

Asian Studies Program Newsletter (2019-20)

Director's Message

Dear Friends of Asian Studies,

The 2019-20 Academic year was a year of commemoration for Asian Studies in many ways. In the fall semester, we organized two important events. The first event was New York Conference on Asian Studies (NYCAS) on Oct. 4-5. The second event was the 50th year anniversary of Asian Studies at SUNY New Paltz, celebrated during Alumni reunion weekend on Oct. 18-19. As you will see in the articles below, both events ended with great success. While we sent off Prof. Lulu Brotherton for her happy retirement, we welcomed two new faculty members, Prof. Yongli Li (Language Literature and Culture) and Prof. Alex Peh (Music).

Our spring semester successfully started with Chinese New Year celebration, and two stimulating panel discussions organized by Prof. Schwartz. Because of COVID-19, however, the college shut down following mid-terms. Asian Studies students studying abroad in China, Korea and Japan had to come back to the US before the completion of their programs. We also had to cancel a number of events, including the East-West Living and Learning Community conference and the year-end celebration. We are hopeful that our program and the college will bounce back from this crisis soon. Thank you for supporting us in such a difficult time for everyone.

Wishing you all the best,

Akira Shimada
Director, Asian Studies

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Student Accomplishments and Alumni News



Jeremy Luna ('20, Asian Studies and International Relations double majors) has been selected for the prestigious and nationally competitive Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Program Graduate Fellowship. This award will provide him \$75,000 to pursue a Master's degree and guaranteed placement in the U.S. Foreign Service.

Congratulations Jeremy!



Derryl N. MacLean ('72 Asian Studies) retired January 2019 after thirty years as a social historian of religion at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, British Columbia. Dr. MacLean is using his retirement to complete two book projects: *Waiting for the End of the*

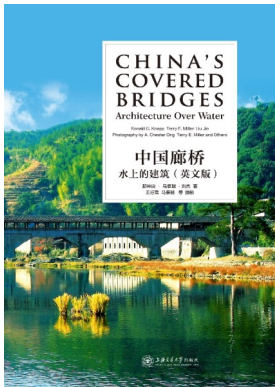
World: The Mahdaviyya Movement in South and Central Asia and *Abu'l-Fazl 'Allami and the Fashioning of Mughal Cosmopolitanism*.

Faculty News

Nathen Clerici (Language, Literature & Culture) co-organized NYCAS 2019 at SUNY New Paltz with Prof. Meeker. He is currently working on a book chapter entitled “The Japanese the Japanese Don’t Know in the Japanese Classroom.”

David Elstein (Philosophy) chaired a conference panel entitled Debates in Chinese Thought: Politics, Leadership, and the Soul at NYCAS 2019 and presented a paper “Confucianism’s Encounter with Democratic Thought”

Ron Knapp (Geography Emeritus) presented a paper with Terry Miller “China’s Covered Bridges from a Worldwide Perspective” at the 7th International Conference on Covered Bridges, Qingyuan, China on Sep. 21. An Interview with Prof. Knapp was published online at [Built Heritage](#). His co-authored book *China’s Covered Bridges: Architecture over Water in Shanghai* was published by Shanghai Jiao Tong Univ.



Press in Sep. 2019 and will be distributed by University of Hawai'i Press in late Spring 2020.

Kristine Harris (History) presented the keynote lecture, “Trespassing, Transforming, Translating,” at the bilingual international conference in Paris, “[Les sons de l'exotisme au cinéma](#) [The sounds of exoticism in cinema],” hosted by IRCAV-Université Sorbonne Nouvelle/ Centre d'études sur la Chine modern et contemporaine/EHESS-CNRS on 13-14 November, 2019.

Sun Hee Kil (Theatre) won Tony Awards (Best Sound Design) for one of her Broadway plays, *Choir Boy* (see below). Prof. Kill also launched Musical *Dreamgirls* International Tour to Shanghai, China & Tokyo, Japan as Associate Sound Designer. With the support of the FASE scholarship, Prof. Kil presented at the [Network Audio Seminar](#) in South Korea on July 18, 2019.

Yongli Li (Language, Literature & Culture) authored “Rising Creativity and the Enduring Main Melody: Trends in China’s 2019 Film Market.” [Asia Dialogue \(Dec. 16, 2019\)](#). Prof. Li also presented conference papers entitled “Healing Shanghai: Reimagining Youth in Early Reform Era Urban Cinema.” in NYCAS and Southeast Conference of the Association for Asian Studies.

