

Columbia University
Envisioning the SnowLand: Film and TV in Tibet and Inner Asia
EALAC Fall '06 (W4557)

Seminar: Mondays 2.10-4pm
Viewings: Tuesdays 7.30-c.9.30pm
Instructor: Robert Barnett

Prerequisites

This will be a 4000 level seminar, open to all students. It will study Tibetan and Inner Asian films and television dramas as a form of political and cultural history. No prior knowledge of the region or of the languages is required and all films shown will be subtitled in English. Almost all of the films are rare, or there is only one copy, so some films will be low quality in terms of color and technical reproduction.

Objectives

The course will use films and television produced in Tibet and Inner Asia as a way of prompting questions about aspects of the history of these areas and of their integration within China since the 1950s. At the same time it will look at ways in which varying notions of the state, nationality, culture and politics have been expressed and constructed at different times and in contested ways, particularly through film and other visual media. It will follow the history of the CCP's policies towards Tibet, Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang by sketching the development of regional language media, the various phases of Tibetan-Chinese film co-operation, and the points of stress indicated by cases of post-distribution censorship. These will be compared with examples of cinema from Mongolia and discussed within the larger framework of "small nation/ality" cultures.

Method

The course will show samples of major cinematic and television productions as well as extracts from secondary types of programming such as TV comedy shows and concerts, advertisements, news items and trailers. It will include work from the exile communities of the relevant nationalities, but it does not include western films *about* Tibet, Xinjiang or Mongolia, except where they are significant co-operative projects with local artists and film-makers.

The course will be interdisciplinary, using approaches from film studies, history and anthropology. Course-packs will be prepared containing all the required readings.

Requirements

Students will be required to attend all classes and complete all assigned readings. They will watch one or two films each week in one of the weekly viewing sessions or, in exceptional cases, in their own time, if copies are available. The films will not be shown in the class. Students will keep a film diary or record of each film they watch, and they will post these to the instructor and the rest of the class, so that they can be circulated to the rest of the class for discussion. Each student should prepare questions for the discussion each week. One or two students will take responsibility for each week's seminar, for which they will read the optional readings, present summaries or analyses of them, and lead the seminar for that session. There will be a mid-term paper (analysis of a sample film scene written by the student) and a final paper (a research paper based on a visual product chosen by the student, or a series of research entries for an on-line glossary about Inner Asian film), both of which will be take-home essays.

Evaluation

Grades will be assessed according to class participation, seminar presentations, class attendance and two written pieces of work - a midterm paper and a final paper. Please don't miss any of the seminars. Please explain in advance if there is some compelling reason why you can't come.

Syllabus and Readings

Note: This list gives all the required readings, with optional readings added as an appendix. Further readings may be added later. Readings marked with an asterisk (*) are not included in the reading pack. If you are a graduate student you should read the required readings and *at least* one of the longer optional readings each week. All students should skim read all the required readings and at least skim the optional readings.

1 The context: questions of nationality, film and genre

Briefing packs on Tibetan history, Regional terms, Party-Government structure, and administrative terms.
See the Courseworks site for these.

2 Recording Liberation, 1950-1966: Freeing a Nationality from its Past
Nongnu ("The Serf", Li Jun, 1963)

See the Courseworks site for the script.

Readings:

Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China*, American Geographical Society Research Studies No. 21, 1940, pp. 3-20

Melvyn Goldstein, "Re-examining Choice, Dependency and Command in the Tibetan Social System: Tax Appendages and Other Landless Serfs", *Tibet Journal*, 9(4), 1986, pp. 79-112

Paul Clark, *Chinese Cinema: Culture and Politics since 1949*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, pp. 94-125

See below for optional readings

3 Propaganda and the Ethnic Model Hero: Inner Mongolia and the Cultural Revolution

Caoyuan yingxiong xiao jiemei ("Little Sisters of the Grassland"), Shanghai Film Studios (animation), 1973

See the Courseworks site for the scripts.

