Yih-Ren Lin, Taipei Medical University

Contesting “home-making” imaginations under the natural disasters: The Morakot typhoon case and its relations to bureaucracy, religious charities and indigenous peoples

This paper attempts to address the issue of how we respond to the happenings of natural disasters under the modern world. If natural disasters can be a symbol of nature, this paper could also be an enquiry of “what nature is about?”. The Morakot typhoon occurred in Taiwan in 2009 and the reconstruction process by the inflicted sectors are the case examined. A participatory action research is adopted to work with the inflicted Tsou indigenous tribe for over 7 years. The political ecology that emphasizes sustainability and social justice is a key approach to understand how the Tsou communities reconstruct after the impact of Morakot typhoon and their relations to the “helpers” like governmental agencies and different religious charities including Tzu-Chi Buddhist charity and World Vision. The “home” imaginations of different social groups are analyzed according to their social practices and actions. There are three major findings in the study. Firstly, while the related governmental agencies and religious charities are more keen to provide “houses” to the inflicted peoples, the indigenous people demonstrate a strong capability of “home-making” inspired by their long and deep migratory history of interacting with the ever-changing environment. Secondly, different religious charities show different attitudes toward their support to indigenous “home-making”. While World Vision adopts a “transitional house” policy in indigenous people’s familiar mountain home range and traditional territory, Tzu-Chi would prefer to create a brand new and modern green designed “long lasting house” far away from their supposed dangerous mountains. Thirdly, for over 7 years until now indigenous people come back and forth between different “homes” no matter it’s their primary living place before the disaster or the remote houses provided by the government or the charities. This paper concludes Tsou people’s “home” concept is an expanding living place network rather than an original, fixed, and authentic location. Like nature, indigenous home is often defined and re-defined by their interaction with changing environment. Nevertheless, natural disaster is not merely a negative impact to their living, but also a regeneration of their home range and imagination, which is quite different from the government and religious charities’ thinking.

Bio

Yih-ren Lin is Director and Associate Professor of Graduate Institute of Humanities in Medicine at Taipei Medical University. He received his Ph.D. at University College London’s Department of Geography. His expertise includes ecology, indigenous studies, cultural geography, environmental justice and food sovereignty. He has been engaged in numerous indigenous community projects and is currently working with the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative (IPSI) to promote self-sufficient management of agricultural and natural resources within local communities.

Sunday, 1.30—3.15 pm: Environmental Justice:

Kalyanakrishnan Sivaramakrishnan, Yale University

Environmental Jurisprudence and Inequality in India
Over last three decades something that might be thought of as environmental jurisprudence has emerged in India, mostly through a growing body of public interest litigation. Much of this consolidation of judicial wisdom has occurred in the Supreme Court of India, increasingly through the work of its Green Bench. But it has also happened in select High Courts and, since 2010, at the National Green Tribunal. This presentation considers issues of citizenship raised in the formation of environmental jurisprudence through the prism of inequality. Thereby it also reflects on the opportunities for research at the intersection of legal studies, social anthropology, and environmental history as one way to shape environmental humanities in Asia.

Bio

My research spans environmental history and political anthropology of forests, agriculture, human-animal relations, and urban environments in India. Recently I have started working on environmental law and jurisprudence in India. Over the years my publications have covered these topics and issues of circular migration, economic development, nationalism, state formation, cultural geography and the history of forestry sciences. I currently serve on the editorial board of the American Ethnologist and the Journal of Peasant Studies; having earlier served as one of the founding editorial board members for Environment and History and Conservation and Society. I edit the “Culture, Place and Nature” Series at the University of Washington Press; with Anand Yang and Padma Kaimal I co-edit the Global South Asia Series, also at the University of Washington Press.

Julia Thomas, University of Notre Dame

The Politics of Periodization: “the Anthropocene” and Asia

My presentation explores the stakes for Asia in the rival definitions of “the Anthropocene” currently under consideration among scientists and humanists. I will first sketch these rival definitions and then speak to these proposals’ political, economics, and intellectual consequences for our historical understanding of Asia and for Asian players as actors in contemporary debates on environmental initiatives. The current leading periodization among geostratigraphers is circa 1950, while some historians, literary scholars, and others tend to wish to push the starting date of the Anthropocene to the late 18th century or even earlier. My concern is the re-emergence of Eurocentric world systems models that obliterate the gains of postcolonial scholarship and the render invisible the role of Asia in causing and ameliorating climate change.

