



University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Center for Chinese Studies

Fall 2024 Webinar Series

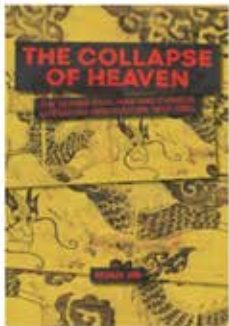
The public is cordially invited to attend. Free admission.



Wednesday, November 20, 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm HST, Online via Zoom

Register in advance for this webinar: <https://go.hawaii.edu/r3b>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email with information about joining the webinar.



Booktalk – The Collapse of Heaven

The Taiping Civil War and Chinese Literature and Culture, 1850-1880

Wielded between two political entities of opposing ideologies, the Taiping Civil War (1851–1864) is one of the most devastating civil wars in human history. What is the effect of the confluence of political discourses? How to make sense of an individual's historical existence during political turbulence? How did the protracted war shatter late imperial Chinese literary and cultural paradigms?

[The Collapse of Heaven](#) shows that under extreme violence, late imperial Chinese literary and cultural paradigms began to unravel, giving rise to new modes of sentiment and expression that mark the beginning of Chinese literary modernity. Huan Jin examines a broad range of genres that belong to both the private and public domains of the war: official propaganda, religious texts, local history, personal collections, personal accounts, and creative works such as novels, plays, and short stories. In these texts, she traces a long literary tradition of writings on military and political violence dating back to the late Tang dynasty (618–907 CE) and especially the Ming-Qing dynastic transition. In addition, she emphasizes how this catastrophic event is mediated through material forms of placards, manuscripts, and printed books. Ultimately, Jin argues that writings revolving around the Taiping War evince the crumbling of the traditional political, literary, and cultural structures figured in the phrase “collapse of Heaven.”

Author:

Huan Jin, Assistant Professor, Division of Humanities, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. She is a historian of literature and culture with a focus on late imperial China (roughly 1300–1900). Her first book explores literature and culture centered around the Taiping Civil War (1851–1864) to investigate the profound changes in late imperial literary and cultural paradigms. She has several ongoing projects: one investigating sixteenth-century literati novels using digital methods, another focusing on a cultural study of nineteenth-century missionary publications, and a third explores letters in late imperial China.



Discussants:

Emily Mokros, Associate Professor of history at the University of Kentucky

Scott W Gregory, Associate Professor in the Department of East Asian Studies, the University of Arizona

Co-Sponsor: Department of Educational Foundations, College of Education, UHM

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