Lauren Meeker (Anthropology) published a journal article titled “Being Witnessed Saving Others: Moral Personhood in Women’s Popular Buddhist Practice in Rural Northern Vietnam,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 78-2(2019): 309-328. She also co-created a new documentary film called [Growing Rhythm](#) with her student Alyson Hummer. Prof. Meeker also wrote an introductory article on this film for [Asia Now \(12/10/2019\)](#),

Jonathan Schwartz (Political Science) published three journal articles on COVID-19 in *Journal of Microbiology, Immunology and Infection* (Online, [March 2020](#) and Apr. 2020) and *Clinical Infectious Diseases* ([March, 2020](#)). A National Swedish Radio program called [Konflikt](#) interviewed with Prof. Schwartz on China’s response to COVID-19. Prof. Schwartz authored a book review for *Pacific Affairs* 92-4(2019): 772-774. He also wrote an opinion piece for [the Diplomat](#).

Akira Shimada (History) presented a conference paper “Bodhisattva or Yaksa? A Standing Male Figure from Goli.” at NYCAS 2019. A Translation of his journal article was included in a Japanese book series [Ajia bukkyo bijutsu ronsyu. Minami ajia 1](#) (Collection of Essays on Asian Buddhist Art: South Asia I), Tokyo, 2020: 261-89.

Prof. Kil won TONY Award!



The “Choir Boy” sound designers at the 2019 Tony Awards

From left: Sun Hee Kil, Fitz Patton, Brad Ward.

Sun Hee (Sunny) Kil, assistant professor of Sound Design in the Department of Theatre Arts, and a regular faculty member of Asian Studies, won the 73rd TONY Awards (Best Sound Design) for *Choir Boy*, a Broadway musical that Prof. Kil joined as associate sound designer. On June 9th, Prof. Kil stood on the stage of Radio City Music Hall in NYC and received the award with the sound designers Fitz Patton and associate sound designer Brad Ward. According to the [SUNY NewPaltz News posted on June 14th](#), Prof. Kil said “when the emcees were reading all the nominees, my heart was beating to death already, and I could not breathe down while I was on stage,” and “it was such a big moment in my life.”

Since joining SUNY New Paltz in Fall 2014, Prof. Kil has tirelessly developed her professional career as the sound designer. Besides joining a number of musical productions in Broadway, Korea and Japan, she served as associate sound designer at the Opening and Closing ceremonies of the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics in South Korea. If you want to know more about Prof. Kill and her work, check [her website](#) and [an interview with Prof. Kil by TSDSA](#) (Theatrical Sound Designers and Composers Association)

Retirement of Professor Brotherton



Prof. Harris' speech at the reception.



Prof. Brotherton's speech at the reception.

Professor Elizabeth (Lulu) Brotherton retired in December 2019 after finishing twenty-five of teaching and service at SUNY New Paltz. On December 11th, faculty and staff gathered at the pre-function space of the Multipurpose Room of the SUB to acknowledge Prof. Brotherton's service and accomplishments. Representing Asian Studies, Professor Kristine Harris delivered a speech to thank Prof. Brotherton's long-term contributions to Asian Studies. After speeches by her colleagues, Professor Brotherton recalled her life at New Paltz by introducing a classical Chinese poem.

After finishing her PhD at Princeton University, Professor Brotherton joined the Art History Department in 1994. As a specialist of Chinese paintings, Prof. Brotherton published a number of important articles in prestigious journals such as *Artibus Asiae* and *Archives of Asian Art*. She also curated several exhibitions of Chinese and Japanese paintings at the Samuel Dorskey Museum. Her courses on the arts of China, Japan, and India as well as research seminars on the history of East Asian art constituted a core component of the Asian Studies Program and the Art History Department. As an active member of the Asian Studies Program, Professor Brotherton co-organized NYCAS 2005 hosted at SUNY New Paltz, and made immense contributions to the development of the Asian Studies.



Thanks Lulu and please stay in touch with us!