Bio

Before joining the history faculty at Notre Dame, Julia taught at the University of Illinois at Chicago and the University of Wisconsin, where she received tenure in 2001. She has also been a visiting scholar at the University of Bielefeld (Germany), the University of Bristol (U.K.), the Max-Planck-Institut für Wissenschaftsgeschichte in Berlin, the Universität Heidelberg, and the University of Michigan as well as a member of the University of Wisconsin Humanities Institute, the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, and Harvard’s Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. Many generous foundations and organizations have supported her research including the Mellon Foundation, the Japan Foundation, the NEH, Mombusho (Japanese Ministry of Education), the Social Science Research Council, the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science, and the ACLS.
Carlos Rojas, Duke University

*Imagining locale: Hong Kong protest movements in the age of the Anthropocene*

This paper will examine the organizational logics and media coverage of recent environmental protest movements in Hong Kong, focusing on the ways in which the ideals and objectives of these movements are articulated. In particular, I will consider the implications of the common NIMBY/NIABY distinction as applied to these protests, and what assumptions about locality, causality, and ecology are implicit in the corresponding concept of the “back yard.”

*Bio*

Carlos Rojas is Professor of Chinese Cultural Studies; Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies; and Arts of the Moving Image, and is also the current president of the Association of Chinese and Comparative Literature. His research focuses on issues of gender and visuality, corporeality and infection, and nationalism and diaspora studies, particularly as they relate to China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the global Chinese diaspora. He works primarily in the early modern, modern, and contemporary periods.

**3.15—4.45 pm: Historical Approaches:**

Christian Lentz, University of North Carolina

*The Labors of Citizenship: Environmental Politics in Postcolonial Vietnam*

For farmers and would-be laborers, the First Indochina War (1946-54) was as much an environmental struggle as a political contest. In territory recently won by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), cadres from late 1952 strove to transform the Black River region’s agrarian economy to meet growing state and military consumption. This paper builds on an affective shift in the language local actors used to describe liberation, one that resonated with larger transformations in environmental and subject relations. Greeted with enthusiasm and anxiety, the affective response closely tracks the making of “people’s laborers” (dan cong) and the mobilization of their labor power for use on road crews and infrastructure projects. Official histories have celebrated an abstract dan cong but, like scholars more broadly, have not interrogated them as nationalizing bodies. When Thai and Khmu women hit the road, they experienced and enabled novel forms of mobility and visibility but also shouldered heavy burdens in a changing landscape. Over the next decade, household hunger and starvation indicate the consequences of diverting scarce labor away from food production and the experience of being a citizen (cong dan) in the new Vietnam. The unintended outcomes helped fuel a countermovement that exposed tensions in ruling relations and contributed to the formation of the environment as a field of governance.

*Bio*

I am a human geographer and qualitative social scientist interested broadly in Southeast Asia’s politics, societies, and environments. My research brings classic themes of social inquiry
such as nationalism, state formation, and agrarian political economy into dialog with concepts of boundaries, territory, and social difference (e.g., racial and ethnic formations). My book manuscript Contested Territory: Dien Bien Phu and the Making of Northwest Vietnam focuses on a borderlands region and the processes through which its peoples and places were made Vietnamese, sometimes against their will. My next project brings postcolonial Vietnamese and Indonesian history into comparative historical perspective by examining divergent Cold War trajectories and convergent experiences with mass violence. Another project draws on research conducted in Sumba, Indonesia in 1997 and 2000 to restudy social adaptation to the El Nino Southern Oscillation and its environmental outcomes. By engaging students on these themes and a range of topics—from revolutionary struggle in Vietnam to social change in North Carolina, from producing Indonesian coffee to drinking it at the Daily Grind—my teaching aims to make the foreign familiar and the familiar strange again.

Meng Yue, University of Toronto

Contested Ways of the “Good Life”

The current concept of Anthropocene, though powerfully stages the entanglement of industrial modernity and Earth history, fails to address a root-cause of climate change i.e., factory farming and the postwar global shift toward a meat-heavy diet. Also left out is the chance of critical engagement with the profound political disconnection between food and self, indeed between what is conceived as “the good life” and the citizen awareness of the Earth. As an attempt to speak to this disconnection, my presentation seeks to retrieve a historical moment of early 20th century when diet became part of a global political culture and conscious food choice a matter of world peace and Earth citizenship. To be more specific, I reexamine how a cluster of cross-border connections of Anarchist sociopolitical thought of mutual aid, Buddhist and other spiritual concepts of nonviolence, and widespread lay vegetarianism in Europe and Asia laid ground for a radical cosmopolitanism to take form in China in the early 20th century. By radical cosmopolitanism here I refer to an aggregation of discourse, organization, publication and practice of lifestyles among others. I am to look into how did this radical cosmopolitanism enable public practice of the good bodily life beyond the (post)colonial civilizational hierarchies in which dietary and racial differences played important parts. I will also investigate how did the key doctrine of this cosmopolitanism, namely the nonviolent relations between human and human, human and nonhuman animals, became the foundation of public envisioning the ideal order of the world. I argue that the disappearance of such a history calls for a critical rethinking of the histories of the Anthropocene, particularly the postwar moment of its “great acceleration”.

