

YUAN GAO

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EDUCATION

Georgetown University, Ph.D., East and Central Asian History, 2024
Nazarbayev University, M.A. in Eurasian Studies with honors, 2016
Fudan University, B.A. in Russian Language and Literature, 2012

EMPLOYMENT

Yale University, Postdoctoral Associate, Program in Agrarian Studies, 2024-2025

PUBLICATIONS

- “The Environmental History of Central Eurasia.” In John McNeill and Erin Stewart Mauldin (ed.), *A Companion to Global Environmental History*, Wiley-Blackwell, Second edition, 2025.
- “Sharing the Ili River: Irrigation and Geopolitics on the Russo-Chinese Borderlands.” In preparation for the edited volume “Keywords in the History of the Russo-Chinese Borderlands” for Harvard University Press, volume edited by Loretta Kim, Sören Urbansky, Willard Sunderland, Sergey Glebov, and Rachel Lin.
- “*Samovar in Chaikhanah*: Tea Trade, Consumption, and Material Culture in Central Eurasia.” In *Silk Roads Papers*, 1st edition. Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.54678/ZCKH9679>.
- “Captivity and Empire: Central Asia in the Nineteenth-Century Russian Captivity Narratives.” In Hacking, Jane F., Jeffrey S. Hardy, and Matthew P. Romaniello. *Russia in Asia: Imaginations, Interactions, and Realities*. London: Routledge, 2020.

Translations and Book Reviews:

- Book Review: Adeb Khaled, *Central Asia: A New History from the Imperial Conquests to the Present*. Princeton University Press, 2021, in *Asian Review of World Histories*, DOI: [10.1163/22879811-bja10074](https://doi.org/10.1163/22879811-bja10074).
- Book translation: *Istoriia kalmykii s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei* (*History of the Kalmyks from Ancient Times to Our Days*), Project funded by Inner Mongolian Academy of Social Sciences, China.
- Book translation: *Velikii shelkovyi put'* (*The Great Silk Road*) by Edvard Rtveladze (Uzbekistan), Project funded by China's National Publishing Fund, published by Lijiang Publishing House as *Zhang Qian tanxian zhi di* 张骞探险之地, 2017.

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

PhD Summer Dissertation Writing Award, Georgetown University	2023
Chiang Ching-kuo Doctoral Fellowship, Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation	2022-2023
Royden B. Davis Teaching Fellowship, Georgetown University	2022
Silk Roads Youth Research Grant, UNESCO	2021-2022
Cosmos Scholars Grant, Cosmos Club Foundation	2021
Dissertation Research Travel Grant, Georgetown University	2020
OYCF-Chow Fieldwork Fellowship for Field Research in China	2020
Nazarbayev University Summer Research Grant	2015
Chinese Scholarship Council (CSC) Degree Program Scholarship	2012 – 2014

CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

Invited Talks

- “Water, Land, and Crops: Agriculture in China’s Core and Peripheries (17th - 20th centuries),”
Center for Chinese Studies Webinar Series, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, February 27, 2025
- “Tigers and Locusts: Environmental Changes in Late Qing Xinjiang,” Asia in Depth Series,
Georgetown University, September 19, 2023. Featured in [The Hoya](#).
- “China’s Arid West: An Environmental History of Late Qing and Early Republican Xinjiang,”
Environment in Asia series, John King Fairbank Center, Harvard University, March 20, 2023.
- “Xinjiang in Russian archives and its access during COVID” at “Openness of State Archives and
Memory Studies” Conference, Institute for Development of Freedom of Information, Tbilisi,
Georgia, December 2021.

Panel Organized

- “Rivers of Empire, Trees of Nation: Environment and State in China’s Inner Asian Frontiers,”
AAS 2022 Annual Conference, Honolulu, Hawai‘i, March 2022.

Papers Presented

- “The InterAsian Caspian Tiger,” Environmental Humanities Workshop and field trip in Kathmandu,
Yale InterAsia Initiative, Nepal, June 3-9, 2025
- “The Ghost of the Caspian Tiger,” Exploring Voices and Narratives in Environmental History
workshop, MIT, April 24, 2025
- “Russian sources on Ili,” Multilingual Sources on the Ili Valley workshop, GWU, Washington, DC,
March 21, 2025
- “The Changing Wastelands: Agriculture and Governance in Late Qing Xinjiang,” Association for
Asian Studies (AAS) 2025 Annual Conference, Columbus, Ohio, March, 2025.
- “‘Stringing Beads’: Karez Irrigation and Property Rights in Qing China’s Arid Land,” Agrarian

Studies Colloquium, Yale University, January 24, 2025

“Central Asian Decolonization or New Frontiers for Colonization? Environmental Narratives in Turn-of-the-century Xinjiang,” Yale Environmental History Working Group, December 3, 2024

“Can the Locust Speak? Locust Outbreaks, Eradications, and Rituals in Qing Xinjiang,” AAS 2024 Annual Conference, Seattle, March 14-17, 2024

“Sharing the Ili River: Irrigation, Colonization, and Geopolitics on the Russo-Chinese Borderlands” at “Borderlands of Ebb and Flow: Shared Histories and Imperial Encounters between China and Russia, 1600s to the Present,” University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, December 13-15, 2023.

“*Samovar in Chaikhaneh*: Tea Trade, Consumption, and Material Culture in Central Asia,” The 35th Anniversary of the UNESCO Silk Roads Programme, UNESCO, Paris, April 7, 2023.

“The Retreat of the Caspian Tigers: Land Reclamation and Desertification in Late Qing and Early Republican Xinjiang, 1877-1927,” AAS 2023 Annual Conference, Boston, March 17, 2023.

“Sharing the Ili River: Irrigation and Geopolitics on the Russo-Chinese Borderlands” for workshop “Keywords in the History of the Russo-Chinese Borderlands,” Amherst College, Amherst, March 12, 2023.

“Water on Sand: Building Irrigation in Early Republican Xinjiang,” AAS 2022 Annual Conference, Honolulu, Hawai‘i, March 2022.

“Water on Sand: Building Irrigation in Early Republican Xinjiang,” Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS) 2021 annual conference, Ohio State University, October 2021.

“Captivity and Empire: Central Asia in the Nineteenth-century Russian Captivity Narratives,” Association for Slavic, East European, & Eurasian Studies (ASEEES) 2018 annual convention, Boston, December 2018.

“Tea trade and tea consumption in Russian Turkestan, 1865-1917,” CESS annual conference, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, October 2018.

“Central Asia in the Nineteenth-Century Russian Captivity Narratives” at “Asia in the Russian Imagination” Conference, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, March 2018.

“Making Horses Better? Horse Breeding and the Russian Colonization of Central Asia, 1870s-1910s,” Joint ESCAS-CESS Conference, American University, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, June 2017.

“The Prisoners of the Steppe: Three Russian Captivity Narratives in Central Asia,” European Society for Central Asian Studies (ESCAS) 14th Bi-Annual Conference University of Zurich,

Switzerland, October 2015.

LANGUAGES

Chinese (native), Russian (fluent), Chaghatay (reading), Modern Uzbek (reading), Uyghur (reading)