

NEWSLETTER

June 2020 (Special Issue)

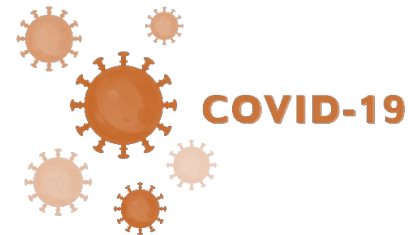
Most events and activities have had to cancel in the past months due to the coronavirus. However, despite the challenging time, teams and sub-groups of our research clusters have done their best to keep up momentum, even if it means going the extra mile, looking for alternatives, just to make things happen.



I. Reaching out to Communities during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Historical Perspective on COVID-19

Prof. Angela Ki Che Leung has virtually shared her thoughts on the governance of pandemics and public health with local community and overseas colleagues during these spring months of social distancing.



Her article “中西傳統的公共衛生與疫病的防預” (Public health and epidemic prevention in Chinese and Western traditions) with a foreword addressing issues raised by the current pandemic was launched on the website of the Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences, Peking University in March 2020. Click the link to read the article: www.ihss.pku.edu.cn/templates/zs_lw/index.aspx?nodeid=232&page=ContentPage&contentid=3610

In April, she contributed a short think piece entitled “Coronavirus and Multi-level Stigmatization” to the Max Planck Institute for History of Science (MPIHS) in Berlin for its Teach 311+COVID-19 Collective Channel — History of Science ON CALL Project. Click the link to read the article: www.teach311.org/2020/04/20/coronavirus-and-multi-level-stigmatization-angela-leung

Upon the invitation of the Asia Global Institute of the University, Prof. Leung gave a public lecture “Chinese State and Society in epidemic governance from the Song to the Qing Dynasties” (宋至清的防疫與治疫：政府與民間組織的角色) on ZOOM at AGI’s Quantitative History Webinar Series on May 21, 2020.



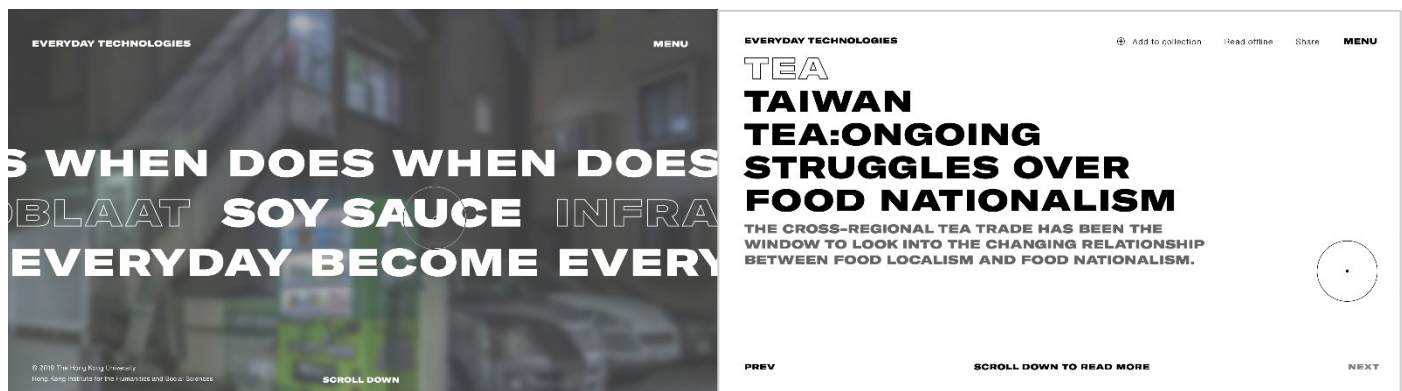
Military mobilization during the 1910-11 Manchurian pneumonic plague

Abstract of the lecture: China’s colossal mobilization against COVID-19 centering in Wuhan in the spring of 2020 demonstrates the character of an authoritarian style of governance. The rationale behind it is partly rooted in Chinese history and culture. This lecture elucidates the historical background of this style by examples in the late imperial period, when the state was ready to implement the most drastic, intrusive and unconventional measures to suppress threatening epidemics. On the other hand, such a style was clearly contrary to the ideal of the Confucian benevolent state best represented by the Song government. This flaw, however, was effective in galvanizing non-governmental groups presenting themselves as the state’s collaborators in providing relief and aid in the late imperial period. In early 2020, such groups did play a role but were less visible to the outside world.