Bio

Meng Yue’s research and teaching bring together city and modern Chinese cultural history, literature and modernity, humanity and science/technology, and recently, culture and environment. Her latest book in English, Shanghai and the Edges of Empires, investigates the rise of the cosmopolitan city amidst a century-long shift of urban centers from China’s heartland to its shore. The book examines the forces that had driven behind the crucial transitions of learning and publishing, garden-building and public gathering, as well as literary and theatrical practices that have taken cities as their urban home. More recently, she has turned her attention to contemporary global environmental crisis and its representations, particularly as they manifest
in East Asia. Meng Yue has published and lectured widely in both English and Chinese. She also has teaching conjunctions with Tsinghua University.

Andrea Janku, SOAS University of London

*Whose Views? Views of What? Seeing the Environment through the Genre of ‘Bajing’ (Eight Views)*

This paper is an attempt to explore the value of the genre of ‘bajing’ or Eight Views for a better understanding of people’s attitudes towards the world around them. The genre has a long history reaching back to at least Song times (960-1279). Essentially, it means picking eight (or in some cases ten or twelve) scenic spots to turn them into a set of celebrated views to enhance the cultural/civilisational standing of a county (or city, region, etc.). These are recorded in local histories, typically by their four-character names, supplemented with short geographical descriptions and often images, as well as poems and in some cases travel accounts. When I started looking at these materials I hoped to use them as a tool for the study of environmental change. While this is possible to some extent, the study of the genre in its own right, of the ways in which these Views evolved and developed – and continue to develop – and how they are integrated into various human and geographical environments, proved to be more rewarding. One could argue that the genre emphasised a kind of compartmental view of the environment as a physical space and encouraged a relationship with it that was defined by very specific needs and functions. It thus narrowed the scope of human concern while at the same time embracing holistic aesthetic and philosophical ideas. This argument then has to be qualified by looking at whose views are represented in the genre. I will be drawing on two case studies on Linfen in Shanxi and Tengchong in Yunnan, addressing a range of themes from literati travel to mass tourism, from landscape aesthetics to questions of ownership.

*Bio*

I studied Classical and Modern Sinology, Romance languages and literatures, and Sociology at the University of Heidelberg, and Chinese literature in Shanghai. The research for my PhD thesis on political editorials in the late nineteenth-century Shanghai press was part of a larger project on the Shanghai Chinese-language press in foreign possession and the transformation of the Chinese public sphere. Before joining SOAS I was an assistant professor in Classical Sinology at the University of Heidelberg. While my interests in the field of China’s social and intellectual history continue to be relatively broad, my own active research has moved to the history of disasters in the early modern period and environmental history more generally. I’m currently working on a monograph on the experience of famine in late Qing and early Republican China and pursuing a collaborative project on landscapes and environmental change.

4.45—6.15 pm: Technology and Culture:

Marc Jeuland, Duke University

*Preference heterogeneity and adoption of improved cookstoves in northern India*

Preference heterogeneity can influence behavior in economically significant ways, for
example affecting agents’ propensity to adopt technology. We characterize household preferences for various features of efficient stoves using a discrete choice experiment, and then relate these tastes to choices made during a stove promotion campaign. Preferences are clearly linked to adoption and choices: households classified as disinterested are less likely to purchase and use any new technology, and relative distaste for smoke is linked to selection of cleaner technology. Through its influence on adoption, preference heterogeneity has important implications for the effectiveness of many interventions that promote improved technology.

*Bio*

Marc Jeuland is an Assistant Professor of Public Policy and Global Health at Duke University. He is an environmental economist with research interests that include nonmarket valuation, water and sanitation, environmental health, energy poverty and transitions, trans-boundary water resource planning and management, and the impacts and economics of climate change. He is one of the founding members of the Sustainable Energy Transitions Initiative (SETI), a global group of researchers working on the relationship between energy and development.

**Meena Khandelwal, University of Iowa**

*In Favor of Awkward Conversations: Universalizing Epistemologies and Deep Meaning*

As warnings from climate scientists become increasingly loud and urgent, they must grapple with economies of food, the politics of culture, and volatile contestations over morality and ethics. These times call for awkward conversations that engage the divergent epistemologies of explanation and interpretation. How, for example, might the concept of ‘sustainable citizenship’ help explain the way veganism seems nonsensical in the face of a uniquely Indian cultural opposition between vegetarianism and beef-eating? Taking the example of my collaborative project with an engineer focused on deforestation in the Aravalli Hill region of southern Rajasthan (India), I outline the different questions we might ask about environmental processes and the different knowledge thus produced. A humanistic approach reveals viscerally-felt meanings of, for example, sacred cows that are embedded in collective identities and national politics, but may simultaneously obfuscate environmental processes. I argue that bringing together analyses of the symbolic and material, citizenship and climate science, not only sheds light on the sacred cows of our own disciplines but may also suggest possible solutions.

