

Department of Asian Studies

Fall 2015

Letter from the Chair...

2014-15 was a year of transition for Asian Studies. I took over as chair of the department and Robin Visser accepted the position of associate chair. Three of our most experienced language instructors, Yuki Aratake in Japanese, Yi Zhou in Chinese, and Doria El Kerdany in Arabic, assumed coordination of those language programs and leadership in language teaching in the department more generally. The University as a whole underwent a major technology shift that has fundamentally changed recordkeeping and administrative functions for everyone. These changes have been challenging, but also led to interesting new initiatives.

Reflecting on my first year as Chair, I am awed by the energy and creativity of our faculty, staff, and students. In 2014-15, the Department had 146 majors and 207 minors and hundreds of additional students enrolled in one or more of our language classes. Continuing their tradition of high achievement, in 2014-15 ten of our students were inducted into Phi Beta Kappa, eight graduated as Buckley Service Scholars, and four were awarded Phillips Ambassador fellowships. Japanese major Katelyn Mitchell graduated with honors this spring and Chinese major James Williams won first place in the advanced category of the National Chinese Bridge Speech Contest. You can read more about James and Katelyn on page 5. Asian Studies faculty have been equally active. Jan Bardsley published a new book, *Women and Democracy in Cold War Japan*, and Li-ling Hsiao co-authored *Xue Tao: Poet, Papermaker, and Courtesan in China in 800 A.D.* with Marinos Vlassas. Robin Visser and Gang Yue launched a new publication, *Journal of East Asian Humanities*. These achievements are highlighted below. In addition, faculty published 17 scholarly articles and book chapters, and 14 popular articles, translations and book reviews. They organized dozens of extracurricular events for their students and the broader campus community. Afroz Taj, the University's first recipient of the Carolina Performing Arts Curatorial Fellowship, curated a fascinating series of music and theater:

"Streams of Spirit: Water Music from South Asia." Faculty also organized numerous workshops and conferences. These gatherings, described in more detail on page 2, are particularly important to the ongoing work of the department since they create opportunities for refining teaching skills, engaging with the broader community, and communicating the latest research findings. All of this research and extracurricular work contributed to the quality of instruction in the 159 courses taught by our faculty in 2014-15. None of these activities would have been possible without the contributions of our staff. Students know well how tirelessly department manager Lori Harris and her assistant Ash Barnes strive to address their enrollment and curricular needs. They also worked hard to weather the significant technology challenges faced by the university. They were assisted by our newest staff member, accounting technician Angelika Straus, who joined the department in October.

Angelika was not the only new face in the hallways of New West. Fadi Bardawil, Bud Kauffman, and Khalid Shahu (Arabic Program) and Dongsoo Bang and Jackie Relyea (Korean Program) joined the department in fall. These faculty, profiled in the 2014 newsletter, have enriched the department immeasurably. This fall we look forward to welcoming Luoyi Cai (profiled on page 3) in the Chinese language program and Didem Havlioglu who will be teaching Turkish at both Carolina and Duke University.

My excitement in welcoming these new additions to our department is tempered by the departure of two faculty members. Ellie Perelman has accepted a position as assistant professor of history at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University in Minnesota. Reiko Nitta will be moving to the University of Oklahoma where she will join a growing Japanese program. I thank both Ellie and Reiko for their excellent teaching and service in our Japanese program and wish them all success in their new positions.

2015-16 will be another year of transition. I will be on research leave completing my book on Palestinian Cinema and Robin Visser has kindly agreed to serve as acting chair during my absence. Transitions have never impeded our work, however, and the department has many new projects and activities planned for the coming year. We look forward to welcoming dozens of students returning from study abroad programs in Asia and the Middle East, including a program in India led by our own Afroz Taj and John Caldwell, and one in Japan led by Yuki Aratake, and to welcoming a strong cohort of honors thesis students. Bud Kauffman will be supervising a small cohort of undergraduate teaching assistants in first-year Arabic, piloting an initiative designed to improve instruction and provide experiential learning to advanced students. Pamela Lothspeich will be incorporating a theatrical performance into her course ASIA 382, *The Story of Rama*. Both Zeina Halabi and Fadi Bardawil will be offering new first-year seminars in the Arabic program this year; Zeina's will be about music and Fadi's will focus on anthropology in the Arab World. Yaron Shemer will be curating the first of what we hope will become an annual Asian Studies film series, generously funded by the Institute for the Arts and Humanities Schwab "Chair's Say Yes" Fund. I look forward to learning about how these and other initiatives unfold when I return to campus in July 2016.



