

Friday, October 21, noon to 1pm, 287 Dwinelle Hall:

Roy Chan, "Inverted Propositions: Chinese Readings of Nikolai Chernyshevsky and Questions of Totality and Transnational *Bildung*"

Nikolai Chernyshevsky (1828–1889) is most renowned for his utopian realist novel *What is to be Done?* (1863). However, he was perhaps most known in China as a literary critic as a result of the Soviet canonization of nineteenth-century “democratic critics,” alongside Vissarion Belinsky and Nikolai Dobroliubov. This talk discusses two Chinese critics’ engagement with Chernyshevsky’s treatise *The Aesthetic Relation of Art to Reality*. Here, Chernyshevsky advances the proposition that “beauty is life” (prekrasnoe est’ zhizn’). In the 1930s and 1940s, Zhou Yang (1908–1989) read Chernyshevsky and produced a Chinese translation in 1942. In 1963, Chinese philosopher Zhu Guangqian (1897–1986) published the *History of Western Aesthetics*, where he devotes a chapter each on Belinsky and Chernyshevsky. This talk will explore how both Zhou and Zhu responded to the proposition of beauty and life, in particular pointing out all three thinkers’ engagement with Ludwig Feuerbach’s “transformative method” in his critique of Christianity that seeks to invert the relation between subject and predicate. Finally, I consider the issue of transnational *Bildung* between Russia and China, and the teacher-student relation, along the same lines of both Feuerbachian transformative critique and Hegelian speculative retrieval.

Friday, November 18, noon–1pm, via [zoom](#):

Jeehyun Choi, “The Unfree Coast: The Korean Coolie and Hemispheric Labor in Ju Yoseop's *To Catch A Cloud*”

This talk will discuss the Korean writer Ju Yoseop (1902–1972) and the politics of his novel *To Catch a Cloud* (1935). I examine the novel’s critique of racialized labor exploitation in Mexico and the U.S. through the figure of the Korean coolie.

Friday, December 2, noon–1pm, 287 Dwinelle Hall (also accessible via [zoom](#)):

Fedde de Vries, “Authors Neither Alive nor Dead: Code-Switching Buddhist Scholars in the Sui & Tang”

In this talk I start by giving a general overview of my dissertation project, wherein I seek to reimagine the early history of Huayan and other schools of East Asian Buddhism. Drawing on comparative work on scholasticism, I argue that the great Sui-Tang Buddhist exegetes are best understood as participants in a single scholastic world. As I will suggest, this opens up new and more fruitful ways to engage their texts. While I give a number of examples in my talk, I will focus on my contention that when commenting on different (sets of) texts these scholiasts engaged different clusters of ideas, argumentative methods, and authoritative sources. They would, so to speak, “code-switch” as they moved between different fields of study.

Friday, December 9, noon–1pm, 287 Dwinelle Hall (also accessible via [zoom](#)):

Jackson Macor, “The Blade of Emptiness: Cook Ding and the Two Truths”

This talk will explore the use of the tale of Cook Ding from the third chapter of the *Zhuangzi* in two Buddhist sources: the preface to the *Shiermenlun* by Sengrui (352–436) and its commentary by Jizang (549–623). Whereas Sengrui uses the figure of Cook Ding to domesticate Buddhist Madhyamaka thought for a Chinese audience at the moment of its introduction, Jizang, on the contrary, draws Cook Ding, and the *Zhuangzi* as a whole, into a framework based on the Indic texts themselves.