*Bio*

Meena Khandelwal is best known for her research on Hindu religious renunciation. This work resulted in an ethnography entitled Women in Ochre Robes (SUNY Press 2004) that focuses on the everyday lives of women initiated into sannyasa, a particularly extreme variety of Hindu asceticism. Sannyasa entails the renunciation of marriage, family ties, wealth, caste, and professional status for a life of celibacy and spiritual discipline. This book explores the complex gendering of a tradition that, on the one hand, was created by and for elite men, and, on the other, claims to transcend gender. Although, historically, women have been excluded from sannyasa, female renunciants (sannyasinis) comprise a substantial minority of contemporary initiates. Khandelwal’s research suggests that sexuality and celibacy are mutually implicated and that abstinence should be accounted for in the field of sexuality studies.
Eco-media Events: Media Materialism as a New Method for Environmental Humanities

This presentation proposes a methodological shift toward media materialism to open up new critical possibilities for environmental humanities in China, across Asia, and globally. We define media materialism as a re-orientation in the study of media that attunes to the materiality of media technologies. Turning attention to the global circuit of production (from minerals to factory assembly), consumption, and the recycling of discarded electronic waste, we aim to connect “old” forms of resource extraction to our new lives of digital dependency. Often times, it is through eco-media events – ephemeral and explosive media spectacles resulting from industrial catastrophes - that these material processes of digital capitalism are made legible.

Inspired by media materialism’s attention to time, body, matter, and the social life of things and objects, we analyze such eco-media events as the Kunshan and Tianjin chemical explosions in 2014-15 and Under the Dome, a 2015 viral video about smog produced by former Chinese television anchor Chai Jing. These eco-events invite methodological and political questions regarding what Nicholas Shapiro has called the “chemical sublime,” and how dust from mineral extraction, deep earth mining, and the processes that produce our digital lives increasingly determine, in radically disparate ways, who lives and who dies. These events thus force us to further reflect on the unequal and uneven experiences of climate change under the new configurations of digital capitalism today.

Litzinger Bio

I received my doctorate in socio-cultural anthropology from the University of Washington in Seattle. My early research focused on the culture and politics of the ethnic borders in China. I have published on Marxist nationality theory in China, on ethnic and indigenous revitalization in the post-Cold War global order, on gender and ethnic representation, and on ethnographic film, photography, and popular culture in China and elsewhere. My current research is engaged with questions of border ecologies, bio-politics, activism and advocacy in labor, education rights, and the environment. In relationship to this research, I have published key essays on the transnational and media dimensions of anti-dam protest in southwest China. I am also working with migrants in China, looking at non-official education projects for migrant kids, the political role of non-governmental organizations and corporate social responsibility projects in these experimental ventures. More recently, I have been tracking Apple's environment, labor, and occupational health record in China, and am very interested in transnational activism directed at Apple and the companies that source its supply chain, as well as the general middle-class obsession for all things Apple in China. In all of my research, teaching, and thinking, I am committed to forging an anthropology of critical advocacy and activism, one which addresses structures of domination, exploitation, and inequality and the struggle to make the world a better place.
Yang Bio

Fan Yang joined the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Media and Communication Studies in 2011. Her research and teaching interests include cultural studies and globalization, media and communication in modern and contemporary China, urbanism and urban communication, and visual culture. She is also a faculty affiliate in the Asian Studies program, and serves on the Global Studies Coordinating Committee. Yang obtained her Ph.D. in Cultural Studies (2011) from George Mason University, where she was the recipient of a High Potential Fellowship. She also holds an MA from the Ohio State University and a BA from Fudan University, Shanghai.

Monday, 9.30—11.30 am: Spiritual Ecologies:

Robert Weller, Boston University

Religious Change and Disturbed Religious Ecosystems in Jiangsu, China

Rapid urban expansion in wealthy parts of China has led to the resettlement of many villagers into high-rise buildings, making earlier forms of material and cultural life impossible. At the same time, large-scale urban reconstruction has displaced many old city neighborhoods. One result is that the territorially-based religion described in much of the anthropological and historical literature has become increasingly untenable as the entire ecosystem surrounding has grown unstable. This talk examines what appears to be an especially creative zone for religious innovation: the expanding urban edge. The cases come from various cities in southern Jiangsu and focus on ghost attacks, a spirit medium network, and innovations in the forms and objects of temple worship. Theoretically, the paper thinks about ecosystems in the broadest sense of complexly articulated systems, without assuming a divide between nature and culture.

Bio

Dr. Robert Weller’s work concentrates on China and Taiwan in comparative perspective. His actual research topics, however, are eclectic—running from ghosts to politics, rebellions to landscape paintings. Perhaps what unites everything is an interest in finding the limits to authority in all its settings. Dr. Weller’s earliest work began with the problem of religious meaning and authority: Who has the power to impose an interpretation? Could you impose one across a land as vast and a history as long as China’s? His first book (Unities and Diversities) examined this through arguments about whether China had a single unifying set of religious ideas; his conclusion was that control over meaning was too limited and multiple to create unity. His second book (Resistance, Chaos, and Control) used very different material—it compared cases of resistance. The analysis hinged on the unusual moments where it becomes possible to impose a unified interpretation. This appears to be the crucial process in converting “cultural resistance” (like smoking in the high school bathroom) into a political movement. He continues to have an interest in the limits to interpretational authority, especially through one of its most extreme forms—silence.
Chris Coggins, Bard College at Simon’s Rock