Readings:

David Sneath, *Changing Inner Mongolia: Pastoral Mongolian Society and the Chinese State*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 62-125

Uradyn E. Bulag, "'Models and Moralities: The Parable of the Two 'Heroic Little Sisters of the Grassland'" in *The Mongols at China's Edge: History and the Politics of National Unity*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002, pp. 183-205 [also in *China Journal*, 42, July 1999]

See below for optional readings

4 The Post-Maoist Search for Self: the Root-Seeking Movement and the Chinese Gaze Towards the Peripheries
Qingchun ji (Sacrificed Youth; Zhang Nuanxin 1985)
Daoma zei (Horse Thief; Tian Zhuangzhuang 1986)

Readings:

Paul Clark, "Ethnic Minorities in Chinese Films: Cinema and the Exotic," *East-West Film Journal*, 1987, 1.2: 15-41

Dru Gladney, "Tian Zhuangzhuang, the Fifth Generation and Minorities Film in China", *Public Culture*, 1995, Vol.8

Ni Zhen, "After *Yellow Earth*" in George Semsel, Chen Xihe and Xia Hong, *Film in Contemporary China: Critical Debates 1979-89*, Westport: Praeger, 1993, pp. 29-37

Xia Hong, "The Debate over *Horse Thief*" in George Semsel, Chen Xihe and Xia Hong, *Film in Contemporary China: Critical Debates 1979-89*, Westport: Praeger, 1993, pp.39-49

See below for optional readings

5 Military Progenitors, Founding Fathers: Mongolia and Tibetan Film of Dynastic Heroes in the 1980s

Chinggis han ("Genghis Khan"), dir: Wang Wenjie, Guangzhou film company?

Chengjie Sihan ("Genghis Khan"), Inner Mongolia Film Studio & Youth Film Studio, dir: Zhan Xiangchi, 1987

or *Chengjie Sihan* ("Genghis Khan"), directors: Sai Fu and Mai Lisi, Inner Mongolia Film Studio 1998
Alasha Prince, TV series (12? Parts) 1994, Alasha League TV Station and Inner Mongolia Film Studio, director: Sun Zhiqiang, writers Batuchuluu and Xin Tianbao.

See below for optional readings

Readings:

Morris Rossabi, *China and Inner Asia: from 1368 to the present day*, London : Thames and Hudson, 1975, pp. 240-251

Almaz Khan, "Who are the Mongols", in Melissa J. Brown (ed.), *Negotiating Ethnicities in China and Taiwan*, Berkeley: Institute for Asian Studies, 1996, pp.125-159 [or * **Almaz Khan**, "Chinggis Khan: From Imperial Ancestor to Ethnic Hero", in Stevan Harrell (ed.), *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontier*, Seattle & London: University of Washington Press, 1995, pp. 248-76]

Nasan Bayar, "History and Its Televising: Events and Narratives of the Hoshuud Mongols in Modern China; in *Inner Asia*, vol 4, no 2, Winter 2002, pp 241-276

See below for optional readings

6 Travelling Brides: Mongolian and Tibetan Queens as Symbols of Transnational Alliance

Queen Mandukhai, director Begziin Bawinnyam, Mongolia, 1989

Wencheng gonjo (Rgya bza' gong jo, "Princess Wencheng"), CCTV, 2000

**Chengjisi Han de mama* ("Genghis Khan's Mother"), Dirs: Sai Fu and Mai Lisi, Inner Mongolia Film Studio, 1998

See the Courseworks site for the script.

