

## Reimagining, Redefining, and Reutilizing the Chu 楚 — Debates about China's Classical Tradition and Cultural Identity in the Twentieth Century

The project will explore how modern concepts and agendas alter and shape our understanding of ancient cultures. The primary task will be to complete a critical review of 20th century scholars' discussions and debates on the cultural, literary, social, and political significance of Qu Yuan 屈原 and the Chuci 楚辭. My mentee and I will focus on reading and analyzing primary and secondary resources in Chinese, Japanese, English, and French. We will pay special attention to how scholars from different cultural backgrounds develop direct and indirect dialogues, and try to historicize and contextualize their arguments and agendas.



*Yun-ling Wang* 王韻齡  
Ph.D. candidate, East Asian Languages  
and Cultures

Yun-ling Wang made her resolution to study early China when she was a 6th grader. Along the way to achieve her goal, Yun-ling received her B.A. in Chinese Literature from Fujen Catholic University, her first M.A. in Chinese as a Second Language from National Taiwan Normal University, and her second M.A. in Chinese Thought from University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is now a Ph.D. candidate at UC Berkeley studying the construction, utilization, and modification of identity in the case of Chu in early China, trying to figure out how academic research can further our understanding of human experiences in the process of identity formation.

With the SMART program, Yun-ling hopes to complete the major part of one chapter of her dissertation, receive first-hand experience of mentoring in a research project, and get to know better a promising young mentee. She also wants to take this opportunity to reflect on the approaches and methodologies in the field of Chinese studies.



*Njeri Kamau-Devers* 柯心藍  
Senior, Chinese Language

Since she started studying Chinese five years ago, Njeri has had a thirst to learn more characters, read more Chinese literature, and make friends from China. She enjoys reading short fictional pieces from modern Chinese writers such as Yu Dafu 郁達夫 and Zhang Ailing 張愛玲. She is also interested in studying the May Fourth Movement and the Cultural Revolution. She is a recipient of the Anne H. Scott scholarship and is currently translating several vignettes from Bei Dao's 北島 Open City Gate. She traveled to China as a Huang scholar during her freshman and sophomore year and has placed in four Chinese speech competitions in San Francisco and in China.

Njeri is drawn to Wang Yunling's research because it focuses on Qu Yuan, a famous poet who lived during an exciting period of intellectual ferment in Chinese history. She hopes to better understand the Chu culture and how 20th century Chinese scholars analyze it. She also would like to explore questions of identity and ethnic diversity within the state of Chu. Under Wang Yunling's guidance, Njeri hopes to improve her researching skills, better navigate the East Asian Library, and familiarize herself with classical Chinese. Njeri plans to pursue a Master's and Ph.D. in Chinese literature at a university in mainland China and/or Taiwan. She will continue translating modern Chinese literature and eventually become a writer.

UC Berkeley's Student Mentoring And Research Team (SMART) is a paid professional development program that engages doctoral students in creating mentored research opportunities conducted with selected undergraduate student mentees during a ten-week period over the summer. Both participants receive compensation and training throughout their participation. SMART broadens the professional development of doctoral students and fosters research skills and paths to advanced studies for undergraduates.

Expenses associated with each team total \$10,000 000 (\$5K graduate stipend/\$3.5K undergrad stipend/\$1.5K research and conference costs). As a donor-supported program of the Graduate Division, the majority of teams are underwritten through a combination of donor funds paired with matching support courtesy of the Graduate Division.

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