*Wind-Water Polities: Village Fengshui Forests and Sustainable Citizenship in Southern China*

This multidisciplinary research examines the geographic distribution, culture history, and political ecology of China’s fengshui forests (fengshuilin), preserved forests or plantations believed to bring prosperity, wellbeing, and good fortune to the communities that protect them. Preserved by lineage village communities for centuries, they survive in an estimated fourteen provinces, comprising the most ecologically significant remnants of the original subtropical broadleaf evergreen forest and tropical monsoonal forest biomes of central and southern China. Despite their broad distribution and socio-ecological importance, fengshuilin are little known among urban Chinese, and they lack significant recognition and protection across most of their range. Negligence of this cultural and biological heritage is a function of modern state ideological proscription against fengshui belief and practice, in conjunction with a lack of scholarly understanding of the religious, cosmological, aesthetic, political, and pragmatic motivations and actions of lineage-based communities in their adaptation to, and alteration of subtropical ecosystems.

As the first range-wide field study of fengshuilin, this research attempts 1) to map their geographic distribution using expert knowledge, GIS, and ground truthing; 2) to analyze historical and contemporary forest and landscape management, lineage fengshui values, and environmental perception; 3) to develop a typology of fengshui forests in both Han and non-Han communities; and 4) to engage with conservation experts in China in an effort to promote fengshuilin preservation while noting the discursive (re)positioning of fengshui and fengshui forests as PRC attempts to develop an “ecological state” (shengtai liguo). Data on 44 villages in Guangdong, Fujian, Jiangxi, and Hunan provide biological and ecological evidence of the socio-environmental adaptive functions of fengshuilin management, and their critical role in protecting biological diversity and cultural identity. Still, fengshuilin occupy a precarious discursive position, spanning, yet fractured by, three periods: 1) the long era of patriarchal, patrilocal lineage communities, when fengshui ensured vital continuity between humans and natural resources; 2) the revolutionary materialist movements targeting fengshui landscapes for radical socio-ecological reform; and 3) the new nature conservation era, when the Chinese Communist Party reconfigures the nation as “the ecological state.” Five seasons of mixed-methods field research on 44 fengshui forests in four provinces of southern China, along with preliminary results from the first attempt to map the existing distribution of these unique cultural features, demonstrate the ecological consequences of traditional village forest management, Maoist efforts to subjugate fengshui landscapes, and post-Maoist efforts to restore forests under new names (e.g. fengjinglin, “scenic forests”) and new frameworks.

Environmental humanities and political ecology offer new ways of understanding these common pool forest resources, helping disentangle shifting environmental discourse in a non-Western context where rapid globalization includes incorporation of the ontologies of the “anthropocene” (renleishi).
**Bio**

Dr. Coggins's research focuses on rural China, political ecology, biodiversity, sacred landscapes, protected area management, globalization, and property/possession. He has led students and faculty on eight trips to China since 1999, six of which have involved intensive field research. He is the co-editor (with Emily Yeh) of Mapping Shangrila: Contested Landscapes of the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands (University of Washington, 2014), and the author of The Tiger and the Pangolin: Nature, Culture, and Conservation in China (University of Hawaii Press, 2003) (runner-up for the 2003 Julian Steward Award for best book in environmental/ecological anthropology and nominated for the Kiriyama Prize in non-fiction). He is also the co-author of The Primates of China: Biogeography and Conservation Status – Past, Present, and Future (China Forestry Publishing House, 2002). He has published refereed articles in many geography, environment, and Asia-related books and periodicals. Since 2011, he has led teams engaged in a multi-year, mixed methods, field and archival research project on the fengshui forests of southern and central China. His work on the history of humans and tigers in China has been featured on BBC 4's Natural Histories. Dr. Coggins has been teaching at Simon's Rock since 1998.

**Dan Smyer Yü, Yunnan Minzu University**

*Eco-geological Terrains of Gods, Humans, and the Earth: An Ethography of Folk Buddhist Environmental Humanities in Amdo*

The interdisciplinary movement of environmental humanities flourishes against the backdrop of public outrages about the global environmental crises of our time. Its fundamental inquiries and discourses are centered upon the conditions, actions, consequences, accountabilities, and meanings of being human as a member of this multi-specied but anthropogenically affected planet earth. In many ways, environmental humanities are ethological in nature, pertaining to the customs and living environments of humankind (Tsing 2012; Rose et al 2012). In regards to Buddhist environmental humanities, this paper is an account of what can be termed “eco-geological terrains of gods, humans, and the earth” in the case of a folk Buddhist cosmovision symbiotically shaped by Buddhist doctrines and indigenous eco-religious practices in the Tibetan Amdo region of Qinghai Province, China. The approach in this paper is enacted from the notion of the “lively ethography” (van Dooran and Rose 2016) aiming at an experiential, empathetic understanding of the biophysical, biocultural complexity of the world interwoven with geological forces, ecological threads, and diverse ethic fabrics of human societies. Within this conceptual framework, the author delivers two interrelated arguments. First, Buddhist environmental humanities in this ethographic case are largely complemented by and syncretized with pre-Buddhist indigenous eco-religious practices rather than inherently manifest in the Buddhist doctrinal notions of sentience and enlightenment. Second, the perspective afforded by the local Buddhist critique of the anthropogenic impacts of regional modernization programs could be understood as the enactment of an eco-geological animism (van Dooran and Rose 2016) commonly found among indigenous peoples in Asia.

