

# **International Conference on China and the Future of Human Geography**

26-28 August 2010  
Guangzhou, China

Jointly Organized by

**The Department of Geography, University of Oregon**

*and*

**The School of Geography and Planning, Sun Yat-sen University**

## **Conference Rational**

On July 20, 2009, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao explicitly highlighted China's global ambition, when he noted that: "we should hasten the implementation of our 'going out' strategy and combine the utilization of foreign exchange reserves with the 'going out' of our enterprises." There is precedent for expansionist initiatives of this sort. David Harvey, for instance, argues in *The New Imperialism* that American hegemony was built upon the geographical expansion of overaccumulated capital at the global scale. In a similar vein, China's going-out strategies will almost certainly influence global networks of production and consumption. Indeed, evidence of rampant Made-in-China flows can already be seen on the shelves of every Wal-Mart and most local groceries, shaping our perspectives of the country, for better or for worse. Accompanying these strategies are massive infrastructure projects, increasing incomes, growing socio-economic disparities, liberalizing economies, rapidly expanding cities, and worsening environmental crises within China's national borders. As China undergoes radical transformation, there are competing agendas that push political leaders and business elites to reconsider the existing political and economic system. An increasing number of Western universities have established East Asia Initiatives or China Research Centers. More and more transnational corporations have founded their regional headquarters or production bases in China. What are the challenges and opportunities brought about by the rise of a new hegemonic power with extensive cultural and economic connections throughout the global community?

Questions such as these suggest that the rise of China has significant implications for human geography. In a land of immensely uneven change—such that the preindustrial villages of western China and the postindustrial cities of the coastal region co-exist uneasily in ways that produce fantastic, often contradictory landscapes, China raises major analytical and theoretical challenges for human geography. To date, however, much of the analysis of China's human geography has been confined to a small group of China specialists. In mainstream human geography journals, China has not received adequate attention. Yet there is little doubt that over the coming decade China will become a crucial economic and political power, fundamentally altering the political,

economic, cultural, and social landscape. In response, suitable theoretically informed platforms for understanding and mediating these fundamental changes are needed.

It follows that the timing is appropriate to bring together human geographers from around the world to examine China and the future of human geography and, more broadly, to rethink the relationship between human geography and a rapidly transformed world. The School of Geography and Planning at the Sun Yat-sen University (SYSU) is joining the Department of Geography at the University of Oregon to organize an International Conference on China and the Future of Human Geography. As a leading program in geographical education and research in mainland China, SYSU's School of Geography and Planning has a long history of active cooperation with overseas institutions. Hosted in Guangzhou, one of China's most market-economy-oriented cities, the conference has three specific objectives:

1. To provide a platform for constructive dialogue among human geographers from various sub-disciplines and countries who are interested in expanding discussions of the future of human geography to encompass the nature and significance of a rising China.
2. To advance understanding of the challenges and opportunities brought by China's rise, both to the discipline of human geography and to the reconfiguration of nature-society relations. While acknowledging the historical influence of Anglo-American paradigms in human geography, China has the potential to reshape the established order in academic research and nature-society relations. The conference will expose human geographers to some of the latest work from China and beyond on the profound transformations that are reshaping global economics and politics.
3. To enable human geographers from outside China to experience the nature of the spatial transformations unfolding in China through conference sessions and associated activities.

### **Conference Themes**

The Conference themes will be organized into three major categories: Fieldwork/Practice, Education/Pedagogy, and Research/Theory. Thematic options are as follows:

- Overseas Chinese and China's transnational links
- The China-US nexus
- China's changing geopolitical role
- Regional integration of the Greater China zone
- Theorizing China's economic reform
- China, sustainability and global climate change
- Financial geography and the internationalization of the Chinese yuan
- Rethinking "development"
- Urbanization and China's socio-cultural transformation
- Fieldwork in China
- Postgraduate training in human geography
- International cooperation and the practice of human geography

## **Conference Format and Schedule**

Conference sessions will take place from 26 to 28 August 2010 on the campus of the Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, China. The conference will consist of plenary lectures, general sessions comprising submitted papers, and roundtable workshops on selective issues. Fieldtrips will take place on Friday 27 August 2010.

## **Four Plenary Speakers have been Confirmed**

[John Agnew](#) (University of California, Los Angeles, USA)

[Lily Kong](#) (National University of Singapore, Singapore)

[Joshua Muldavin](#) (Sarah Lawrence College, USA)

[Michael Webber](#) (The University of Melbourne, Australia)

## **Conference Organizing Committee**

*Jigang Bao*, Co-Chair, Sun Yat-sen University

*Alexander Murphy*, Co-Chair, University of Oregon

*Xiaobo Su*, Co-Organizer, University of Oregon <xiaobo@uoregon.edu>

*Desheng Xue*, Co-Organizer, Sun Yat-sen University

*Hong Zhu*, South China Normal University (China)

## **Registration Details**

Please complete the following pre-registration form. The deadline for submitting the completed form is **18 June 2010**.

In addition, ALL paper presenters are required to submit an English abstract of 150 words (maximum) at any time up until **30 June 2010**. We strongly encourage you to submit your abstract via <mailto:xiaobo@uoregon.edu> (both in-email-text and as an attachment). Upon receipt of the abstract, we will issue an acceptance letter in electronic form in the first instance. Please let us know if you require the acceptance letter in printed form.

**Please note that after the original deadline of 30 June 2010, we are unable to refund any registration fee payment.** This is because we will have made commitments to different vendors for conference-related expenditure (e.g. venue, food, and fieldtrip) by that time.

The conference registration fee is **US\$250**, inclusive of all lunches, tea/coffee sessions, one conference banquet dinner and one local fieldtrip. Please ensure that your payment will reach the “School of Geography and Planning, SYSU (for ICCFHG)” by **30 June 2010 at the very latest**. Timely payment of your registration fee is necessary if your

abstract/presentation is to appear in the Conference Programme. Due to the long processing time and extra charges, we are unable to accept personal checks, bank drafts, or credit cards.

### **Local Field trips in Guangzhou**

Field trips to different parts of Guangzhou will be arranged from 1:00 pm to 6:30 pm on 27 August 2010. Participants are encouraged to use this conference to conduct more lengthy trips throughout China so that they can get to know more about China's geographical diversity. The following fieldtrips, which are included in the registration fee, are available for your choice:

1. Inner city of Guangzhou—Shamian-Shangxiajiu-Beijing Road-Tianhe-Zhujiang New Town (CBD)-New Fair Center (the largest in the world). This fieldtrip demonstrates the history of Guangzhou and the new development in the inner city.
2. New development in suburb Guangzhou—New fair Center-University Town-Guangzhou New Town (2010 Asian Olympic Meeting site)-Nansha Economic Development Zone. This route demonstrates the newest development led by some flagship projects of the city during the last decade.

### **Visa Requirement**

We strongly advise you to check to see if you will need a visa to enter China and participate in the conference. You can either visit the official website of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs or check with the Embassy of China nearest to you. In any case, upon receiving your conference registration fee, we will issue you via fax or email an official conference invitation letter stamped by the School of Geography and Planning, Sun Yat-sen University. This letter will enable you to obtain a visa from the nearest Embassy of China.

### **Enquiries and Further Information**

Please direct all your enquiries and requests to either:

#### **Dr. Xiaobo Su**

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