



Departments of History & Sociology

Joint-Seminar

Professor Edmund Fung

Asian Studies, University of Western Sydney

Chinese Writings on Chinese Cultural Nationalism of the 1990s and Beyond: An Intellectual Inquiry

Date : 22 November 2011 (Tuesday)

Time : 11am - 1pm

Venue: Committee Room 505, Shaw Tower, Shaw Campus,
34 Renfrew Road, Kowloon Tong, Kowloon

Abstract

This paper departs from previous Western scholarship on China's 'new nationalism' of the 1990s, which has paid much attention to state nationalism, international politics, and foreign and defence policy-making, and from the nation/state, tradition/modernity, and cultural nationalism/political nationalism dichotomies in earlier works to provide a nuanced understanding and multilayered analysis of Chinese cultural nationalism of the 1990s and beyond. The paper argues that what began as an intellectual critique of the 'culture craze' of the 1980s developed into a positive response to the challenges of modernity and globalization that is significantly linked to the rise of China and to the 'China threat' and 'containing China' theories propagated in the West. The intellectual pluralism of the 1990s and beyond underscores visions of a nation that is in competition with the West led by the United States in the new world order. The paper further argues that cultural and political nationalisms, nation and state, rather than opposing each other, converge at particular points. Even as the CCP regime's narrative of the nation is contested, cultural nationalists are capable of supporting it and help to strengthen the conservative, political mainstream. None would seek a revival of traditional authoritarianism, though. Instead, they see a positive relationship of cultural nationalism to political reform. In return, the regime accommodates their views, acknowledging their 'patriotism' and deploying culture as an important part of China's 'comprehensive competitiveness.' The culture-politics nexus in contemporary China is more complicated and more nuanced than was previously thought.

Bio

Edmund Fung is Professor of Asian Studies at the University of Western Sydney. He is the author of *The Intellectual Foundations of Chinese Modernity: Cultural and Political Thought in the Republican Era* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), *In Search of Chinese Democracy: Civil Opposition in Nationalist China 1929-1949* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), *The Diplomacy of Imperial Retreat: Britain's South China Policy, 1924-1931* (Oxford University Press, 1991), and *The Military Dimension of the Chinese Revolution: The Role of the New Army in the Revolution of 1911* (Australian National University Press, 1980). He is currently working on the cultural and political thought of post-1980s China.

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