The lecture was broadcasted by RTHK Program “University Knowledge Platform” (大學堂) on May 31, 2020. The recording of the lecture is available online:

AGI: www.asiaglobalinstitute.hku.hk/eventdetail/quantitative-history-webinar-series-role-government-civil-society
RTHK: www.rthk.hk/radio/radio1/programme/university_knowledge_platform

Making Modernity in East Asia: Virtual Museum



The Virtual Museum (VM), as part of the CRF Project “Making Modernity in East Asia: Technologies of Everyday Life, 19th-21st Centuries”, will enable our CRF collaborators to make their research accessible to academic and general readership from around the world. Focusing on the CRF themes, this website highlights research essays, illustrated with high quality images, on everyday East Asian technologies. With an enhanced search and archive function, this website will also allow readers to compile and download a personalized reading list and files for further research.

The Virtual Museum will be made accessible to the general public in late summer 2020.

Fashioning a Global Brand. A Business History

Dr. John D. Wong shared his research paper entitled “Fashioning a Global Brand: Houqua’s Portraits in the China Trade of the Early Nineteenth Century,” and had an in-depth dialogue with the professional community at the “Colloquium on Pearl River Delta, Art, and Global Exchange in Maritime Trade History Hong Kong,” organized by the Hong Kong Museum of Art and the Oriental Ceramic Society of Hong Kong on January 18, 2020. Dr. Wong’s paper was previously published in his book *Global Trade in Nineteenth Century: The House of Houqua and the Canton System*, by Cambridge University Press in 2016. More about his book is available online at:

www.cambridge.org/hk/academic/subjects/history/east-asian-history/global-trade-nineteenth-century-house-houqua-and-canton-system?format=PB



A portrait of Houqua
(Wu Bingjian, 伍秉鑑)

A Webinar on Catering Management during COVID-19 Epidemic



The Institute connected one of its long-term partners, the Good Food Fund with the University’s Catering Team to share best practices and insights on food catering management during COVID-19 at a Webinar organized by the Good Food Fund and Yale Hospitality. In addition to Mr. Sam Poon of CEDARS, representatives from the China University of Petroleum in Beijing, Zhejiang University (International Campus), Yale University, Peking University, I JY Sheng Bakery in Taipei, Whole Perfect Food, and Haidilao Hot Pot joined in on the sharing and discussion. The Webinar is part of the “Food Forward Forum,” a collaboration between the Good Food Fund and Yale Hospitality 2020 to promote food sustainability. The Good Food Fund, founded by Mr. Jian Yi (簡藝), is one of the

organizations that constitute the China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation in Beijing. More about the Webinar can be accessed online at: www.cbcdgf.org/NewsShow/5023/12189.html

II. Research, Teaching and Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic

CRF Projects

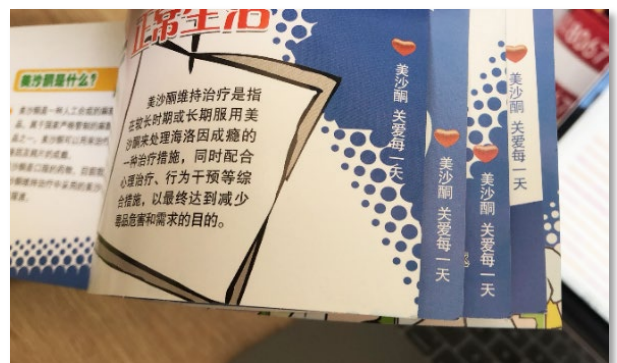
The CRF projects “Making Modernity in East Asia: Technologies of Everyday Life, 19th-21st Centuries” (MMEA), under the Science, Technology, and Medicine in Asian Society Cluster (STMS), and “Infrastructures of Faith: Religious Mobility on the Belt and Road” (BRINFaith), under the Asian Religious Connections Cluster (ARC) held project meetings in early February and early March 2020, respectively. The meetings were for local collaborators to discuss project progress and plans, and overseas team members were able to join in on the discussions via tele-conferencing.



