WEEK 1
Burning (An Introduction)

Welcome to the first week of classes! Throughout the term, we'll be talking and thinking and reading about how a history of late imperial China is a history of how things come apart, and why that matters, and how we make meaning from the ruins and fragments…and, sometimes, how we make ourselves from them. And, sometimes, how we put them back together. And, sometimes, how we take what's left and make something new. To understand this history is to understand how it has been, and how it could be, possible to exist as a social/cultural/political/material being in the world that is always coming apart and being fashioned anew. It is to understand that to exist is to come undone. To be is to be constantly unmade and remade. We'll talk about what that means, for how we understand history and China and ourselves in relation to them, over the course of our semester together.

This first week together is a week of introductions: we must come together, that is, before we come apart. This first weekly guide is intended to get you used to the rhythm of our time together: it is deliberately briefer than most weekly guides will be, but please read it (as all weekly guides) carefully. And welcome to the course! I'm really, genuinely (like, truly, actually) looking forward to getting to know you all and working with you this term.

Warm wishes from the South Side flats,

Carla (Nappi, your professor)

THE READING

Typically, this is where you will find the week's reading assignment, and a guide to how to approach the reading in light of what we'll be discussing in our class sessions. For this first week of classes, all you need to do is read this here weekly guide right here, and also the course syllabus. Easy peasy. Next week, we'll kick things up a notch!

THE LECTURE/DISCUSSIONS

      1.1   INTRODUCTIONS (Tuesday Aug 30)

      1.2   BURNING: ON HOW CINDERELLA GOT TO CHINA (Thursday Sept 01)

THE WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT: SELF INTRODUCTION AND REFLECTION I

This first week, I'm asking you not to write about the reading, but instead about yourself. Please write your first self reflection of the semester (woohoo! exciting!), an introduction that helps me to get to know you and your interests and goals for the class. Please email this directly to me at nappi@pitt.edu **by Friday September 2 at 5 pm**.

This is the first of three self-reflections that you will write over the course of the semester. There is no required length: take whatever space you need to introduce yourself to me, whether that looks like one paragraph, or one page, or more than that. It's genuinely up to you. Include your thoughts about the following: What would you like me to understand about you, as a human, here at the beginning of the term? What are you particularly excited about or interested in, in the context of the class? What about beyond the class? (The latter helps me to know what sorts of course materials,

when I have an option, that I might make available to you so that it articulates with your broader interests.) What are your goals for the course and where do you want to be, with respect to those goals, by the end of the term? What do you anticipate will be particularly challenging for you? Are there particular skills that you'd like to work on, and is there anything you'd especially like help with, whether that's writing or class participation or really anything else?

  A university class is a relationship: we'll be learning together over the course of our semester together, and we'll get to know each other in that process. Importantly, this course (and your self-reflections) will also be an opportunity for you to get to know yourself a bit better. This is the first step on that path.

  *Please remember that your thinkpiece for Week 2 will be due next Wednesday (Sept 7) at noon, posted to the Canvas site. I recommend getting started on that over the weekend, after you have a chance to read the Week 2 Guide, so that it's not a big rush for you next week. Don't worry! It'll be fun!