**Bio**

Dan Smyer Yu is an anthropologist specializing in the studies of religious revitalizations, charismatic communities, commercialization of religious spirituality, and the relationship
between eco-religious practices and place-making in contemporary China. He received his Ph.D. in cultural anthropology from the University of California at Davis. Prior to his joining Max Planck, he was a New Millennium Scholar and the Associate Director of the Ethnic Minority Study Center of China at Minzu University of China. He also taught and held research positions at the University of California, Davis, Graduate Theological Union, San Francisco Theological Seminary, and Sacramento City College, and the Center for the Pacific Rim of University of San Francisco.

David Grace, Duke University

The Sacred Grove and the City: Analysis of Preferences in India’s National Capital Region

I propose to report on my 2016 survey of actors (n=198) living near four sacred grove sites at various levels of urbanization in India’s National Capital Region and its southern periphery along the Aravalli Mountain Range. Sacred Forests, or forests with particular spiritual qualities, are commonly noted in Asia, particularly India and China. Research on sacred forests in India has sometimes suggested a decline in sacred forest institutions as a consequence of urbanization. This research centers on an analysis of preferences for sacred and non-sacred forests given urbanization. Utilizing revealed preference data on actual forest visits in addition to stated preference data on visit choice of hypothetical forests from contingent valuation questions, I identify demand for sacred forests and non-sacred forests. Further, discrete choice tasks allow me to quantify the impact of forest size, quality, temple presence, and extraction level on forest preferences. Given these models of preference based on demand, I attempt to describe characteristics which contribute to pro-forest preferences despite or as a positive consequence of urbanization. It is hoped these methods and findings provide support to the growing discourse on sacred natural sites and their conservation prospects given cultural and environmental change scenarios – an active field in the Asian context.

11.30-1.00 pm: Animals and Humans:

Haiyan Lee, Stanford University

“A Convocation of Politic Worms”: The Romance of the Species in the Anthropocene

The emerging field of animal studies has a curious relationship with environmentalism. Instead of fitting comfortably in the latter’s capacious tent, animal studies has chafed at environmentalists’ commitment to holistic communitarianism best represented by Aldo Leopold’s “land ethic.” The land ethic approaches the biotic community as a pyramidal ecological system that turns on the relations between producer and consumer and between predator and prey rather than as an egalitarian moral community. Animal rights activists have thus repeatedly clashed with conservationists in an internecine fight poignantly dramatized in T.C. Boyle’s novel When the Killing’s Done (2011).

In this paper, I consider the divergent philosophical underpinnings between the land ethic and animal rights by interrogating what it means for animals to have rights and share a moral
community with humans in the age of bio-genetic capitalism and anthropogenic climate change. I argue that environmental justice cannot be secured by either the deontological argument underlying animal rights or the utilitarian argument often used to justify the land ethic. Instead, we might draw on the pragmatist traditions East and West and view justice not as a sui generis good but as a larger loyalty achieved as much by the moral imagination of the particular as by rational deliberation on the universal. Using a French novel (The Roots of Heaven, 1958), a Chinese novel (The Disappearance of Lao Hai, 2001), and a Chinese film (Monster Hunt, 2015) as my examples, I demonstrate how literature can help enlarge our loyalty and build ethico-ecological subjectivity by bringing particular instances of non-human distress into aesthetic, affective, and moral proximity with us.

**Bio**

Before coming to Stanford in 2009, Haiyan Lee taught at the University of Colorado at Boulder and the University of Hong Kong, and held post-doctoral fellowships at Cornell University and Harvard University. Her first book, *Revolution of the Heart: A Genealogy of Love in China, 1900-1950*, is a critical genealogy of the idea of “love” (qing) in modern Chinese literary and cultural history. It is the first recipient of the Joseph Levenson Prize in the field of modern Chinese literature. Her second book, *The Stranger and the Chinese Moral Imagination*, examines how the figure of “the stranger”—foreigner, migrant, class enemy, woman, animal, ghost—in Chinese fiction, film, television, and exhibition culture tests the moral limits of a society known for the primacy of consanguinity and familiarity. Her new project centers on Chinese visions of “justice” at the intersection of narrative, law, and ethics. In 2015-16 she received a Frederick Burkhardt Residential Fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies which supported her residency at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences. For more about her work, see “Social Science Research Council (SSRC): New Voices” and “Stanford Report: The Human Experience Feature Story.”

