

Asian Studies Program

Volume 5
2014-2015

A Message From The Director

Dear Friends of Asian Studies,

The 2013-14 Academic Year was a busy one for Asian Studies. The upcoming year looks to be just as busy. This newsletter will give you a taste.

Perhaps the most exciting news is that for a second consecutive year Asian Studies will add two new faculty members! The Geography Department recently hired an Asian geographer— Melissa Yang Rock (Ph.D. Penn State) while Theater Arts hired Sun Hee Kil (MFA Cincinnati). Both joined us for Fall 2014. Our new faculty members will offer new opportunities to our Asian Studies students and will assuredly make significant contributions to our program. We are truly fortunate to have them joining us. Read more about them in the interview section of this newsletter.

In other news, Asian Studies faculty responded to student interest in an overview, Asian Studies introductory class, with the new *Introduction to Asia*. This course (first offering in Fall 2015) will be a required class for all Asian Studies students and will serve as a gateway to the major/minor. We anticipate that this General Education course will raise the profile of Asian Studies on campus, attracting additional students to the Program.

We have 23 students studying abroad in 2014-15, a record! While most are off to Japan or China, some are in South Korea and India. Our new relationship with Guangxi Normal University, Guilin (see the 2013-14 newsletter) has begun with great promise. We have 6 students there this year, studying Chinese language, history and culture. You can follow their adventures through Facebook (SUNY New Paltz Asian Studies Program).

Finally, we have planned many programs for 2014-15 that will enrich the experience of the entire college community. We would love to have you join us for these activities or even just for a visit. We would also love to hear updates on your own doings. So, if you can't come in person, perhaps drop us an email or post on our Facebook page. Wishing you all the best,

Jonathan Schwartz, Director, Asian Studies

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Scholarship Recipients

Many SUNY New Paltz students have studied abroad in Asia this past year, or are preparing to embark on their journeys this coming year! Many have received scholarships to help them do so.

Friends of Asian Studies (FASE) Scholarship Recipients:

Chosen by a committee of Asian Studies faculty, awards run from \$1,000 to \$1,800 (if studying abroad). The FASE awards are made possible by the generosity of Asian Studies friends and alumni. This year's recipients are all traveling to Japan.

FASE recipients are: Courtney Kie-secker, Alyssa Mullen, and Jason Serrano

Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship

Josh Greenberg (Japan), Ediliana Estrella (Japan), Arlenys Valdez (Japan)

JASSO Scholarship

Victoria Alfano (Japan), Estrella Ediliana (Japan), Samantha Lee (Japan), Liu Hao Ran (Japan), Alyssa Mullen (Japan), Faith Schepper (Japan), Jason Serrano (Japan)

Hua Yu Scholarship

Ari Kaputkin: AS 2014 grad, received

the prestigious HuaYu Enrichment Scholarship for studying Mandarin at National Taiwan University (Taiwan)

Bridging Japan Scholarship

Ediliana Estrella (Japan)

Keeping in Touch

Join our Facebook group: **Asian Studies Community of New Paltz**
Like our Facebook page: **SUNY New Paltz Asian Studies Program**.
Send us your email address to subscribe to the E-newsletter:
schwartzj@newpaltz.edu

Meet Our New Faculty Members!

Asian Studies is pleased to welcome two new faculty members - Professors Melissa Yang Rock (Geography), and Sun Hee Kil (Theater Arts). The Asian Studies program has now grown to thirteen affiliated members!

Melissa Yang Rock: I was born in Germany on a military base where my father served. My dad also served in Taiwan, where he met my mom. My mom moved (fled) to Taiwan from Shanghai in

1949. Curious about my parent's experiences and how they intersected in a particular geopolitical landscape, I majored in Environmental and International Studies and minored in Geography at the University of Oregon. I traveled to Beijing for language studies in 1995 and again in 1998 when I also did field research on the Three Gorges Dam.

