

Xiaochuan Tian (田 小川)

Summa and Awwiller Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, UC Davis

Contact: equitian@ucdavis.edu | <https://magmact.github.io>

RESEARCH INTERESTS

By leveraging advancements in **geodynamic** modeling, global datasets, and interdisciplinary constraints, my research seeks to reveal principal mechanisms and quantify key parameters that control the phenomena vital to civilizations — e.g., *earthquakes, volcanism, topography, and climate*.

EDUCATION

- 2015-2021 *Ph.D. in Geophysics, Columbia University*, Advisor: W. Roger Buck
2013-2015 *M.Sc. in Geophysics, University of Memphis*, Advisor: Eunseo Choi
2009-2013 *B.S. in Geology, Sun Yat-sen University*, Advisor: Gu Cheng
-

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- 2024-Present **Summa and Awwiller Postdoctoral Fellow**, UC Davis. With: Magali Billen & Mike Oskin
2021-2024 **Postdoctoral Research Fellow**, Boston College. With: Mark Behn & Garrett Ito
2015-2019 **Graduate Research & Teaching Fellow**, Columbia University
2013-2015 **Graduate Research Assistant**, University of Memphis
-

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-reviewed journal articles

1. **Tian, X.**, & Buck, W. R. (2025). Contrasting Topography of Continental Large Igneous Provinces: Crucial Role of Crustal Flow and Intrusion Dynamics. *Earth and Planetary Science Letters*, 673, 119726. →[link](#)
2. **Tian, X.**, Behn, M.D., Ito, G, Schierjott, J. C., Kaus, B. J., Popov, A. (2024). Magmatism controls global oceanic transform fault topography. *Nature Communications*, 15, 1914. →[link](#)
3. Schierjott, J. C., Ito, G., Behn, M. D., **Tian, X.**, Morrow, T., Kaus, B. J., & Escartín, J. (2023). How transform fault shear influences where detachment faults form near mid-ocean ridges. *Scientific Reports*, 13(1), 9259. → [link](#)
4. **Tian, X.**, & Buck, W. R. (2022). Intrusions induce global warming before continental flood basalt volcanism. *Nature Geoscience*. 15, 417–422. →[link](#)
5. **Tian, X.**, & Buck, W. R. (2019). Lithospheric Thickness of Volcanic Rifting Margins: Constraints from Seaward Dipping Reflectors. *Journal of Geophysical Research: Solid Earth*, 124(4), 3254-3270. →[link](#)
6. **Tian, X.**, & Choi, E. (2017). Effects of Axially Variable Diking Rates on Faulting at Slow Spreading Mid-Ocean Ridges. *Earth and Planetary Science Letters*, 458, 14-21. →[link](#)

Manuscripts under review or in preparation

1. **Tian, X.**, & Billen, M. I. Obliquity limit of global megathrust earthquakes. submitting to ***Science****.
2. **Tian, X.**, Janin A., Fraters M., Behn M., Gruber B., Chin E., Urann B., Le Roux V. Numerical simulations of clinopyroxene fabric development under laboratory and natural conditions. Submitting to ***JGR****.
3. **Tian, X.**, Behn M., Gruber B., Chin E., Le Roux V. Crustal Delamination Induced Finite Strain and Rock Fabrics: Constraints and Insights from Arclogite Samples and 3D Numerical Models, in prep.
4. **Tian, X.**, Billen, M. I., Osokin, M. Stress-State Inboard of the Mendocino Triple Junction, in prep.
5. **Tian, X.**, Choi, E., Tominaga, M., Janin A., Behn, M.D., Ito, G. Magmatism and cooling control global fracture zone depths, in prep.

* manuscript available upon request

GRANTS & AWARDS (Total Funding as PI: ~\$330,000)

- 2024-2026 **Lori Summa and David Awwiller Postdoctoral Research Fellowship:** \$313,875 (PI)
“*Ups and Downs of Northern California Forearc*”- a multidisciplinary geology/geodynamics project focusing on dynamics of forearc deformation in Northern California (Collaborate with Michael Osokin and Magali Billen). →link
- 2025-2026 **Statewide California Earthquake Center Awards SCEC-25188:** \$25,056 (PI)
“*Numerical Simulations of the Change in Stress-State Inboard of the Mendocino Triple Junction*” (Co-PI: M. Osokin and M. Billen) →link
- 2024 **AGU 2024 Tectonophysics Caregiver Awards:** \$500
- 2017-2020 **National Science Foundation Awards OCE-1654745:** \$319,977 (Contributor)
“*Evaluating mechanisms for the formation, propagation and evolution of volcanic rifts and margins*” (Contributed to proposal writing. PI: W. Roger Buck). →link
- 2017 **National Science Foundation Awards OCE-1658072:** \$179,333 (Contributor)
“*Fully three-dimensional numerical models for along-axis variations in magmatic and tectonic processes at slow-spreading mid-ocean ridges*” (Funded by the project; mentored PhD student Hao Lu. PI: Eunseo Choi). →link
- 2015-2020 **Columbia University Dean’s Fellow:** \$409,515
The highest honor conferred upon entering graduate students in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences.
-

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

Invited Talks

- ◆ **Tian, X.** (2024). Deformation across scales: from plate boundaries to lab experiments. *UC Davis* (Nov 15); *SZ4Grads* (Oct 30); *Boston College* (Sep).
- ◆ **Tian, X.**, Behn M., Ito G., Schierjott J., Kaus B., Popov A. (2023). Magmatism Controls Global Oceanic Transform Fault Topography. *MGG Lecture Series, University of Rhode Island* (Oct 6); *G&G Department Seminar, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution* (Jun 6).

