

2026

AHGN Graduate Conference

Asia in the Global Context

10:00-10:30am

Introduction and
Registration

10:30-12:00 pm

Panel 1- History of Conflict
and Tension

Panel 2- The Literary Past

12:00-12:20 pm

Coffee

12:20-13:30 pm

Panel 3- Untold Histories

Panel 4- Beyond Memories
and Boundaries

13:30-14:10 pm

Lunch

14:10-15:20 pm

Panel 5- Embodied Identities

Panel 6- Politics of the
Everyday

15:30-16:15 pm

Keynote- Dr. Sam Cheney
Teaching and Research Fellow
University of Edinburgh



Asian Histories
Graduate Network



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
School of History, Classics
and Archaeology

2026

AHGN Graduate Conference

Room A

Panel 1: History of Conflict and Tension

10:30-12:00pm

Dongdong Bai (University of Sheffield), *Mobilising Sympathy: China's Wartime Publicity and the China Campaign Committee in Britain, 1937-1945.*

Noel Mariam George (London School of Economics and Political Science), *Ghost Regiment: Refugee Soldiers, Covert Warfare, and the Making of Postcolonial Security in Asia, 1940-1980.*

Leonarda Rosanna Pfaus (University of Oxford), *Post-Honeymoon Tensions: A Chinese Performing Arts Troupe's tour of the United States and the Fragility of Sino- American Rapprochement in 1975.*

Panel 3: Untold Histories

12:20-13:30pm

Huirong Cheng (University of Edinburgh), *From Canton to Edinburgh: A Scottish Merchant and the Globalisation of Chinese Tea, 1845-1855.*

Tanmay Kulshrestha (University of Leeds), *Seen and Unseen: The Ayah and the Intimate Life of British Colonial India.*

Mingcan Rong (University of Bristol), *Botanising rhododendrons, cultivating national dream.*

Panel 5: Embodied Identities

14:10-15:20pm

Maggie Bryan (University of Oxford), *No Human is an Island: Community and the Role of Women in the Farmers' Art of Izu Oshima.*

Nanda Deebu Sheeja (University of Leeds), *Gendering Empire's Animals: Colonial Power and the Production of Non-Human Difference.*

Talisha Daisy Dionysius Schilder (Leiden University), *The (her/hi)story of Indigenous tattooing in Indonesia.*



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Room B

Panel 2: The Literary Past

10:30-12:00pm

Nicolas Gangi-Saroukhani (University of Oxford), *Nightmares in the Age of Dreams: The 'Dream-State' as Critical Rhetoric in Chinese Fiction from the 1990s to the Mid-2010s.*

Tuen Yi Lee (University of St. Andrews), *Reconstructing the Past: The Failure of Memory and Limits of Identity in Song South-Migrating Ci Poetry.*

Xingyu Chen (School of Oriental and African Studies University of London), *The Sacralisation of Desire: Sex and Moral Reconfiguration in Late-Ming 'Guanyin-as-Courtesan' Narratives.*

Panel 4: Beyond Memories and Boundaries

12:20-13:30pm

Tuyet Mai Tran (University of Edinburgh), *Bà ngoại returning to the roots - filmic exploration of a Vietnamese family diaspora.*

Bhanushali Gahlot (University of Manchester), *Dissonant Histories in South Asian Museums: Memory, Religion, and Politics in the Partition Memorialisation Project.*

Anu Shree Murali (University of Stirling), *Dialogues of Home: tracing the interaction between South Indian migrant heritage practices and Delhi's urbanscape.*

Panel 6: Politics of the Everyday

14:10-15:20pm

Yinan Luo (University College London), *Beyond Global Models: Negotiating Coeducation and Gendered Agency in Chinese Higher Education.*

Yunyufei Luo (University of Oxford), *Credit Generation without (External) Contract Enforcement: Property Redemption Right in Traditional China, 1592 - 1950.*

Manish Surin (University of Sussex), *Indigeneity Within the State: Re-thinking Ho Adivasi Autonomy in Colonial and Post-colonial India.*



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Asia in the Global Context

Keynote: Dr. Sam Cheney

15:30-16:15 pm

Teaching and Research Fellow, University of Edinburgh

"Fragments from Peking": British Composers, Colonial China, and the Possibility of Listening 'Against the Grain'

The archive of Britain's imperial presence in China resonates with references to the myriad musical activities that formed the acoustic fabric of Chinese treaty port life, as various Chinese regional opera genres, folk Daoist street performances, and Buddhist temple rites coexisted with European orchestras, missionary hymn services, and military brass bands. Nonetheless, the importance of music to China's treaty port residents has remained understudied and under-theorised. Indeed, most histories of these foreign concessions and missionary outposts in China have argued not only that genuine cultural exchanges between Chinese and Britons rarely occurred within these multiethnic colonial spaces, but also that music itself existed as the absolute limit point of cross-cultural comprehensibility between Chinese and Western civilizations. This paper moves beyond this historiographical commonplace by examining the parallel processes of integration, negotiation, and repudiation that occurred when Chinese and British sonic worlds interacted in this colonial context.

This paper takes as its case study the music produced by British composers living in treaty port China, asking whether increased exposure to China's treaty port soundscape actually changed the listening ears and compositional outputs of the British inhabitants of these colonial cities. By focusing on the musical works of composers such as Marquis Chisholm, Norman Peterkin, and Gwen Howell, it scrutinises how imperial Britons listened to China's diverse and multiethnic soundscape, and explores how musical composition existed as a tool to make sense of this unfamiliar sonic environment. In particular, by analysing this music 'against the grain' of the orientalist idiom in which it was composed, it will attempt to uncover the facets of the treaty port soundscape that were encoded in these works, as well as the racial and cultural assumptions that shaped the compositional choices of their creators.



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