Members at the MMEA project meeting on February 3, 2020

Findings on People's War on Drugs

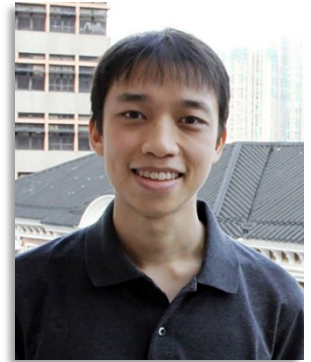
In a March 2020 research article published in *EASTS* entitled “Translating *Guān'ài* (關愛) in the People's War on Drugs: Enacting Relations of Care in China's State-Run Methadone Maintenance Treatment Program,” Drs. Zhang Chaoxiong and Priscilla Song offer an in-depth account of how attending to the everyday dynamics of *guān'ài* in the People's War on Drugs provides a novel approach to theorizing the fraught politics of care. Based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Yunnan province from 2013 to 2019, Zhang and Song examine how various stakeholders, including methadone recipients, clinicians, public health officials, police officers, and the general public in China's methadone program have translated the official discourse of *guān'ài* into workable social, professional, and moral practices and relationships based on divergent understandings of how to care for/about Chinese drug users.



Source: Zhang Chaoxiong & Priscilla Song, *East Asian Science, Technology and Society* (2020) 14 (1): 85–108.
Link: read.dukeupress.edu/easts/article/14/1/85/148620/Translating-Guan-ai-in-the-People-s-War-on-Drugs

Shakespeare and Jin Yong

Dr. Jonathan Hui (Presidential Post-doctoral Fellow) keeps on working in the past months. “Over the past weeks, my research has taken an unexpected, though not entirely unwelcome, detour. Following the recent submission and acceptance of an article of mine in an international journal of Shakespearean studies, I have begun directing my attention towards some of the visible influences of Shakespeare on Jin Yong, who was, famously and by his own admission, an avid reader and ardent admirer of Shakespeare. My investigation is currently exploring the influence of one of Shakespeare’s great tragedies, *Othello*, on *Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils*. The two texts share a number of significant parallels which explore questions of social identity, power and obsession — parallels which bear upon the texts’ most tragic developments with striking similarity.” He aims to write these findings up as an article. Dr. Hui recently received the notification from the Research Grants Council that he has been selected for the award of Council’s newly launched Post-doctoral Fellowship.



Teaching and Writing Business History



Dr. Ghassan Moazzin (Assistant Professor) continues his teaching and research. “The past semester has been a doubly new experience for me. Not only did I teach my first courses at the University of Hong Kong, but due to Covid-19 I also delivered classes online for the first time. While the classes I have been teaching this semester – a Chinese business history course for undergraduate students in the History Department and a graduate seminar at the Institute – at the beginning were still held in person, we soon had to switch to delivering our teaching exclusively online. Having to meet with students through online video conference instead of in the class room took a while to get used to, but the support from the University – in particular from the University Library and the Information Technology Services – made the transition quite smooth and allowed me to carry on delivering my classes as planned. Even though the coronavirus has led to some conference, lecture and seminar cancellations, it has, at least so far, not had a major impact on my research, as I spent the semester mainly finishing up a book manuscript and journal article and writing up a new manuscript for another article. Nevertheless, as everyone else, I am hoping that the coronavirus will soon abate, so that we can return to the classroom and resume archival research.”