Readings:

Uradyn Bulag, "Naturalizing National Unity: Political Romance and the Chinese Nation" in *The Mongols at China's Edge: History and the Politics of National Unity*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002, pp. 63-102

Jennifer Hammett, "The Ideological Impediment: Epistemology, Feminism, and Film Theory" in Richard Allen and Murray Smith (eds.), *Film Theory and Philosophy*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997, pp. 244-260

Fatima Mernissi, "The Mongol Khatuns" in *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, OUP 2003 (1990), pp.21, 99-107

See below for optional readings

7 Appropriating History: Tibetan and Mongolian Re-writing the Past

Budala gong mishi ("The Secret History of the Potala Palace"), director Zhang Yi, Tibet Regional Theatre Group and Emei Film Company, 1989

Readings:

Ljangbu, "A History of Tibetan Film" (manuscript)

Robert Barnett: "The Secret *Secret*: Cinema, Ethnicity and Seventeenth Century Tibetan-Mongolian Relations", in *Inner Asia*, vol 4, no 2, Winter 2002, pp. 277-346

See below for optional readings

8 Culture, Women and Ethnicity: Reshaping the Uighur Nation as a Musical Tradition

Amanisahan, Wang Xinjun, 1993

Tsogt Taij, directors: Y. Tarich and M. Bold, Mongolia, 1945

TV footage of New Year concerts and variety shows

Readings:

Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China*, American Geographical Society Research Studies No. 21, 1940, pp.187-197

Tony Rayns, "The Position of Women in New Chinese Cinema", *East-West Film Journal*, 1987, 1.2, pp. 32-44 or

Esther C.M. Yau, "Is China the End of Hermeneutics? Or, Political and Cultural Usage of Non-Han Women in Mainland Chinese Films", in Diane Carson, Linda Dittmar and Janice B. Welsch, ed., *Multiple Voices in Feminist Film Criticism*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis & London, 1994

***Dru C. Gladney**. "Transnational Islam and Uighur National Identity: Salman Rushdie, Sino-Muslim Missile Deals, and the Trans-Eurasian Railway", *Central Asian Survey* 11:3 (1992), pp. 1-18.

***Gardner Bovingdon**, "Autonomy in Xinjiang: Han Nationalist Imperatives and Uyghur Discontent", *Policy Studies* 11, East-West Center, Washington, 2004, pp 3-12, 65-7

***James Millward**, "Violent Separatism in Xinjiang: A Critical Assessment", *Policy Studies* 6, East-West Center, Washington, 2004, pp 3-12, 65-7

See below for optional readings

9 The Tibetan TV Comedy: the comedians and writers

Migmar and Thubten, comedy sketches

"An Appeal for Our Cultural Relics", Migmar and Thubten (writer: Phuntsog Tashi), comedy sketch

"Tibet No. 1", Migmar and Thubten (writer: ?), comedy dialogue

"Neither Goat nor Sheep", Migmar and Thubten (writer: Sonam Tsering), comedy dialogue

"This is not a joking matter", Rabsel and Amchi Lhagpa (writer: Phuntsog Tashi), comedy sketch

Readings:

Phuntshog Tashi with Patricia Schiaffini, "Realism, Humor, and Social Commitment: An Interview" *Manoa* 18.1 (2006) 119-124

Phun tshog Bkra shi (trans. Ronald Schwartz), "Guests of the Or Tog Bar", *World Fiction Today*,

***Scripts from Phun tshog Bkra shi**, 'khrab gshung 'dzum shor don ldan, Tibet Regional Nationalities Publishing House, Lhasa, 1999 (in translation; will be on courseworks site)

***Scripts from Bsod Tshe**, *Bzhad gad dpyid kyi pho nya*, Tibet Regional Nationalities Publishing House, Lhasa, 1994 (in translation; will be on courseworks site)

Tseten Wangchuk Sharlho, "China's Reforms in Tibet: Issues and Dilemmas" in *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 1(1), Fall, 1993, pp.34-60

10 The Rise of the TV Drama Series: Globalisation and the Post-1980s Role of Semi-Commercial TV Production

Xizang Fengyun (Bod ljongs dus 'gyur, "Wind and Clouds over Tibet"), CCTV, 2000

Readings:

Geremie Barmé, "To Screw Foreigners is Patriotic" in *In the Red: On Contemporary Chinese Culture*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, pp. 255-281

Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snow: A History of Modern Tibet Since 1947*, Pimlico/Columbia University Press, pp. 52-101

11 The 21st Century: the Rise of Local Family Dramas

Lhasa wangshi (Lha sa'i sngon byung gtam rgyud - Old times in Lhasa, CCTV/Tibet TV, 2001)

Xiangwang Lasa (Lha sar phyogs pa - In the direction of Lhasa, Tibet TV, 2002)

Readings:

Yangdon, "God Without Gender" in Herbert Batt (trans.), *Tales of Tibet: Sky Burials, Prayer Wheels, And Wind Horses*, Rowman and Littlefield, 2001, pp. 177-88, 266-67

Lisa B. Rofel, "'Yearnings': Televisual Love and Melodramatic Politics in Contemporary China", *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (Nov., 1994), pp. 700-722

Sheldon H. Lu, "Soap Opera in China: The Transnational Politics of Visuality, Sexuality and Masculinity", *Cinema Journal*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (Autumn 2000), pp. 25-47

***Melvyn Goldstein**, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951: The Demise of the Lamaist State*, University of California Press, 1989, pp. 186-212

See below for optional readings

12 The Fly-on-the-wall Documentary – Chinese Modernist Views of Tibet and Xinjiang

The Ends of the Earth (Tibet), director Duan Jinchuan, 1996

No 16 South Barkor St (Tibet), director Duan Jinchuan, 1995

Railroad of Hope (Xinjiang), director Ning Ying, 2001

Reading:

Jenny Kwok Wah Lau, "Globalization and Youthful Subculture: The Chinese Sixth-Generation Films at the Dawn of the New Century" in Jenny Kwok Wah Lau (ed.), *Multiple Modernities: Cinemas and Popular Media in Transcultural East Asia*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 2003, pp. 13-27

Berenice Reynaud, "Dancing with Myself, Drifting with My Camera: The Emotional Vagabonds of China's New Documentary", *Senses of Cinema*, September 2003

- 13 Nepal, Bhutan and Tibetan exiles: Films and Documentaries in the Diaspora
Phurpa ("The Cup"), Khyentse Norbu, Bhutan/India, 1999
 or *Mukundo* ("Mask of Desire"), Tenzin Rithar/Kelsang Tseten, Nepal, 1999
 and *A Stranger in My Native Land*, Tenzing Sonam, India, 1997

Reading:

Tenzing Sonam "A Stranger in My Native Land", *Tibetan Review*, July and September 1996, and *Civil Lines*, Issue No. 4, 2001

- 14 The Foreign Co-Production and Pastoral-Primitivist Mythologies
Urga ("Close to Eden"), Nikita Mikhalkov, Belgium/Russia/Mongolia, 1992
Caravan (aka *Himalaya*), Eric Valli, France/Nepal, 2000

Readings:

Kenneth Bauer, "A *tsampa* Western: The Making of the Film *Caravan*, and the Constructions of Dolpo and 'Tibetanness'" in *High Frontiers: Dolpo and The Changing World of Himalayan Pastoralists*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2002, ch. 8

Ulrike Ottinger, "*Johanna d'Arc of Mongolia*: Interview with Ulrike Ottinger"
<http://www.ulrikeottinger.com/e/html/johanna.htm>

Optional & Background Readings:

Session 2

Su Wei, "The School and the Hospital - On the Logics of Socialist Realism" in Pang-yuan Chi and David Der-wei Wang, *Chinese Literature in the Second Half of the Modern Century - A Critical Survey*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000, pp. 65-95

Melvyn Goldstein, Tsering Tashi and William Siebenschuh, *The Struggle for a Modern Tibet: The Autobiography of Tashi Tsering*, Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1997, pp.1-47

David Elliot, "Introduction" in Dawn Ades, Tim Benton, et al. (eds.). *Art and Power: Europe under the Dictators, 1930-45*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1995, n.p.(pp 1-3)