Checking in with Faculty



Professor Yongli Li joined Department of Languages, Literatures & Cultures and the Asian Studies program in fall 2019 after finishing her Ph.D. in East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Prof Li teaches Chinese languages courses, East-West Living & Learning Community (ASN 100), and Introduction to Asia (ASN 200). She also organizes Chinese Conversation Table every week. Professor Li is also a rising young scholar working on Chinese Cinema (her recent article is [here](#)). Her current research focuses on cinematic representation of Shanghai in contemporary film and media productions. She plans to offer a new course on East Asian Pop Culture and Media in Spring 2021.

In an on-campus interview, Professor Li shared her experiences as a new faculty member at SUNY New Paltz. While there has been new learning about New Paltz and students, Professor Li is excited to be a member of the Asian Studies. She particularly likes the interdisciplinary nature of the Program in which professors from different fields work together to cover a wide range of topics. She believes that the program is particularly beneficial for International Relations and Political Science majors. She also recommends the Program to students of the School of Business, because learning Asian languages is a great asset for them. (Christine YU)

New York Conference for Asian Studies (Oct 4-5, 2019)



Conference co-host Nathen Clerici with student volunteer Mel Rodriguez.



Flyers of Events organized by Asian Studies in 1970s and 80s (Exhibition by Lulu Brotherton at STL library)



Alyson Hummer ('20) giving her presentation at "Cultural Politics of Musical Transformation" panel



Participants in "Tourism in Vietnam" panel

The New York Conference on Asian Studies (NYCAS) is among the oldest of the nine regional conferences of the Association for Asian Studies (AAS), the largest scholarly society focusing on Asia in the world. Since Prof. Ron Knapp (Emeritus, Geography) was deeply involved in the development of NYCAS (he served as Executive Secretary between 1999 and 2013), Asian Studies faculty and students have regularly attended the conference and presented papers. The two most recent years we had hosted NYCAS were 2005 and 2012.

As it seems to happen at SUNY New Paltz every seven years, the Conference came back here on October 4th and 5th, 2019. The 2019 conference theme was "Movement", a topic prompting such questions as what role Asia has played in moving the world to where it is now, and how will it foster new ways of thinking and being in the future. A total of forty panels and roundtables were created to discuss this broad theme. More than two hundred scholars and students presented papers and joined discussions. The conference participants were mainly scholars and students in the New York area, but included a good number of international participants from China, Vietnam, Japan and India. They enjoyed the conference papers, keynote presentations by playwright Jiehae Park and AAS president Professor Prasenajit Duara, and the book exhibit. (cont.)



(cont.) For conference participants and students who took her Arts of Japan, Professor Brotherton curated an intimate exhibition entitled "[The Ukiyo-e Movement: Gems from the Dorsky Museum Collection of Japanese Woodblock Prints](#)" at the seminar room of the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art. To show the history of Asian Studies at SUNY New Paltz to NYCAS participants, Professor Brotherton also arranged a small exhibition at the Soujourner Truth Library too.

The finale of the conference was a special concert on Saturday evening entitled "With Gongs, Drums and Pianos: Traditional Southeast Asian Music" at Studley Theatre. This concert, led by percussion professor Kyaw Kyaw Niang (Music), piano professor Alex Peh (Music), and percussionist Susie Ibarra, was the first Burmese *hsaing* ensemble performed in the United States. In addition to the three master artists, New Paltz students who took Prof. Kyaw Kyaw Niang's "Southeast Asian Gong Ensemble" course (MUS 493) joined the performance. Professor Lauren Meeker and her student Alisson Hummer recorded this historic concert and the process of its preparation and produced the documentary "[Growing Rhythm](#)"



In short, the conference was a great success. Special thanks should go to Prof. Meeker and Prof. Clerici, the co-hosts of NYCAS 2019, as they worked for the success of the conference for nearly two years.

The 50th Anniversary of the Asian Studies Program (Oct. 18-19, 2019)



Prof. Knapp introducing the faculty member of Asian Studies Department

The year 2019 marks the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Asian Studies Department (now Program) at SUNY New Paltz. We celebrated this anniversary year by organizing two days of events in the alumni weekend.