- ◆ **Tian, X.**, & Buck, W. R. (2022). Intrusions induce global warming before continental flood basalt volcanism. *AGU Fall Meeting* (Dec); *University of Memphis* (Sep 30).
- ◆ **Tian, X.**, & Buck, W. R. (2017). Seaward Dipping Reflectors at Rifted Margins: Formation Mechanism and Implications for Lithospheric Strength during Incipient Rifting. *CERI, University of Memphis* (Jul).

Selected Conference Presentations

- ◆ **Tian, X.**, Janin A., Fraters M., Behn M., Gruber B., Chin E., Urann B., Le Roux V. (2024). Numerical simulations of clinopyroxene fabric development under laboratory and natural conditions. *AGU Fall Meeting* (Poster).
 - ◆ **Tian, X.**, Behn M., Ito G., Schierjott J., Kaus B., Popov A. (2023). Magmatism Controls Global Oceanic Transform Fault Topography. *AGU Fall Meeting* (Talk).
 - ◆ **Tian, X.**, & Buck, W. R. (2023). Effects of Large Igneous Province Magmatism on Earth's Structure and Climate. *CIDER research talk, UC Berkeley* (Jul 13).
-

FIELD AND SEAGOING EXPERIENCE

- ◆ **Peru** (2019): 12-day Storke Memorial multi-disciplinary field trip. Tectonics & earthquakes; Mountain building and the Altiplano; El Nino/La Nina; Arc volcanism; Rainbow mountain.
 - ◆ **Atlantic Ocean** (2018): 35-day RV Atlantis cruise. Western North Atlantic Survey. Multi-channel seismic and multi-beam sonar data acquisition, processing, visualization. Principal Investigators: Mitch Lyle and Gregory Mountain. (NSF OCE-1656960)
 - ◆ **Azores** (2017): 11-day field trip focusing on Volcanology.
 - ◆ **Basin and Range** (2016): 9-day field trip on normal faulting at Basin and Range.
 - ◆ **Additional field experience:**
North Kentucky (2014), Memphis (2013) - seismic instrument deployments, geophysical surveys
-

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Columbia University – Teaching Assistant (2016-2019)

Delivered guest lectures, designed lab experiments, held office hours, graded assignments.

- ◆ Earth: Origin, Evolution, Processes and Future (2019)
- ◆ Earth's Environmental Systems: Solid Earth (2018)
- ◆ Geodynamics (2016)

Courses Prepared to Teach:

- ◆ Undergraduate: Structural Geology, Introduction to Earth Sciences, Introduction to Geophysics
- ◆ Graduate: Geodynamics, Plate Boundary Processes, Tectonophysics, Geophysical Fluid Dynamics

SERVICE & LEADERSHIP

- ◆ **Manuscript Reviewer** (2019-present): Nature Communications, Geology, Geophysical Research Letters, Journal of Geophysical Research, Earth and Planetary Science Letters, Tectonophysics, Geochemistry, Geophysics, Geosystems, Seismica.
- ◆ **Proposal Reviewer** (2022-present): National Science Foundation, NSF-NERC.
- ◆ **Executive Committee Member**, SZ4Grads (2025-Present)
- ◆ **AGU Fall Meeting session chair** (2014): T43A - Three-Dimensional Observations and Models of Lithospheric Extension

Outreach

- ◆ Invited intern lecture on “Modeling Interactions of Magma and Tectonics” at Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory (2019)
 - ◆ Volunteer for lava flow demonstrations at the World Science Festival, NYU (2017)
 - ◆ Exhibitions at Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory Open House: Demonstrate analog models of Mantle Plume induced Rifting; Mantle Plume upwelling; Visualizing stress patterns due to faults and flexure with Photoelasticity (2015-2018)
-

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- ◆ **Numerical Modeling:** 2D/3D finite difference/element geodynamic codes (LaMEM, ASPECT, FLAC), Fabric development code (D-Rex), Climate model (LOSCAR)
 - ◆ **Programming:** C++, C, Python, MATLAB, Fortran, Shell scripting
 - ◆ **Geophysical Analysis:** Seismic data processing, GPS/geodetic analysis, global centroid moment tensor analysis, bathymetric data analysis
 - ◆ **Field Methods:** Structural geology mapping, seismometer deployment, various geophysical surveys
-

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- ◆ American Geophysical Union (AGU)
- ◆ Geological Society of America (GSA)