**Jeffrey Nicolaisen, Duke University**

*Sustainable Citizenship and the Taiwanese Canine: Who is included in the Anthropocene citizenry?*

The new academic discourse on the Anthropocene in the humanities reinvigorated the debate about models of agency, and how anthropocentric and individualist models of agency have contributed to unsustainable economic growth. Scholarship on alternative ontologies and new materialism deconstructs individualist and physicalist models of agency, often focusing on non-European “indigenous” cultures and European philosophical traditions to reconstruct alternative ontologies and models of agencies. My study focuses on Taiwan both to bring an Asian voice into the conversation as well as to examine the complex hybridities in a global society developed under the capitalist model. I use the life protection group Life Conservationist Association as a focal point to examine the hybrid construction of the sentient being. In this presentation, I focus on their current work to manage the stray dog problem in Taiwan. I ask what beings qualify to be included in a citizenry in contemporary Taiwan, in Asia, and in the Anthropocene. To do this, I use the Taiwanese stray dog as an example and analyze its multiple constructions from the point of view of conservation biology, animal rights activists, Buddhists, the common Han Taiwanese people who are often not committed to one particular named
ontological framework, and of course the Taiwanese canines. While composing the content of what sustainable citizenship entails, we must also ask who are the citizens who must be sustainable, and what is it that must be sustained? Nature? Economics? Life? Or something else?

Barbara Ambros, University of North Carolina

In this paper, I examine the 1977 TV series Araiguma Rasukaru (Rascal the raccoon), for which Miyazaki Hayao served as one of the lead animators, and its influence on the introduction of raccoons into Japan. In the wake of the animated series, large numbers of juvenile raccoons were imported as pets, and many were subsequently released into the wild where they have proliferated exponentially. Furthermore, I analyze how the contemporary discourse in the scientific literature, news reports, and social media has been shaped by national-identity politics pitting a foreign species against national treasures and other historic landmarks. The case of raccoons, which has largely played out in religious spaces such as on temple and shrine precincts, has sparked a public debate about what constitutes a “natural animal.” As is often the case in the literature about invasive species around the globe, the Japanese discourse about invasive species employs eco-patriotism and the language of ethnic cleansing. In this case, the right-wing fringe has even appropriated the raccoon problem to voice xenophobic, anti-Korean sentiments. The story of raccoons in Japan raises important ethical questions about humans assign value to animal life and about the power of metaphors in scientific discourse.

Bio

Barbara Ambros is a professor in East Asian Religions in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her research on Japanese Religions has focused on issues in gender studies; human-animal relationships; place and space; and pilgrimage. She has been serving as co-chair of the Animals and Religion Group of the American Academy of Religions since 2014. She served as the co-chair of the Japanese Religions Group at the American Academy of Religion from 2008 to 2014 and as the President for the Study of Japanese Religions from 2008 to 2011. She has held fellowships from the American Council of Learned Societies, the National Humanities Center, UNC’s Institute of Arts and Humanities, the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science, the Japanese Ministry of Education, and the German Academic Exchange Service. Before coming to UNC Chapel Hill, where she presently teaches, she taught at Columbia University in New York and at International Christian University in Tokyo. She holds a PhD in East Asian Civilization and Languages from Harvard University (2002), an MA in Regional Studies East Asia from Harvard University (1995), and an MA in English and Comparative Literature from Columbia University (1993).

1.30—3.00 pm: Representing Degradation:

William Schaefer, University of Rochester

Photograph Ecologies: Picturing the Anthropocene in China

This presentation is part of a larger research project exploring how photography is a crucial site for staging and rethinking fundamental questions of the relations between culture and
nature in the present moment—and thus for learning to picture, with fierce precision, the Anthropocene. The photographers whose work I explore reconfigure both media and subjectivity in radically environmental terms: they have understood photographs not to be mere depictions of environments, but rather that the very materiality and forms of photographic images are emergent from interactions of ecological processes composed of matter, objects, bodies, spaces, surfaces and markings, the atmosphere, liquids, pollution, and light. Their photographic practices and discourses are thus highly critical of dualist conceptions of photography modeled on the camera obscura and the division it structures between the world and its representation, or of photographic representations as indexical “imprints” of the world; instead, their work allows the human to be seen as one among many contingent agents within ecological processes. Adou, for example, treats expired, decaying film in his Samalada (2006-2007) as an ecology in which unpredictable mottles, blobs and stains—marks of the decay of organic material or the exposure of mineral materials composing film surfaces—are as much a visible part of his photographs as their blurring of distinctions among persons, animals, objects, and their environments. Zhang Jin pictures environmental patterns and what he calls nomadic objects along the former Silk Road in Another Season (2011) by means of aesthetics of surface and abstraction, figure and ground.