After my undergrad I joined Teach for America (2000-2002), teaching 8th grade Math and Science at a middle school in Oakland, CA. In 2002 I started a Masters degree in International Relations at Syracuse University - focusing on global development policy and global markets, with a regional emphasis on China. Funded by a *Boren National Security Education Program Fellowship*



I studied in Beijing in 2004-2005. During that time I grew interested in studying the impact of the 2008 Olympics on Beijing residents - in particular residents of the hutongs (neighborhoods with courtyard housing and meandering alleyways). My PhD (in Geography and Women's studies) is from Penn State. There I focused on the implications of urban dispossession. I returned to Beijing for research and, as a break from studying, I played on two Beijing Ultimate Frisbee teams, participating in tournaments throughout Asia. At Penn State I taught courses including: Human Geography, Cultural Geography, Geography of International Affairs, and an International Service Learning course where I led students on a 3 week service abroad trip to an orphanage in India. In 2011 I took a post-doc at Dartmouth College and in 2013-14, I was Visiting Assistant Professor at Bucknell University.

In my courses I integrate digital technology enabling my students to produce great podcasts, digital video essays and websites. I look forward to continuing this work in New Paltz!

Sun Hee Kil: I am a native South Korean. I have loved American musicals since I was 5 years old when my mom showed me Rogers & Hammerstein



musicals on VHS. As a result, I studied Theatre at Hanyang University, in Seoul. After graduating, I worked as a musical sound engineer, and had

many opportunities working with Broadway & West End sound designers who came to Seoul. I was so inspired by their work and productions that I decided to study sound design in the US. In preparation for studies in the US, I studied English Language & Literature at Ewha Woman's University. Finally, I completed an MFA at Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music in 2009.

Prior to coming to New Paltz, I taught Sound Design & Engineering at the University of Central Oklahoma. In New Paltz I am based in the Theater Department where I am establishing the Sound Design & Digital Technology program and also plan to teach Asian Theatre classes!

In addition to teaching, I have experience designing sound for musicals including four World-premiers. As a first generation South Korean musical sound engineer, I am always thinking about "What is the Korean Musical?" and have been making new Korean Style Music Plays since 2010.

Study Abroad for Academic Year 2014-15

The Asian Studies Program strongly encourages all students to take advantage of the many study abroad opportunities available to them. Many of these opportunities are administered by the SUNY New Paltz Center for International Programs under Dean Bruce Sillner with assistance from Christian Wilwohl.

This year we are pleased with the large number of students (23) studying abroad. Their studies and their lives will truly be enriched by their time abroad, be it for a summer, a semester or a year. We wish them all safe travels.

China

The first cohort studying at the Chinese Language Institute/ Guangxi Normal University include:

Daniel Baietto, Stephanie Chang, Kelwin Choi, Amy Glazer, Connor Holmes, and Lawrence Senzel

Japan

Victoria Alfano, Alvin Chen, Ediliana Estrella, Goering Carolyn, Peter Hotum, Shawn Kenyon, Samantha Lee, Aaron Lefkowitz, Liu Hao Ran, Alexandra Martin, Alyssa Mullen, Jason Serano, and Arleny Valdez

Korea

Samuel Kim, Nina Pena, and Susan Yu

India

Nina Pena

For more on Study Abroad opportunities, check out: <https://studioabroad.newpaltz.edu>

Faculty Research and Publications

The Asian Studies faculty continue to be among the most productive scholars on campus. A selection of highlights for the 2013-14 academic year appears below:

Elizabeth Brotherton (Art History) Chaired the Art History Department, was on leave in Spring 2014, and reviewed "Looking at Asian Art" for the *Journal of Asian Studies*.

Sunita Bose (Sociology) co-authored "The effect of a male surplus on intimate partner violence in India," in *Economic and Political Weekly*.

Nathen Clerici (LLC) presented his research at two conferences, The New York Conference for Asian Studies and AsiaNetwork.

David Elstein (Philosophy) was

guest editor for a special issue of *Contemporary Chinese Thought* on the political thought of Jiang Qing.

Kristine Harris (History) was visiting scholar at the University of Chicago where she made a number of presentations.

Sara Hsu (Economics) authored *Financial Crises, 1929 to the Present*, and *Lessons in Sustainable Development from China and Taiwan*.

Ron Knapp (Geography) co-published *America's Covered Bridges: Practical Crossings, Nostalgic Icons*.