Exploring Digital China

Mr. Rao Yichen (PhD student) has been doing fieldwork in mainland China for his project “China’s digital peer to peer (P2P) lending industry” since last fall. During these past months in Guangzhou, he conducted interviews via video/audio calls and observed both investor and borrower participations in online social media groups, in order to understand the special challenges they have experienced during the epidemic. This has brought insights on how the economy has been affected by COVID-19. Meanwhile, Rao is planning a new project on *Animal Crossing: New Horizons*, a console game developed by Nintendo and launched amidst the COVID-19 outbreak, and has since caused a global fever. Rao is a 2019 awardee of the Wenner-Gren Foundation, who funds the fieldwork toward his dissertation.



Contemplating Art Market at Home



Ms. Hua Shuo (PhD student) remains at home during the unprecedented time. While continuing on her dissertation “A Mobile Art World: Exhibiting and Commodifying Modern Chinese Ink Paintings in Hong Kong, 1945-1997,” she is finishing a paper for the upcoming conference “The Chinese Art Market,” scheduled to be held in the Christie’s Education Hong Kong. She has also done online teaching as guest lecturer for Dr. Anna Grasskamp’s class on Chinese art theory at Hong Kong Baptist University.

Solitary Musing on the Global



Mr. Martin Tse (MPhil student) calls the epidemic perhaps “the worst time for many in the world, as the coronavirus struck hard and took away lives.” On the other hand, he appreciates being granted the extra time to “stay home and work ardently on research.” Tse recalls how learning and research at the Institute never ceased despite all current challenges. A case in point is how his mentors Drs. Izumi Nakayama and Ghassan Moazzin have found innovative ways to deliver their Research Seminar on East Asian Culture online, thereby continuing to offer him the chance to keep up to date with new academic findings in Chinese history as well as global history. “I found the most quiet, undisturbed time to think about the responsibilities a modern nation must take in the global context, where cultures and lifestyles of different people are converging more than ever before,” says Tse.

III. Sin Wai-Kin Junior Fellowship

Drs. Zhang Chaoxiong and Ghassan Moazzin have been selected as recipients of this year’s fellowships.

Dr. Zhang, Postdoctoral Fellow at the Institute, says her research project, “Technoscientific Controversies and the Agency of a Moral Area in China’s Battle Against the COVID-19 Epidemic,” will explore a “moral laboratory” that has emerged from techno-scientific uncertainties in China’s battle against the COVID-19 epidemic. The coronavirus outbreak has claimed the lives of tens of thousands worldwide. This has included direct COVID-19 patients and those who have had other illnesses and were unable to receive needed medical care. Many of these deaths were related to various controversial techno-scientific practices in public health warning systems, diagnostic techniques, quarantine technologies, etc. A moral arena has thus been formed quickly with extensive moral and ethical debates on the impact of these technologies on life and death, and the responsibility of the government for proper employment of these technologies. Dr. Zhang’s project will delve into the dynamics of the formation of the moral arena, and examine how people live through various techno-scientific uncertainties during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, especially under China’s campaign-style governance and the government’s urge for “scientific epidemic prevention and control.” The research also aims to further understand the moral confrontations and dialogues on the ethics of life and death between the state/government and the society/people in China.





Dr. Moazzin is currently an Assistant Professor at the Institute. He says that his research, “A Preliminary Study of the Chinese Electrical and Electronics Industries, 1870-1937,” will examine the history of the Chinese electrical and electronics industries. While these two industries form a crucial part of the Chinese economy today, little is known about their historical development. Yet, without such knowledge, we are unable to make sense of the current and future development of the electrical and electronics industries in China. Dr. Moazzin’s study will shed light on the role of multi-national and Chinese companies in manufacturing and marketing electrical products in China. At the same time, his study will also show how such products, ranging from electrical lamps and telephones to electric trams, have been adapted to the Chinese market and received by Chinese consumers.

IV. Our Graduate Programs

Congratulations to Mr. Jack Xing



Mr. Jack Xing, who obtained his MPhil degree at the Institute in fall 2019, received a 5-year fellowship from the Georgia Institute of Technology in USA to pursue his PhD studies. He plans to conduct research on labor ethics and the interactions between workers, companies, and government policies in the innovative IT sector in China.

