes that suggesting that "whatever its status nationally, whiteness is not hegemonic within" Detroit is not to imply that whiteness is somehow "irrelevant" there. Rather, crucially, it is to highlight the degree to which "its operations do not possess a generically 'unmarked' or 'normative' character" (Hartigan, *Racial Situations*, 16-17).

I suggest that applying Hartigan's work to constructions of Han-ness on the margins of China

might be generative of insights into the ongoing, complexly trans/local production of notions of unmarkedness and normativity that diverges in significant respects from more common visions of the place of the Han in China's ethno-minzu typology of human difference. In this discussion the figure of the Han on the grasslands, of the Han not as sedentary, but as nomadic becomes of crucial importance in highlighting the particular characteristics of the ways in which ethno-minzu economies of national belonging in Gannan are inflected by region, class, livelihood, religion and dietary practices. This in turn forces us to deal with the realization that Han is not merely an ethno-minzu category but one that ramifies in multiple, complexly articulated domains of social difference.

Florent Villard, Assistant Professor, Department of Chinese Studies, Institute of Transtextual and Transcultural Studies (IETT), University of Lyon - Jean Moulin

"Class," "Race" and Language: Imagining China and the Discourse on the "Han" Category in the Writing of Marxist Revolutionary Qu Qiubai (1895-1930)

This study investigates the discursive peregrinations of the "Han" category in the writings of the Chinese revolutionary, theoretician and activist Qu Qiubai. In the papers he wrote at the beginning of the 1930s dealing with the questions of language and writing, the author made singular use of the concept "Han" to talk about the language/writing of the "Han" (*Hanzi, Hanyu*) as a racial or ethnic group (*Hanzu*). Narrating the history of the cultural hegemony of the "Han" in Asia and criticizing the assimilation policy (*tonghua*), Qu elaborated a discourse which articulated and mobilized, sometimes in a contradictory manner, the "Han" category both as a "race" and as a social class. Going beyond the race/class dialectic, I will try to show that these texts question the territorial, cultural and ethnic boundaries of "China" and its homogeneity.

Following this argument, this paper demonstrates how Qu's attempt to define "Chinese language(s)" helps us to elucidate the complex articulation between China as a discursive and spatial category, the "Han" category, and the other nationalities in the Chinese space. By questioning the homogeneity of the linguistic identity of China, using the word *zhongguohua*, Qu Qiubai unveiled an unstable and fragile imaginary relative to China and its so-called majority ethnic group, the Han.

The imaginary of the "nation" and its boundaries is a recent phenomenon in China, but it is interesting to see that in Qu's texts we can already find different theoretical and textual traditions which give a polysemic sense often veiled by the translation of signifiers such as *Hanzi, Hanyu, Hanzu, Zhongguo, minzu*, etc.

Wang Ming-ke, Research Fellow, Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica

Imagining Ethnic Origins and Borders of the Huaxia during the Han-Jin Period

From the Former Han (202 BC-AD 8) through the Jin Dynasty (AD 280-420), the expeditions of Huaxia identity gradually reached its geographical, ecological and social boundaries. During this period, ancient Chinese historians not only created the history of the Yellow Emperor to establish the common spatial and blood origins of the Huaxia, but also wrote heroic histories for other peoples on their borderlands. These heroic histories concerning “others” always followed a specific plot that

described a frustrated hero who had left China for a remote place and then became the natives’ king, and brought with them civilization. We can call them “hero-went-to-frontier histories.” Based on four hero-went-to-frontier histories found in the works of court historians of the Han-Jin period, I analyze the concepts of “others” or “peripheral Huaxia”—the Chaoxian, the Wu, the Dian and the Qiang respectively—in the mind’s eye of these historians.

Wang Peihua, Professor, Department of History, Beijing Normal University

The Compilation of the Quyu Tuzhi during the Sui Dynasty and an Assessment of Emperor Suiyang

Recent scholarship has paid little attention to the three large-scale cartographic endeavors during the Sui Dynasty: Notes on Local Agricultural Products and Customs of Prefectures (《诸郡物产土俗记》), Quyu Tuzhi (《区宇图志》) and Compilation of Cartographic Canon for Districts (《诸州图经集》). This paper discusses the backdrop against which these cartographic books appeared during the Sui Dynasty, the fostering role played by Emperor Suiyang in the compilation of these works and the reasons for the changes to the Cartographic Annals of the Territory. I argue that the cartographic developments during this period can be attributed to nationwide surveys on administration, local customs and agricultural

products. In addition, an increase in trade enabled the Sui to gain a better understanding of foreign territories. At the same time, Emperor Suiyang’s high educational level and his intention to use cartographic books to record and eulogize his political and military accomplishments in unifying the state contributed significantly to this endeavor. It must be noted that the Quyu Tuzhi was modified many times during Emperor Suiyang’s reign for two main reasons: first, to improve the inappropriate and redundant style of the original author; second, the emperor’s decision to modify the book’s narrow outlook on nationalism and territorial domain.

Scott Writer, Ph.D. candidate, Asia Institute, University of Melbourne

A Reluctant Minority: Articulating the Hakka Collective in Republican China and Post-War Taiwan

This paper examines representations of Hakka collective identity in Republican China and post-war Taiwan and their relationship to overarching paradigms of history, nation and culture. It begins by describing the program of “Hakka Research” (*Kejia yanjiu*) that took shape within Republican Chinese social sciences of the 1930s. Developed in parallel with an incipient Chinese ethnology, this research program on the one hand refuted strongly the suspicion that the Hakka were anything but a proud “sub-nationality” (*minxi*) of the Han people, while on the other attempting to account for the linguistic and cultural distinctiveness that had historically divided the Hakka so clearly from neighboring Sinophone communities.