Irina Gutkin, *The Cultural Origins of the Socialist Realist Aesthetic: 1890-1934*, Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1999, pp. 1-5, 38-51

Session 3

Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China*, American Geographical Society Research Studies No. 21, 1940, pp. 97-102

Paul Clark, *Chinese Cinema: Culture and Politics since 1949*, Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1987, pp. 56-93 (and *125-154)

Lan Yang, "The Ideal Socialist Hero: Literary Conventions in Cultural Revolution Novels" in Woei Lien Chong, *China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution - Master Narratives and Post-Mao Counter Narratives*, Rowan & Littlefield, 2002, pp. 185-211

Session 4

Chris Berry, "Han and non-Han: China's Avant-Garde and the National Minorities Genre," *China Screen*, 1986, 1: 34 or **Chris Berry**, "Race (*Minzu*): Chinese Film and the Politics of Nationalism", *Cinema Journal* 31, no.2 (1992), pp. 45-58

Li Qingxi, "Searching for Roots - Anticultural Return in Mainland Chinese Literature of the 1980s", in Pang-yuan Chi and David Der-wei Wang, *Chinese Literature in the Second Half of the Modern Century - A Critical Survey*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000, pp. 110-123

Geremie Barmé and John Minford, *Seeds of Fire: Chinese Voices of Conscience*, Hong Kong: Far Eastern Economic Review, 1986, pp. 251-269

Yingjin Zhang, "From 'Minority Film' to 'Minority Discourse': Questions of Nationhood and Ethnicity in Chinese Cinema", in Sheldon H Lu, (ed.), *Transnational Chinese Cinema- Identity, Nationhood, Gender*, University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu, 1997

Session 5

Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China*, American Geographical Society Research Studies No. 21, 1940, pp. 80-83

***Alicia Campi**, "Use of Chinggis", Central and Inner Asian Studies [details tba]

Diane Gabrysiak, "A Survey of Cinema Making on Mongolia", see http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~corff/im/Film/mongolkino_article.html#toc3

Nasan Bayar, "On Chinggis Khan Being Like A Buddha: A Perspective on Cultural Conflation in Modern Inner Mongolia", *Inner Asia* (forthcoming)

Leo Hartog, "Genghis Khan: Conqueror of the World", Taurisparke, pp. 2-17

***Larry Moses** and Stephen A. Halkovic, "Introduction to Mongolian History and Culture", Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, Bloomington, Indiana: 1985, pp.42-57

Session 6

Morris Rossabi, "Mongolia in the 1990s: from Commissars to Capitalists?", Open Society Institute, no date. www.eurasianet.org/resource/mongolia/links/rossabi.html

Mark Russell, "The Landscape as Star: A sensitive new filmmaker puts Mongolia on the map", Newsweek, Aug. 16 2004

Watanuki Mugi, Wada Hiroshi, "*Perpetual Motion* - An Interview with Sakhya Byamba: I Tried to Express That We're All the Same", New Asian Currents, 2003

Morris Rossabi, "Women of the Mongol Court"

Session 7

Poshek Fu, "The Ambiguity of Entertainment: Chinese Cinema in Japanese-occupied Shanghai, 1941-1945", *Cinema Journal*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Autumn 1997), pp. 66-84

Han Ju Kwak, "Discourse on Modernization in 1990s Korean Cinema" in Jenny Kwok Wah Lau (ed.), *Multiple Modernities: Cinemas and Popular Media in Transcultural East Asia*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 2003, pp. 90-113

***Andrei Plesu**, "Intellectual Life Under Dictatorship," *Representations*, 1995, Number 49, pp. 61-71.

Session 8

Peter Stanfield, *Horse Opera: The Strange History of the 1930s Singing Cowboy*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002, pp. 46-77, 149-154

Session 11

Tsering Shakya, *Introduction* in Herbert Batt (trans.), *Tales of Tibet: Sky Burials, Prayer Wheels, And Wind Horses*, Rowman and Littlefield, 2001, pp. xi-xxiii