The event started on Friday afternoon with a special lecture by Ron Knapp (Professor Emeritus, Geography and Asian Studies). Professor Knapp, who came to SUNY New Paltz in 1968, delivered a comprehensive overview of the history of Asian Studies from its beginning in the 1960s to now. Alumni and current faculty members and students enjoyed learning the dramatic history of our Program, including the robust nature of the department in the early 1970s with its 22 faculty members, the origins of the East-West Living and Learning Community (East-West Union), the highly-contested retrenchment of the faculty in late 70s and the abolishment of the department in 1979 while establishing the exchange program with Peking University in the same year, and the revival of the Asian Studies as an interdisciplinary program in 2005. Thank you Professor Knapp for delivering such an informative and illuminating lecture for us, and for supporting Asian Studies as a great teacher, scholar, and mentor for 50+ years!



Prof. Knapp and the poster presentation of John Stengel ('76)

The next day on Saturday afternoon, after the lion dance performance by Chinese students, we organized a panel discussion entitled "The Past and Future of Asian Studies at SUNY New Paltz". Eight panelists representing students, alumni, former faculty members, and the International Program shared their memories of Asian Studies and their experiences of study abroad in Japan and China. Following the panel discussion, a reception was held with generous support from Peter Hottum ('15). Hottum, the sales manager of Kuramoto US and a scholar of sake-making in Japan, gave us a brief lecture on the different types of *sake* he had brought, and all enjoyed the tasting. On both days, there were poster presentations by Asian Studies students and alumni going back to 1969 as well.



Children of Late Prof. Jane Lee (center) with Asian Studies faculty. Prof. Lee was the point person of establishing the exchange program with the Peking University in 1979.

Professor Knapp's lecture and the pictures of the events and posters are all available at Asian Studies [Hawksite](#). Please visit the site and enjoy the event online!



Beth Vargas (International Program)



Jeremy Luna '20



Veronica Ruoff (O'Keefe) '09



Michael (Mike) Boccio '83



Jeannie Irvine '78



David Riggle '73

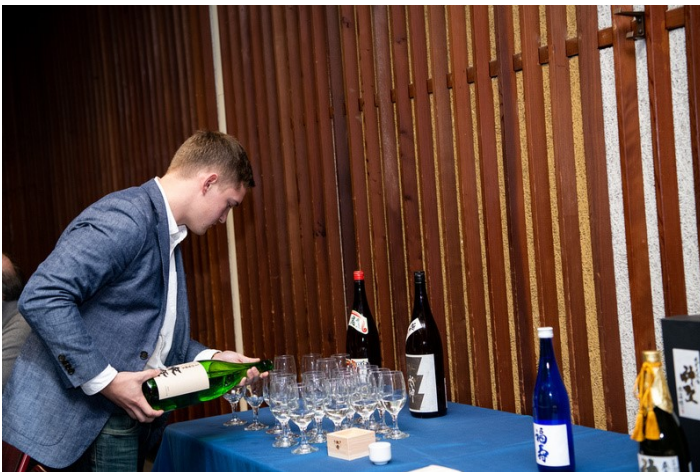


Richard (Rick) Hessney '72



Elliott Feldman
(Faculty member 1968-1976)

Panel Presentations on Saturday
(2-4 PM at LC 104)



Reception and Sake Tasting hosted by Peter Huttum ('15) (left)

Fall and Spring Festivals



Calligraphy table, Mid-Autumn festival



Aya Kikuta (front left) and student group who performed Soran Bushi, Mid-Autumn Festival



Lion dance performance from EWLLC students (Brandon, Masaki, Eric and Kai), Chinese New Year



Chinese Red Lantern Making, Chinese New Year

With generous support from the Center for International Program and Sojourner Truth Library, Asian Studies and East-West Living and Learning Community (EWLLC) co-organized the Mid-Autumn festival on October 23 (Wed), 2019 and Chinese New Year Celebration on Feb. 19, 2020 in the Library Lobby. In the mid-Autumn Festival, participants enjoyed Prof. Li's presentation about the mid-Autumn celebration in China, as well as a calligraphy table, a goldfish scooping game, Japanese curry rice and rice balls cooked by EWLLC students and Professor Shimada and, of course, mooncakes (thanks Professors Harris and Brotherton for bringing the cakes from NYC!). A highlight of the festival was the Soran-bushi (a traditional Japanese fisherman dance) performance by a group of students led by Aya Kikuta. They practiced the dance for a few weeks after the class and they nailed it!