Lauren Meeker (Anthropology) Produced the documentary - *Singing Sentiment*, and presented at the AsiaNetwork conference.

Jonathan Schwartz (Political Science) directed Asian Studies, co-authored "Effectively Responding to Pandemics: Adapting Responses to Differing Institutional Circumstances in the United

States and China," in *New Security Challenges in Asia*.

Akira Shimada (History) authored "Guntupalle: The Oldest Rock-cut Buddhist Monastery in the East Deccan" in *Living Rock: Buddhist, Hindu and Jain Cave Temples in Western Deccan*, and was awarded a Senior Research Fellowship from the American Institute of Indian Studies.

Hanmo Zhang (LLC) authored "Liu An." *Berkshire Dictionary of Chinese Biography* (Volume 1), and presented at the AsiaNetwork conference.

Please join us in congratulating Professors Meeker and Elstein who were tenured and promoted to the rank of Associate Professor, and Professor Schwartz who was promoted to Full Professor.

For more information about faculty areas of expertise and recent accomplishments, visit the *SUNY New Paltz Experts Database*: www.newpaltz.edu/publicaffairs/experts/

Alumni Update - Lani Nelson (class of 2012)

Ever since childhood, I've harbored a deep fascination with East Asian language, history, and culture. SUNY New Paltz's Asian Studies program enabled me to satisfy these curiosities and manifest them into a wealth of experiences, knowledge, and skills. As a reporter for SinoVision Inc.'s English Channel, I'm constantly drawing on the Mandarin language skills, historical understanding, and cultural sensitivity I acquired studying at SUNY New Paltz and during my 2 semesters studying abroad at Nanjing University. These skills enable me to communicate with my interviewees and convey their stories to a western audience. SinoVision is a U.S.-based Chinese language television network. According to Wikipedia, SinoVision was founded in 1990 as an affiliated member of the Asian Culture and Media Group which also owns the New York edition of The China Press, among the largest and most influential Chinese media outlets in North America.



25th Anniversary Commemoration of the 1989 Tiananmen Square Incident

In April, the Asian Studies Program commemorated the 25th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square Incident with a screening of selections from the PBS documentary *Tank Man*. The screening was followed by a discussion moderated by Professors Schwartz (political science), Elstein (philosophy) and Knapp (geography, emeritus). Over 30 students, including some from China who are currently studying at SUNY New Paltz,

engaged in discussion. The students shared their understanding and interpretations of the Incident and its



ramifications for China's current and future stability and development. Students also posed interesting and challenging questions to each other and to the moderators. The atmosphere was respectful and open, and all left feeling that they had participated in a meaningful and eye opening experience. The PBS documentary is available online for those who might wish to see it: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/tankman/view/>

East-West Living Learning Community



Samantha Cosentino (6th from right), former Resident Mentor and now Resident Assistant at the East-West Living Learning Community, writes about her experiences in the Community.

There are many wonderful experiences

in college that you don't expect to encounter and, for me, the East West Living Learning Community was one of them. I never imagined my university offered this kind of program, and was elated to learn of it during my Japanese language class. As a member of the community, I developed a new circle of friends and gained the opportunity to enrich my language skills. I cannot imagine a more ideal living situation.

During my freshman year I was a reserved and shy student, but the community helped me branch out and meet many different people. Not only did I meet Japanese and Chinese exchange students, I gained access to the larger international community on campus. Many international students bonded over their shared experiences living in a foreign country,

and they found comfort hanging around the East West Living Learning Community and participating in our events. Their presence further enriched the program and my own experiences.

The Community has enabled me to develop some of my closest bonds and fondest college memories, and I intend to stay in the Community for the rest of my college career. I encourage others to enroll in programs like the East West Living Learning Community. There are very few experiences that are comparable to living with, and learning from a group of people who sincerely want to understand and engage in other cultures while building new and meaningful relationships.

A Visit to the Thubten Chöling Monastery



The SUNY New Paltz Asian Studies Program prides itself on giving students the opportunity to experience various aspects of Asian culture, tradition, and history. This past April students had the chance to visit one of the monasteries in the Hudson Valley region. The trip attracted both Asian Studies majors and students from outside the Major.