Observing that Ariella Azoulay’s recent political ontology of photography—in which agency and sovereignty are dispersed among photographers, photographed subjects, the camera, and photographs—begins in the idea of nature and its agency in early photography, in this presentation I will explore the politics of agency when considered in non-dualist terms as manifest in “photograph ecologies” in contemporary China. I will do so by focusing on how Zhang Kechun in his large-format, slightly opaque color photographs of Yellow River (2010-2012) depicts ecosystems of cultural artifacts, water, land, and sky by connecting the classical Chinese painterly aesthetics in which "the great image has no form" (da xiang wu xing) to a pervasive environmental haze of pollution, sand, and dust.

Bio

William Schaefer, Assistant Professor, received his Ph.D. from The University of Chicago. He has previously taught at the University of Minnesota and the University of California, Berkeley. His research and teaching interests include modern Chinese visual culture and literature; histories and theories of photography in China; image and medium theory and history; modernism; landscape representation and geographies of literature; and comparative studies of literary, ethnographic, and historical narrative. He recently completed a book manuscript, “Shadow Modernism: Photography, Writing, and Space in Shanghai, 1925-1935.” His most recent publications are "Poor and Blank: History’s Marks and the Photographies of Displacement" (Representations 109 [Winter 2010]), “Shadow Photographs, Ruins, and Shanghai’s Projected Past” (PMLA 122:1 [2007], and “Shanghai Savage” (Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique 11:1 [2003]). He is also the guest editor of a special issue, “Photography’s Places,” of Positions (18:3 [2010]). His new research concerns the intersection of documentary, abstraction and the historicity of surfaces in contemporary Chinese photography, and Chinese photography and image theories during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Melody Jue, The University of California, Santa Barbara

Environmental Media and the Futures of Storytelling
In this presentation, I discuss how an expanded definition of media? (beyond human technologies, to include natural substances) might offer possibilities for activist storytelling in East Asian contexts. The Anthropocene has been used to describe phenomena that straddle two conceptions of media: one where human agency is essential in shaping and marking a future stratigraphic layer, and one where human agency is complicit in dissolving, eroding, and destroying certain kinds of Earth records. I suggest that an alternative to these two conceptions of media comes in the form of artist and Duke alumnus Pinar Yoldas? imaginative practice of distilling toxic ink from atmospheric pollution, to be given to artists to write stories with, as in Chinese calligraphy. I bring Yoldas? work into conversation with Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring" and Chai Jing's documentary "Under the Dome," and suggest that Yoldas? practice of ink models a new way of thinking about media in the Anthropocene?not as already made, not as disappearing, but as possible for us to distill into our own stories, stories whose gravity is increased by the aura of the substance each is written with. I conclude by outlining areas of possible intersection with citizen science in East Asian contexts.

Bio
Melody Jue is Assistant Professor of English at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her research and teaching interests concern oceans & the environmental humanities, American literature, digital media & media theory, science fiction, science & technology studies, and the relation between theory and practice. She completed her Ph.D. in the Graduate Program in Literature at Duke University, where she was a recipient of the Katherine Goodman Stern Dissertation Completion Fellowship and James B. Duke Graduate Fellowship. Prior to this, she worked as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant at the Open University of Hong Kong. Melody has published articles in Grey Room, Animations: An Interdisciplinary Journal, Green Planets: Ecology and Science Fiction, and has forthcoming work in Size & Scale in Literature and Culture. Drawing on the experience of becoming a scuba diver (supported by two Summer Research Fellowships from the Duke Graduate School), her current book project concerns how the ocean shifts our understanding of critical terms in media theory through its conditions of movement, erasure, and dissolution, and how this new understanding might be brought to bear on questions of cultural preservation and environmental justice.

Takushi Odagiri, Duke University

The Binary of the Everyday after the Fukushima Crisis (2011)

Various elements of the everyday have been suspended, interrogated, and redefined in the estranged experience of the crisis that occurred in Japan shortly after March 2011. This complex transformation of quotidian consciousness gives renewed meaning to Miki Kiyoshi's philosophy of history, especially his interrogations of human temporality in the 1930s. Miki's idea of the binary of genzai (the present) and gendai (the modern), which he developed during wartime, resembles the duality of everyday experience in the postearthquake nuclear crisis of the current century. This recognition of the binary gives the biosemiological notion Umwelt (Uexküll) a new definition. Namely, despite the modern's tendency to quantify its temporality, human Umwelt retained its singularity of the present in these circumstances. How and to what extent this binary
of our human temporality is associated with our species consciousness on a much longer scale? This presentation tries to tackle these issues.

_Bio_

Takushi Odagiri is a scholar of religions, philosophy, film, and environmental humanities. He holds M.D. (University of Tokyo), and received a Ph.D. from Stanford University in 2010 for his dissertation on modern Japanese philosophy and environmental thought. He has published on comparative philosophy, religions, and film, as well as on bioethics, in The Journal of Religion, Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies, Positions Asia Critique, Boundary 2, Philosophy East and West, Journal of Philosophy and Ethics in Health Care and Medicine, and Tetsugaku.