



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE FOR CHINESE STUDIES

ICS presents the "China in Transition" Lecture Series

Gendering the Nation-State: Revisiting Nineteenth Century Chinese Women's *Tanci* Novels

Friday, March 3, 2017

4:00-5:30 pm

Mendenhall Lab 115

125 S Oval Mall

Li Guo

Associate Professor

Language, Philosophy, and Communication
Studies

Utah State University



Abstract: Late imperial Chinese social and intellectual histories witness heterogeneous examples of the interplay between shifting nationalist discourses, and women's literary, cultural and political participation and burgeoning proto-feminist activism. This project explores how nineteenth century women writers illustrated socio-political ideals of the nation-state in *tanci* fiction, which are novel-length chantefable narratives. My study investigates how *tanci* authors negotiated with social, political and moral contingencies in transcending the rhetoric of female sacrifice for the nation, and projecting transformative concepts of selfhood. Importantly, nineteenth century *tanci* novels bespeak the contesting relationship between discourses of gender and nationhood, by portraying women as military generals, prime ministers, jurisdiction officials, and courageous warriors, indicating writing as a vehicle for mediating gendered political consciousness. These utopian narratives introduce readers to a rich and under-studied repertoire of women's fictional tradition which enriches literati discourses about nation and self-expression, and foreshadows modern concepts of the nation-state.

Bio: Li Guo (PhD. University of Iowa) is an associate professor of Chinese language and literature at the Utah State University. Her research interests include late imperial and modern Chinese women's literature, chantefable narratives, gender and sexuality theory and performance studies. She is the author of *Women's Tanci Fiction in Late Imperial and Early Twentieth Century China* (Purdue University Press, 2015). Her peer-reviewed articles have appeared in *Frontiers of Literary Studies in China*, *Tulsa Studies of Women's Literature*, *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, *Film International*, and *Consciousness: Literature and the Arts*.

Free and Open to the Public

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Contact: Nathan Lancaster | East Asian Studies Center | lancaster.102@osu.edu | <http://easc.osu.edu>