

Institute for Chinese Studies Lecture Series

Revolutions in Memory: Singing Girls and China's Socialist Transformation

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1969–2019
EAST ASIAN
STUDIES
CENTER

Friday, Nov. 15, 4-5:30 pm
Mendenhall Lab 115



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This study examines the contested revolutionary histories of the PRC in an intersectional framework of gender, class, and political status. It focuses on both state archives and the oral accounts of individuals such as singing girls-turned-revolutionary artists and CCP cadres. Singing girls were female entertainers who sang stories to mostly male patrons before the socialist transformation in the 1950s. Their identities were ambiguous as both performers and women of ill-repute. Their class statuses were fluid depending on the statuses of their male patrons. The CCP cultural cadres who were from diverse class backgrounds such as bourgeoisie, working class, rural landlords and petty peasants joined the revolution for various reasons. Today, these individuals craft their revolutionary pasts shaped by their shifting gender and class identities in a changing political context.

Individuals' memories could challenge and yet collaborate with the state in the making of official history. I apply a critical approach to the competing narratives of individuals (oral accounts) and the state (archival records).



Free and open to the public
easc.osu.edu/events/ics/m-zhao

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