Nadia Yaquub



A Year of Workshops and Conferences

2014-15 was an unusually active year for conferences and teaching workshops. Such activities are complex and time-consuming to organize, but also bring tremendous benefits. They provide opportunities for faculty to develop their professional skills and to learn about emerging research in their fields. They are also venues for engagement with other units across campus and beyond. And they create greater cohesion within the department by deepening knowledge about each other's work and areas of expertise. All of these factors contribute to the quality of research and instruction.

Fall began with a bang with a four-day Oral Proficiency Interview certification workshop in August led by Dr. Cynthia Martin, an official trainer from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Organized by Hebrew lecturer Hanna Sprintzik and funded by generous contributions from the UNC Institute for Arts and Humanities Schwab Chair's Yes Fund, the Carolina Center for the Study of the Middle East and Muslim Civilizations, the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies, the Carolina Asia Center, the Center for Global Initiatives, and the UNC Africa Studies Center, the workshop provided full training to ten faculty members from six of our language programs. Full certification requires that each faculty member spend additional hours in training and practice testing over the course of the year following the workshop. Completing the certification process will bring a number of advantages. As certified testers, faculty can incorporate oral proficiency testing into our language programs and contribute to the profession by offering testing to others. The training itself will help to maintain high standards of instruction within the Department and UNC Chapel Hill's reputation as a center for excellence in Asian language instruction. Providing training to faculty in our smaller programs will be particularly beneficial; once they complete the certification process, Hanna Sprintzik will be the third certified tester in Hebrew in the United States, and John Caldwell will be the seventeenth tester in Hindi-Urdu.

Also this past fall, Assistant Professor Uffe Bergeton and retired faculty member Eric Henry hosted the 18th annual Southeast Early China Roundtable (SEECR) at Chapel Hill. The conference included seventeen scholarly presentations on early China. E. Bruce Brooks of the Warring States Project delivered the keynote address titled "China and the Second Christian Generation." Dr. Bruce is the editor of the journal *Warring States Papers*, and with his wife Taeko Brooks is the author of *The Original Analects* (1998) and *The Emergence of China* (2015). The conference brought together scholars working in a rich range of disciplines, from linguistics and philosophy to history, politics, cultural studies, literature, art history, and archaeology. Founded in 1997, the SEECR is a group of scholars from the south Atlantic region who specialize or maintain an interest in the study of China, from the earliest period through the Tang dynasty. The purpose of the group is twofold — first, to provide a forum for specialist discussion of all aspects of early China studies through yearly meetings; and second, to promote the study of early China in the Southeast by sponsoring public non-specialist lectures.

Anyone who has studied a language and been intimidated by the oral skills of some classmates, or who has struggled to internalize the differences between the language spoken by parents and that

being taught in the college classroom, will know how crucial it is to carefully consider the different needs of heritage students (those who have informally learned to speak the language of their parents but have no knowledge of the writing system or grammar) and those who come to the language from other cultural or linguistic backgrounds. The various language programs of the Department have tackled this issue in a variety of ways. In fall, faculty came together in meetings and workshops to begin work on sharing information and developing best practices. The work began with a program organized by Chinese faculty member Yi Zhou: a talk on "Designing a dual-track curriculum in a foreign language program" by Ms. Kun Shan Lee, Director of the Chinese program and professor of the practice at Duke University. The workshop focused on the effects of teaching true heritage and non-heritage language learners in the same classroom, the curricular needs of each population, and options for addressing challenges. Many faculty members have been inspired to think about both short-term and long-term changes they can make to improve the language learning experience for all students.

The Department of Asian Studies has a longstanding commitment to engagement with the wider community. This has included invitations to community members for guest appearances in our classes and extracurricular activities, fieldtrips to local cultural sites and events, and service learning courses that put student volunteers in local organizations. This year, Chinese faculty member Yi Zhou, working with colleagues in the Chinese program, began a new initiative to improve communication between Carolina's Chinese program and local high school and middle school teachers of Chinese. This February, in the first of what we hope will be an ongoing series of workshops, she organized a conversation about students moving from the high school to the college-level Chinese classroom as a first step towards easing that transition. Yuki Aratake was also instrumental in the success of the workshop by sharing the Japanese program's extensive experience with developing Japanese at the K-12 level in local schools. Twenty NC teachers participated in the workshop, and evaluations were uniformly positive. The Chinese program is planning future workshops centering on teaching methods, curriculum design, and classroom dynamics.