For the past several years, the Asian Studies program has organized visits to Kagyu Thubten Choling Monastery. This year there were 20 students and several faculty members who participated. Students and faculty were given a tour of the monastery by Lama Chodron. Lama Chodron was a most gracious host, providing students with a basic understanding of Buddhism, while taking them through a few different meditation styles. Participants had the opportunity to practice meditation using a different focus each time. Lama Chodron then gave a tour of the stupa, providing a brief lesson on its structure and interior. The final stop was at the dining hall where we enjoyed tea and snacks before returning home. Overall students and faculty alike had a great time.



Supporting Asian Studies

There are many ways to support Asian Studies at SUNY New Paltz. Share with us your experiences, ideas and suggestions. If your company offers internship opportunities that might be valuable for our students, we would love to hear about these. Contact the Director, Jonathan Schwartz at schwartzj@newpaltz.edu or 845-257-2627.

Many of the programs and opportunities available to our students are made possible through the gifts of our alumni and friends. Thank you for your gifts and for remembering Asian Studies at SUNY New Paltz. You may renew your commitment to Asian Studies at <http://www.newpaltz.edu/asianstudies/support.html>. Thank you for your support.

NY Conference on Asian Studies creates Ron G. Knapp Award

Saying a Fond Farewell to Jingjing Xu



Professor Emeritus Ronald Knapp

The New York Conference on Asian Studies (NYCAS) has created the Ronald G. Knapp Award for Distinguished Service to Asian Studies in New York State, to recognize the work of its long-time executive secretary and emeritus SUNY Distinguished Professor, Ron Knapp. Knapp became the first recipient of the award at the annual NYCAS meeting at Binghamton University on Sept. 27-28.

Knapp served as NYCAS executive secretary from 1999 to 2013 and was active in the organization for decades. As executive secretary, he

worked with colleagues around the state to organize the annual meeting, increase participation and maintain the stability of NYCAS, which is recognized as one of the strongest of the regional associations affiliated with the Association for Asian Studies. He was a core member of the Asian Studies Program at New Paltz, serving as director of the Office of International Education in 1982-83 and becoming a SUNY Distinguished Professor in 1998. He authored numerous books and articles and is known as one of the world's experts on vernacular Chinese architecture.

"The scholarly career of Dr. Ronald G. Knapp is notable for excellence not only in research and teaching, but also in service to fellow Asianists across New York State. For this reason, the Executive Board of NYCAS has established an award in his honor to recognize outstanding contributions in support of Asian Studies in the state," explained a press release from NYCAS announcing the award. (News Pulse, Oct. 7, 2013)

After teaching Mandarin at all levels for four years at New Paltz, Jingjing begins her Ph.D. studies in Chinese linguistics at the University of Arizona. Jingjing arrived in New Paltz with a 2009 MA in Teaching Mandarin as a Foreign Language from NYU. She wishes to tell her former students and colleagues that she loved working here very much and will miss everyone. She encourages her former students to continue their language and cultural studies, enjoying classes with Prof. Zhang and with our incoming language teacher, Cheng Cheng. We will truly miss her and wish her the best in her studies ahead!



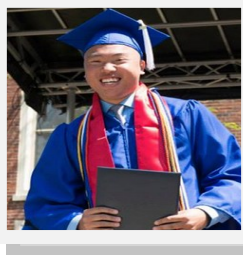
The Class of 2014's Asian Studies Graduates!

Graduating in 2014: Hanako Saeki; Rachel Sanborn; Sarah Gleason; Kathryn Cramer; Kevin Larose; David Defabrizio, and; Anja Allnach.

Congratulations to you all and STAY IN TOUCH!

Focus on three grads:

Ki Soo Kim
As an Asian Studies major, I learned a lot about Asian cultures. I enjoyed taking 2 years of Chinese as the professors made learning the language challenging yet enjoyable! I also studied abroad in Shanghai, where I made many friends



and memories.