This narrative of Hakka identity was amongst the numerous cultural tropes imported to Taiwan upon the assumption of Nationalist rule after the Second

World War. There it was mobilized in the service of the state’s claims to represent Chinese cultural orthodoxy and encourage a spirit of patriotic sacrifice on the part of Taiwanese Hakka. In contemporary Taiwan, however, the received vision of the Hakka as collective envoys of Han racial purity has been replaced by emergent discourses of ‘ethnicity’ and ‘community.’ These discourses question the salience of binary distinctions between Han and non-Han groups and instead reorient practices of group-making towards distinctly local forms of collective agency. The divergent mappings of the Hakka collective in each period thus provides a useful illustration of how the space between Han and non-Han is staked out and unraveled, and how these constructions both imply and are implicated by changing conceptions of community and nation.

Xu Jieshun, Founding Director, Han Nationality Research Center, Guangxi University for Nationalities*The Snowball Theory on the Study of Han*

This paper draws on the “snowball theory” to discuss the Han as an ethnically diverse but cohesive nation that has continuously grown throughout history. Retracing the origins and the development of the Han over the past two thousand years, I demonstrate that this nation is pluralistic by nature, having expanded by successfully incorporating minor ethnic minorities. The Han can be compared to a snowball, as its ability to absorb other ethnic groups and attenuate the cultural differences among them has created the largest nationality in the world.

The “snowball theory” enables scholars to better comprehend the process through which ethnic groups are absorbed and gradually identify themselves as Han. I argue that the unity of this

nation is achieved both cultural and politically. Culturally, devising a system of writing based on character captured the essence of the Han’s traditions. It created a form of communication that could be understood by all ethnic groups scattered throughout China regardless of their dialect. It is not by accident that the written language features as a linchpin of China’s unity. Politically, over time the Han have enacted several policies aimed at exerting influence and transforming ethnic minorities into Han. This continued even during periods the empire was governed by non-Han peoples. Therefore, the “snowball theory” provides a means for understanding the ways different ethnic groups merge together taking the Han as a model.

Gang Zhao, Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Akron*A Marginal Identity and Its Modern Transformation: Inquiring into Han Identity*

The subject of this paper is the changing identity of the Han Chinese people (*Hanren*) in the twentieth century. After tracing the origin of the term “Han,” it suggests that the category was used mainly by non-Han peoples who wished to construct their own identity in contrast with an ethnically and culturally distinct other. While Chinese writers might use the term in its specifically ethno-cultural sense, applying it to themselves, they rarely identified closely with Han-ness, defining their corporate identity instead through a connection to a political entity such as China or the Ming dynasty, entities they were prepared to die for. Han-ness must be seen in the larger framework of dynastic identity to explain why the category was so little used during the late imperial era.

As the international and domestic ruptures that took place around 1900 led them to question the nature of a Chinese identity or a Qing identity, Chinese literati influenced by Western ethics constructed and promoted the category “*Hanzu*” (or “*Hanzhong*”). Whereas “*Hanren*” had in most cases been used by non-Han people for the purpose of defining themselves, “*Hanzu*” was self-consciously coined and used by Han intellectuals as they pitted themselves against their Manchu rulers. Most recently, contemporary intellectuals have used “*Hanzu*” identity to challenge the official Communist Party discourse that presents China as a multiethnic state.

Minglang Zhou, Associate Professor and Chair, East Asian Studies, Dickinson College*Models of Nation-State Building and the Meaning of Being Chinese in Contemporary China*

In this paper, I will examine how the meaning of being Chinese in contemporary China changes as China’s nation-state-building models evolve and what theoretical and pragmatic significance such changes have for ethnic relations in China. In the 1950s China adopted the Soviet model of multinational-state building (Dreyer 1976, 2006; Connor 1984). In theory this model is based on the doctrine that all nations are equal, though in

practice there is always a big brother. This model defines Chineseness at two levels: nation/nationality and state. Thus, being Chinese means being “Han and a citizen of China” and/or being “a non-Han nationalities and a citizen of China.”

Since the mid-1990s, the Soviet model has been quietly replaced by a Chinese model called “one nation with diversity (Zhou 2007). The new

ABSTRACTS

model is based on Fei Xiaotong's "the pattern of diversity in unity of the Chinese nation" where the Chinese nation includes both Han and non-Hans (Fei 1991, 1999; Luo et al. 2000). The new model defines Chineseness at three levels: ethnicity, nation, and state. In the new model, being Chinese includes "Han ethnicity, membership of the Chinese nation, and citizenship of China" and/or "non-Han ethnicity, membership of the Chinese nation, and citizenship of China."

I will demonstrate that the new model has consequences in three areas that affect being

Chinese: (1) the state's current discourse on geopolitical, blood/lineage, cultural, and economic relationships among peoples in China; (2) laws and policies regarding ethnicity and nation; and (3) negations of ethnicity, nationality and citizenship identification. I will conclude the paper with critical questions of the relationship between this new model and being Chinese, and with theoretical explorations of definability and re-definability of modern nations.