In spring the faculty of the Japanese program worked closely with the Carolina Asia Center to organize the 29th Annual Conference of the South Eastern Association of Teachers of Japanese (SEATJ). The conference, which was funded by the Japan Foundation and the Carolina Asia Center, included more than twenty presentations on a wide range of topics including using animation in the language classroom, systems for teaching writing, service learning, speech and essay contests, new technologies, and methods for learning vocabulary, among others. While most attendees were from the Southeast, the conference brought together presenters from as far away as New Mexico, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Indiana. The keynote address was given by Sufumi So of George Mason University and Mieko Kawai of the University of Virginia and was titled "Curricular Transparency and Teacher Empowerment Manifested Through the J-GAP (Japanese Language Education Global Articulation Project) Activities."

Jan Bardsley's New Book and Promotion

This fall former department chair Jan Bardsley published a new book, *Women and Democracy in Cold War Japan* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2014). The book offers a fresh perspective on gender politics by focusing on the Japanese housewife of the 1950s as a controversial representation of democracy, leisure, and domesticity. Examining the shifting personae of the housewife, especially in the appealing texts of women's magazines, reveals the diverse possibilities of postwar democracy as they were embedded in media directed toward Japanese women. Each chapter explores the contours of a single controversy, including debate over the royal wedding in 1959, the victory of Japan's first Miss Universe, and the unruly desires of postwar women. Jan also examines the ways in which the Japanese housewife is measured against equally stereotyped notions of the modern housewife in the United States, asking how both function as narratives of Japan-U.S. relations and gender/class containment during the early Cold War.

In part because of this important and innovative scholarship, Jan has been promoted to full professor effective July 1, 2015. Jan has been on a well-deserved research leave during 2014-15, writing a book about gender, race, and citizenship in contemporary Japan as displayed in beauty pageants of all kinds from the campus contest to international competitions. When she returns in fall 2015, Jan looks forward to teaching the honors first-year seminar "Chasing Madame Butterfly" and taking her students to see the N.C. Opera company's performance of Puccini's famous opera.



The Department Expands: Meet Luoyi Cai!



I got both my bachelor's degree in teaching Chinese as a foreign language and master's in teaching Chinese to speakers of other languages at East China Normal University. I worked at UVA as a visiting scholar from May 2013 to May 2014, then worked as a Chinese instructor at the summer language program at Middlebury College in summer 2014. Now I'm very honored to get the opportunity to work for UNC Chapel Hill!

My research recently is focusing on task-based and task-support language teaching and topic-oriented language teaching approaches. My master degree's research paper focused on the Chinese moral adverbs' teaching for intermediate to advanced level students.

In my spare time, I'm a volunteer working for some local grassroots NGOs for women and LGBT rights in Shanghai. Personally I am a feminist and amateur drama actor. I used to co-direct and act in China's *Vagina Monologues* with some of my feminist friends in Shanghai. I also assist fieldwork research for a joint cultural study project hosted by University of Amsterdam and Heidelberg University focusing on the female migrant women working in Shanghai in the past year.

I'm very excited about working and living in Chapel Hill. And the most exciting thing surely is working with brilliant people at UNC! I'm so looking forward to contributing to the department and learning from this excellent team!

Li-Ling Hsiao Co-Authors Book on Tang Dynasty Poet, Papermaker, and Courtesan

In the co-authored book *Xue Tao: Poet, Papermaker, and Courtesan in China in 800 A.D.* (Aiora Books, 2014), Dr. Marinos Vlessas provides a biography of the renowned courtesan, papermaker, and poet of the Tang dynasty Xue Tao (768–831), and Dr. Li-ling Hsiao studies the poet's celebrated stationery design Xue Tao Jian (薛濤箋 Xue Tao Stationery) that has delivered love between brothers, sisters, friends, and romantic couples for more than a thousand years. This is the only study of Xue Tao's renowned stationery in English. Xue Tao is one of the most distinguished poets in the Tang dynasty, and she befriended some of the most famous poets of the era. Xue Tao invented her famous stationery to exchange poetry with her friends among the literati. Xue Tao Stationery was a marvel of technical skill that earned the praise of generations of literati. The stationery was intended as a mere medium, but it became a locus of cultural meaning in its own right and the focus of a rich metaphorical tradition. This study examines the origin and cultural meaning of the greatest and most famous stationery in the history of China.