Because of the water emergency that hit New Paltz in February, the Chinese New Year festival was held approximately a month after Chinese New Year (January 25) on February 19th. The festival consisted of students' presentations on the New Year celebration in East Asia, a calligraphy table, Red Lantern making, Lion Dance and song performance from EWLLC students, a Tai Chi demonstration by Martha Cheo and plenty of Chinese and Japanese foods. My favorite part of the festival was the Lion Dance performance by EWLLC students. Despite the limited time for practice (the dancers were Japanese and US students who never did the lion dance before!), they did a superb performance. Both events were very well attended and successfully promoted Asian Studies and Asian culture to the campus community. They were also great opportunities for Asian Studies students and faculty to come together and celebrate these events! (Christine YU)

Panel Discussions organized by Prof. Schwartz



In the spring semester of 2020, Professor Jonathan Schwartz (Political Science) organized two panel discussions on ongoing issues of China.

The first panel discussion held on January 30th at LC 108 (5-7 pm) was entitled “The Wuhan 2019 Coronavirus: Implications for China and the United States.” The panel began with Prof. Schwartz’s concise overview of the COVID-19 problem in China and the advantages and disadvantages of the Communist government’s attempts to control the virus. The two guest speakers, Dr. Rachel Schwartz and Dr. Gregory Evans, discussed how it would affect the United States and how we should cope with this new pandemic.

The second panel discussion entitled “China: Exploring the Uighur Muslim Situation in Xinjian,” was held on March 11th in JFT 1010 (5-6:30 pm). The panel was organized by a group of students who took Prof. Schwartz’s class. Five presentations by students described the treatment of the Uighur minority by the Chinese government in Xinjiang Autonomous Region of northwestern China and its causing problems.

Because of the timely nature of the topics and the careful planning by Prof. Schwarz, the both panels were very well attended. Vibrant Q&A sessions after the presentations clearly showed students’ concerns on these issues. Thank you Prof. Schwartz for organizing such stimulating panels!



Prof. Schwartz and the student organizers of the Uighur panel discussion

Study Abroad for Academic Year 2019-20



Christine Yu (right) with Natalie Yee, SUNY New Paltz student (MBA '20) at Happy Valley on Hong Kong Island Summer 2019

Between Summer 2019 and Spring 2020, a total of twenty-one students studied abroad in Asia. Nine of them are Asian Studies students. Although some of the students had to cancel their trips or come back to the US in the middle of the program due to COVID-19, their studies and their lives will truly be enriched by their time abroad, be it for a summer, a semester or a year.

China

- The Chinese University of Hong Kong: Christine Yu (Summer 2019)

Japan

- Meiji University: Ana Beato (Academic Year), Robert Renert (Academic Year)
- Nagasaki University of Foreign Studies: Kamil Hankour (Fall 2019)
- University of Tsukuba: Veronica Peck (Spring 2020)

Korea

- Ewha Woman's University: Emily Gan (Spring 2020), Jamie Schiller (Spring 2020), Heather Trimboli (Spring 2020)
- Dangkook University: Katherine Mattison (Summer 2019)

Scholarship Recipients 2019-20

For many New Paltz students, one of the biggest challenges in pursuing study abroad in Asia is to manage the airfare and the cost of living in the countries. We thank generous donors who support our scholarship programs that provide immense help to New Paltz students embarking on study abroad.

Friends of Asian Studies Endowment Scholarship

2019

Katherine Mattison (Student) and Sun Hee Kil (Faculty)

2020

Amber Davidson and Gabriel Karp (Students)

Nathen Clerici, Yongli Li and Lauren Meeker (Faculty)

EOP Travel Grant

Jamie Schiller (AS minor)

Tamah and Warren Weigant Travel Grant

Robert Renert (AS major)

2019–20 Graduates of Asian Studies

BA Major in Asian Studies (* Program Honors)

Jeremy Luna*

Katherine Mattison

Lauren Levrini

Skylar Mungenast

Mairead O'Hanlon

Alyssandra O'Connell

Alexander Seah

Christine Yu*

BA Minor Asian Studies

Amy Zheng (Graphic Design major)

Bridgette Cammisa (Graphic Design major)

Tyler Chan (English major)

Emily Kimoto (Theatre Arts major)

Jessica Tobey (Sociology major)

Stefanie Workman (Theatre Arts major)

Lynn Nguyen (Sociology major)

Tanasia LaBrew (Graphic Design major)



Christine Yu



Jeremy Luna

Many
Congratulations!

Asian Studies Program Honors 2019-20