Niki Ghostlaw
(Friends of AS scholarship recipient and Outstanding AS gradu-

ate)
My experience in the Asian Studies program has been really eye opening. I not only studied Chinese and Japanese, I also met different people from varied cultures and lived with them in the East West Living Learning Community. Since I was unable to study abroad this was especially meaningful. Overall, not only were the professors supportive in their teaching and advising, but they encouraged me to

Annamaria Alfonso (Friends of AS scholarship recipient and Outstanding Asian Studies graduate) Deciding to major in Asian Studies wasn't easy. My adventurous self was eager to explore a topic I knew little about and was keenly interested in. My practical self, concerned with the need to make a living, questioned the wisdom of learning simply for the sake of learning. Now my adventurous self smiles with pride since this decision fully satisfied my desire to study Chinese language and culture simply for the joy of it, and also opened unanticipated doors of opportunity. Thanks to the support of my Asian Studies professors and essential scholarships, I participated in two challenging and enriching study abroad opportunities in China; extraordinary experiences I will continue to draw upon for years to come. Through these experiences I immersed myself in intensive language and cultural study which broadened my worldview. (continued at the bottom of page 6)

News from 1976: Student Hunger Strike in support of Asian Studies

In March 1976, Asian Studies was caught in major program cutbacks occurring across the SUNY system. These cutbacks were a result of difficult economic times and resulted in faculty firings and closure of the Asian Studies Major. But AS students did not quietly accept this fate. Below is the text of an article from the local press describing the event.

Students Fasting for Asian Course Return

New Paltz (Hudson Valley News, 4-A, March 17, 1976): The sit-in and fasting of a dozen Asian Studies students ended early Monday morning, after they decided that no action would be taken to restore the retrenchment of four of the department's eight faculty members.

The fast and sit-in, which began last Wednesday morning when the students learned of the cuts to the Asian Studies department reflects the style of Gandhi. "We're trying not to interfere with the life of the office," said a spokesperson for the group, "and we're being very quiet."

"We're supporting the academic excellence of the school, the Asian Studies department, and the SUNY system," they said, and explained that the college's Asian Studies program is among the best in the state. The firings, which the group called a "drastic and unfair measure," will "cripple the department and will act as a barrier to its ability to attract more students."

According to the College, the heavy cuts were made to this department because its enrollment figures were not up to par with the number of faculty members it supports. "But its enrollment has been growing," said Ann Carli, one of the students there, who will be graduating from the department in June of this year. She feels that the time is not right to cut the department, which may be showing a more significant increase in enrollments soon. Her feeling was admittedly partially based on SUNY Chancellor Ernest Boyer's recent remarks that these kinds of programs are a strength of the University. His comments followed his trip to China last spring.

The men and women involved in the sit-in said that they feel the firings represent a phasing out of the South Asian and Japanese programs in addition to the elimination of the department's courses in Chinese language.

During the sit-in and fast, the group's spokesperson also said they plan to step down from their demonstration and fast, "when actions taken (by the administration) met their satisfaction." But their protest ended with only a better understanding of why the cuts were made, and on what factors any sort of reversal could be made.

The College's Health Center had been officially notified of the action and had offered to cooperate with the students, but the center was not needed to treat or examine any of the students. Dr. Coffman, who stayed away from his office due to illness during most of the affair, was thought to feel that the students are free to remain in his office as long as they are well behaved and do not cause damage.

***Do you know any of the people who participated? Were you one of them? We would love to hear about your experiences/memories of that time. If you have one, send along a photograph to be included in future Newsletters. Send to schwartzj@newpaltz.edu**

Outstanding Asian Studies Graduate ('14) Annamaria Alfonso (contd. from pg. 5)

In China I was privileged to design and conduct a field study with a professor. This taught me critical academic and professional skills. I also traveled in northeast China to study technical, political, and social developments in agriculture while also briefly teaching English to elementary school children. I built beautiful friendships with people from all over the world. One such friendship resulted in employment I have been engaged in for the past year.

My classes at New Paltz coupled with these experiences contributed significantly to my acceptance to all the graduate institutions to which I applied. My New Paltz Asian Studies education will enable me to seize academic and professional opportunities as they arise. I have gained a sense of confidence and self-awareness— something I will forever treasure. Although the initial decision to major in Asian Studies wasn't easy, in retrospect it was without doubt a life-altering choice that will continue to yield countless favorable results to come.



Annamaria with friends In Hongcun, Anhui Province 2011