Gang Yue and Robin Visser Co-Edit New Journal of East Asian Humanities



Drs. Gang Yue and Robin Visser.

Professors Gang Yue and Robin Visser are the co-editors of a new publication, the *Journal of East Asian Humanities* (Dongya Renwen 東亞人文). The production manager for the journal is Han Han, a former visiting scholar in the UNC Department of Asian Studies and current postdoctoral fellow of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and member of the China Writers' Association. The journal will be published annually in Taiwan and will primarily publish in Chinese in order to fill a demand for reputable, non-censored venues for humanities scholarship in Chinese. The central aim of the journal is provide a platform for emerging younger scholars whose cutting-edge scholarship in East Asian humanities is more difficult to publish in other venues. The inaugural 2014 issue includes a rich mix of articles on modern literature, philosophy, religion, and the arts in China, Korea, Japan, and Vietnam, written by scholars working in North America, P.R. China, and Taiwan. In addition to thirteen scholarly articles, the 345-page issue includes book reviews, opinion pieces, an interview with a Chinese expert on African literature, and findings from contemporary social science research.

Asian Studies Students Achieve Great Things

Asian Studies students are extremely active and high-performing. Among the numerous gifted students, whose numbers include Phillips Ambassadors, scholarship recipients, and extracurricular activity leaders, two exceptional majors have proven themselves to be exemplars of the best that UNC can offer. **James Williams**, a junior double major in Chinese and Economics, with a minor in Mathematical Decision Sciences, won 1st place in the eastern U.S. “Chinese Bridge” Chinese advanced speech contest for college students sponsored by the Chinese government in April. An honors student, Morehead-Cain Scholar, and former Phillips Ambassador, James plans to spend this summer interning at Goldman Sachs, continuing work that he has conducted on Chinese business. His Chinese language professor, Ms. Yi Zhou, commends James for his ability and motivation, observing that he is one of the most talented critical thinkers she’s ever taught.



Katelyn Mitchell with Dr. Elisheva Perelman

Katelyn Mitchell, a senior double major in Japanese and Dramatic Art, with a German minor, is graduating with honors in Asian Studies based on her senior thesis “All the Evil of Good: Portrayals of Police and Crime in Japanese Media.” An outstanding work of original research, advised by Dr. Inger Brodey and Dr. Elisheva Perelman, Katelyn’s thesis marries her majors by analyzing policing tropes in Japanese new media, specifically *anime* and *manga*, to discover how law enforcement has been viewed and represented in popular culture over the centuries. Katelyn plans to continue this work in graduate studies following her postgraduate work in Japan as an Assistant Language Teacher on the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program, a Japanese government-sponsored initiative to promote cultural exchange and English language acquisition. Katelyn’s Japanese culture professor, Dr. Elisheva Perelman, notes that Katelyn’s dedication, tenacity, and intelligence will serve her as well in her future endeavors as they clearly have in her past.

Did you know...

...that our department is starting a listserv for Asian Studies alumni? If you are an alumna/alumnus and wish to receive occasional news and information regarding opportunities that may interest you, please contact Ash Barnes at elphaba@email.unc.edu and request to be added to our listserv!

You can also keep up with Asian Studies on social media! Check out our Facebook page, the **UNC Asian Studies Alumni Network**, at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/uncdas/>.

Asian Studies Events on Campus



Students in Asian Studies engage in a variety of exciting cultural events: Japanese calligraphy; a dumpling-making extravaganza during China Night, featuring Dr. Gang Yue; and exploring Egyptian village heritage and dress, courtesy of Arabic lecturer Doria El Kerdany.



The fun's not over yet! Activities abound throughout the semester: a Chinese dance workshop; a study abroad presentation; and a Persian New Year celebration.



Department of Asian Studies

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 - Your recent accomplishments, awards, career changes, or any other news that you would like to share (use back if necessary, or send separate sheet):
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