Call for Applications for the Admission to Research Postgraduate Programs at HKIHSS

HKU Presidential PhD Scholarship

Outstanding candidates (with a Bachelor’s degree of first class honors or equivalent), who are holding a PhD admission offer for 2020-21 from a top university, are encouraged to apply for this prestigious scholarship scheme.

Application deadline: **June 30, 2020**

More information and application procedures: www.gradsch.hku.hk/gradsch/f/page/554/AdmissiontoFull-timePhDProgrammesatHKUwithAttractiveScholarships.pdf

HKU Second Clearing Round

Application period: **May 1 to August 31, 2020**

About our programs and application procedures:

www.hkihss.hku.hk/admission_2020-21

Enquiries: (Email) ihssrpg@hku.hk

(Phone) (852) 3917 5772

Online application: www.gradsch.hku.hk

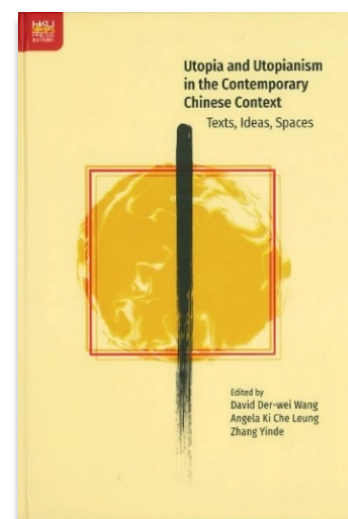


V. Recent Publications

David Der-wei Wang, Angela Ki Che Leung, and Zhang Yinde (eds.), *Utopia and Utopianism in the Contemporary Chinese Context: Texts, Ideas, Spaces*, Hong Kong University Press, April 2020.

The edited volume demonstrates the extent to which utopianism has shaped political thought, cultural imaginaries, and social engagement after it was introduced into the Chinese context in the nineteenth century. Covering a time span that goes from the late Qing to the modern days, contributors show that few ideas have been as influencing as utopia, which has compellingly shaped the imaginaries that underpin China's historical change.

The volume is a product of the international symposium masterminded by Prof. David Der-Wei Wang at the Institute on the same theme in spring 2015. Special thanks to the Hung Hing Ying and Leung Hua Ling Charitable Foundation for supporting the appointment of Prof. Wang as the Hung Leung Hau Ling Distinguished Fellow in Humanities from July 2014 to December 2015.



王迪安 (John D. Wong) 、吳海傑 (Michael H.K. Ng) 合編：《香港動盪：法與治的歷史與文化解讀》，香港大學出版社，2020 年 5 月。

By examining episodes of civil unrest and social movements in Hong Kong, this edited volume explores the notions of the rule of law, law and order, and governance from historical and cultural perspectives. The volume does not regard the law as a static rulebook or system, but treats it as a historical and cultural process whereby different parties involved in social movements assert and justify their desired social, economic and political order over time. In addition to revisiting conventional narratives, and to a large extent turning them on their head, this volume also makes an important contribution by analyzing issues of governance and law and order from inter-disciplinary perspectives. Focusing on the local developments yet being mindful of the international backdrop, this volume explores the imaginaries of law and order that the social movements have engendered, revealing a complex interplay among evolving notions of justice, governance, law and order, and cultural creations throughout the under-explored history of instability in Hong Kong. Readers who have an interest in Asian studies, socio-political studies, legal studies, cultural studies and history would welcome this volume of unique inter-disciplinarity.



The English version of the volume, *Civil Unrest in Hong Kong: Law and Order from Historical and Cultural Perspectives*, was published by Routledge in 2017.

VI. Personalia

Staff Appointments

Existing Staff

The following existing members of staff took up new positions during the period of February and May 2020:

Prof. David A. Palmer, Professor

Dr. Mohammed Turki Alsudairi, Post-doctoral Fellow (BRINFAITH Project)

New Staff

Ms. Helen Fu, Research Assistant (ARC Cluster)

Staff Departure

Ms. Shen Wenxi, Research Assistant (ARC Cluster), left the Institute w.e.f. June 1, 2020. We wish her every success in her future endeavors.

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If colleagues have news to share with the Institute,
please email your materials to sycheng2@hku.hk.