

Body, Space, Spirit

The Sensorium in Chinese History

WORKSHOP

22-23 JUNE 2023

NEEDHAM RESEARCH INSTITUTE

(IN-PERSON ONLY)

With the Support of

The Needham Research Institute, Cambridge
Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies,
University of Cambridge

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Presenters

T. H. Barrett · Flavia Xi Fang · Linda Rui Feng
Imre Galambos · Arthur Harris · Elisabeth Hsu
Xuelel Huang · Christopher Jensen · Yang Lei
Bill M. Mak · Gil Raz · Avital Rom
Sharon Sanderovitch · Elizabeth Smithrosser

Discussants

Roel Sterckx · Adam Yuet Chau · Imre Galambos
T. H. Barrett · Gil Raz



Needham Research Institute
LEVERHULME
TRUST



The workshop is open to all, but space is limited. To attend the workshop, please register by contacting the organisers:

Flavia Fang xf236@cam.ac.uk and Avital Rom ahr33@cam.ac.uk

Thursday 22 June 2023

09:30 – 09:45 **Registration**

09:45 – 10:00 **Welcoming address**

Panel I. The Sensorium in Early Chinese Texts

Chair: **Roel Sterckx**

10:00 – 12:00 **Avital Rom** (University of Cambridge)
 “The Body Knows its Comfort:” The Body as a Sensory Organ in Early Chinese Thought

Sharon Sanderovitch (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
 Myth, Ritual, and the Multivalence of the Royal Sensorium

Arthur Harris (Needham Research Institute)
 Health and the senses in ancient Greece and China

Q&A

12:00 – 13:00 Buffet Lunch at NRI

Panel II. Scents and Tastes in Medieval China

Chair: **T. H. Barrett**

13:00 – 15:00 **Linda Rui Feng** (University of Toronto)
 A Counterfeit Emperor Wearing Dragon Brain: The Social Construction of Scents in Ninth-century China

Bill M. Mak (University of Hong Kong/Needham Research Institute)
 The Bitterness that is Wholesome — The History of Unsavoury Herbs and Foodstuff in Medieval China

Flavia Xi Fang (Needham Research Institute)
 Scenting and Knowing: Making Sense of Olfaction in Premodern China

Q&A

15:00 – 15:30 Tea Break

Panel III. Sense Obscured: Blindness

Chair: **Gil Raz**

15:30 – 17:00 **Christopher Jensen** (Carleton University)
 A Rhetorical, Doctrinal, and Hagiographical Double B(l)ind: Perspectives on Impaired Vision from Medieval Chinese Buddhist Literature

Imre Galambos (University of Cambridge)
 The Motif of Blindness in the Story of Shun the Filial Son

Q&A

Friday 23 June 2023

Panel IV. The Perceptible and the Inscrutable

Chair: **Imre Galambos**

- 10:00 – 12:00
- T. H. Barrett** (SOAS, University of London)
Beyond the Sensory World: One Hand Clapping and the Sounds of Silence
- Gil Raz** (Dartmouth College)
The Way is Dark: Synesthesia in Early and Medieval Daoist Texts, Images, and Practices
- Elisabeth Hsu** (University of Oxford)
Resonance (*ying*) in Chinese Medicine
- Q&A
- 12:00 – 13:00 Buffet Lunch
- 13:00 – 13:30 Optional Tour of the NRI with **John Moffett**

Panel V. The Late Imperial Sensorium

Chair: **Adam Yuet Chau**

- 13:30 – 15:30
- Yang Lei** (Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales)
The Making of a “Mountain Temple”: The Sensorium in the Guangjisi 廣濟寺 in Early 18th-Century Peking
- Elizabeth Smithrosser** (Leiden University)
The Deviant Dragon’s Left Ear: Deafness as a Blueprint for Late-Ming Reclusehood
- Xuelel Huang** (University of Edinburgh)
Aromas of the Red Chamber
- Q&A
- 15:30 – 16:00 Tea Break
- 16:00 – 16:30 Round Table Discussion and Closing Remarks