



China Node Announcement of Activities 2008

2007 was a quiet year as the events planned in 2006 did not find active sponsors amongst the Node's membership.

We therefore convened and financed an open meeting in Sydney in late 2007 to plan for a more active year in 2008. Several Node members from around Australia came to that meeting and agreed to curate an event for late 2008 that should cater to many interests around the China Studies community.

Stephi Hemelryk Donald.

Preliminary details are below

Dates 28th and 29th September 2008.

Venue: UTS China Centre. Blackfriars, Sydney.

A symposium consisting of three linked roundtables (each half a day long), an evening cultural event, and a postgraduate workshop (the final afternoon). All facets of the two days will address multiple themes on the general subject of culture and religion in contemporary China.

Each roundtable has been conceived by academics from at least two universities. They will receive funding to support their nominated speakers, who will be drawn from China researchers around Australia. The remainder of the funding will be used to support the postgraduate workshop, and a cultural event based on film and adaptation. The Node will also supply free day-catering for any delegates from the membership who wish to attend.

1. 'Localities' roundtable

Convened by A/Prof Anne McLaren (Melbourne), Dr Gerry Groot (Adelaide) and Prof Mobo Gao (Adelaide)

This roundtable will focus on the cultural resurgence at the level of the locality in China. It will explore the use of cultural forms and icons to assert regional identity amidst transformation of the 'rural' to the urban in a time of phenomenal growth. What role to regional authorities, amateur ethnographers, folk practitioners and local scholars play in the construction of new regional identities? Topics to be discussed include food and wine traditions, and food safety, folk ecologies in performance



traditions and the reinvention of cultural forms for the purpose of commerce, tourism and 'cultural nationalism'.

2. Roundtable on: Cities, space and cosmopolitan desires

Convened by A/Prof Michael Keane (QUT) and Dr Luigi Tomba (ANU)

China's aspiration to transform from the world factory to the world studio has great appeal for government and business. But how does the empire of control become the empire of ideas? A focus on innovation, consumer culture and foreign invested development in China's large cities has led to a number of major urban renewal projects: including cultural parks, creative clusters and artists' precincts. There is no doubt that the big cities are where the new creative classes and international capital come together. Distressed industrial areas are being rezoned and turned into recreation districts, technological innovation parks and creative clusters. Real estate developers cash in while motor vehicle emissions pollute the atmosphere. Is this growth frenzy manageable, is it morally justified, is it equitable, and what are the consequences?

This roundtable address issues of social mobility and urban reconstruction. Associated sub-themes may include China's peaceful rise, human capital migration, independent innovation, soft power, entrepreneurship, and creative industries.

3. 'National Studies' Roundtable

Convened by A/Prof John Makeham (ANU) and Dr Yi Zheng (UTS)

Since the early 1990s "national studies" (*guoxue*) has steadily grown as a social phenomenon in China. There are now countless websites, DVDs, videos, books, and journals devoted to this burgeoning enterprise. The *Baijia jiangtan* TV show on CCTV has attracted huge interest across China. Today, "national studies" is a standard bibliographic category in most book stores. This roundtable will explore a range of questions, such as: What is national studies? What has brought about this interest in national studies? How should it be defined? What are its connections to popular culture, to scholarship, to cultural nationalism and to Marxism? Whose interests does it represent? Why does it continue to grow in popularity? How does it function as a new form of cultural capital?

4. Cultural Event. 28th November (evening).

Curated by Dr Yiyang Wang, University of Sydney

Screening and discussion

From Text to Screen: Theory and Practice in Chinese Film Adaptations



Many Chinese films have their origins in literary texts and Ang Lee's production, 'Lust, Caution', is a most recent success in this regard. However, there has been little scholarship that examines Chinese film adaptations. This event will present a number of outstanding 'adapted' films followed by discussions on their relation to their literary origins. This event promises an initial effort in investigating and theorizing the practice of adaptation in Chinese film studies.

5. Postgraduate workshop: how is culture being made in China today?
Convened by Dr Andrew Kipnis (ANU) and Hongwei Bao (postgraduate candidate: University of Sydney)

NB- details of application for inclusion will be posted on the Suez to Suva website by the end of May.

Culture, according to Raymond Williams, constitutes the lived experiences of the ordinary people and manifests a 'structure of feeling'. Culture in China today is extremely diverse and fascinating: from discrete cultural products like films, novels, TV shows, artworks and websites, to cultural practices like common languages, dispositions, religious beliefs, attitudes and abilities, to the mundane lives of the people on city streets, in rural cottages and ethnic communities. It exists where globalisation and locality intersect and when tradition and modernity contest. Meanwhile, the production, circulation and consumption of culture are intertwined with different agents including the nation state, class, gender and consumerism; they are also imbued with ideologies, discourses and power. An examination of how culture is being made today will unravel a multiplicity of forces that makes and remakes Chinese society in the age of rapid social transformation.

This workshop will bring up to 10 postgraduate students from various disciplines and different universities in Australia to present their research projects on contemporary Chinese culture. This is a good opportunity for postgraduate students to talk about their work, to receive feedback from experienced academics in the field, and to communicate with their fellow students from other universities. A small amount of travel subsidy will be provided to the successful applicants who travel to Sydney from other parts of Australia.

Speakers to be confirmed on all roundtables/panels. More details will be posted on the Suez to Suva website by May.

<http://www.sueztosuva.org.au>