

# Asia Notes

2020-2021

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Cover image: Kaoru Ohta, Associate Teaching Professor of Japanese, gives a lecture via Zoom video conferencing software in an introductory Japanese class.



## THE NEW NORMAL? REMOTE TEACHING IN ASIAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

By Elizabeth Self

Following the spread of COVID-19 and the resulting global health crisis, the Department of Asian Languages and Literature moved all classes to a remote format at the beginning of March. On March 9, the University of Washington officially declared that all classes and exams would no longer be held in person. With this change, our faculty, teaching assistants, and students alike had to suddenly step up and meet an unprecedented challenge—both pedagogically and logistically. While many believed at the time that this move to remote teaching would be temporary, it continued through the spring and summer quarters. As a result, we have seen our students and teachers forced to adjust to the day-to-day challenges of these remote quarters—not just temporarily, but perhaps much longer than anyone could have predicted.

Our faculty have all faced these challenges bravely, but language teaching in particular poses unique challenges when conducted online. Language learning generally emphasizes student-to-student interaction and conversation practice, as well as interactive learning exercises, which can be more difficult to implement online. However, faculty in the Department of Asian Languages and Literature have done an outstanding job rising to these challenges.

For this article, I interviewed three teaching professors who teach very different classes: Kaoru Ohta, Associate Teaching Professor, who teaches first- and fourth-year Japanese; Pauli Sandjaja, Teaching Professor, who teaches all levels of Indonesian, and Liping Yu, Teaching Professor, who teaches first-year, second-year heritage, and third-year Chinese.

### What changes have instructors implemented as response to teaching remotely?

For the most part, instructors told me that changes had to be made to their class plans when moved remotely. Professor Yu noted that the pace of language classes in some cases slowed when moved online, so she wasn't able to get through as much material in one class session. The types of material

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# Asia Notes

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Alumni and Friends,  
The other day, I was talking with a friend of the department about my taking up the role of chair and stepping into the very large shoes of my predecessor, Paul Atkins. “So what exactly does the chair do?” he asked. The question, so fundamental, nevertheless gave me pause. The chairship is an administrative position, so one might think of the chair as a kind of boss or manager. But while it’s true that the position carries with it some degree of authority, the analogy fails; the chair does not, for example, dictate to faculty what to research or how to teach. One could instead answer the question by enumerating a list of administrative duties that the chair must undertake each year, such as holding faculty meetings, shepherding hires and promotions, approving teaching assignments, authorizing expenditures, writing reports to the deans. But this dry characterization doesn’t seem to capture what the role is really about.

So what is it, I thought, that I have agreed to do by taking on this role? After a moment’s reflection, I answered that the essence of the chair’s role is to facilitate the educational and research mission of our department. And that the best way to do this is by providing support and resources for our highly talented faculty, staff, and students within the department and by building connections to communities and networks outside of the department. In this way we can best realize our vision of serving our local and global community by teaching and researching Asian languages and literatures in a broad humanistic context. (You can read our full Mission and Vision statements in the “About” section of our department website.)

As I sit at home (instead of in my office) in the midst of a devastating pandemic and financial crisis, our departmental mission has never seemed more challenging or more important. In our thoroughly inter-connected world, a humanistic understanding of the global cultures of the

past and the present is as essential to our survival and prosperity as are the tools of the natural and social sciences. Plagues have been a part of human existence for all of recorded history. As Marta E. Hanson translates in her book *Speaking of Epidemics in Chinese Medicine*, Cao Zhi (192–232 CE, son of the famed Chinese warlord and poet Cao Cao) documented the intense suffering of a pandemic that claimed the lives of four of the seven Chinese literati known to history as the Seven Masters of Jian’an: “In 217 CE, pestilential *qi* circulated. Every household suffered deaths; in every house [people] wailed and wept in grief. In some cases, [they] closed their doors and died; in other cases, an entire lineage perished and mourned.” Learning about the past, and the different cultural approaches to facing and overcoming tragedy, provides us with the inspiration and fortitude needed to make sense of what is happening to us today and to seek a path to a better future.

In March, the University of Washington very suddenly made the decision to move entirely to remote learning in order to protect the health of the campus community. The abrupt transition to an unfamiliar mode of instruction was not easy for teachers, students, or staff. But everyone rose to the challenge. (Elsewhere in this issue you can read about how three of our department’s outstanding instructors navigated this challenge.) These past few months of “life during coronavirus” already loom so large in our collective consciousness that it is easy to forget what came before. Our department once again had a very successful year. In the pages of this newsletter you will read about our collective and individual achievements and milestones, including a remotely-held convocation ceremony in which we joyously celebrated our graduating students together with their families and friends. Reflecting on these accomplishments gives me confidence that we will continue to succeed, and reminds me that the dedication of the AL&L family makes my role as facilitator a happy one.



Professor Handel delivering a Zoom lecture in Asian 404 “Writing Systems” (Spring 2020), co-taught with Professor Emeritus Richard Salomon.

It is now July. The weather in Seattle has finally turned from chilly drizzle to gentle sunshine. By the time you read this, the weather will be turning again and our autumn quarter will be underway. All of our department’s classes will be in the process of being taught remotely. At the time of this writing, the shape of the winter and spring quarters remains unknowable. But one thing we know for sure is that we will be here, serving our students and our communities, pursuing our research, teaching our classes, and preparing for a better future. I am grateful to each and every one of you who are invested in supporting that mission.

Wishing you all good health and good cheer,

### **Zev Handel**

Department Chair  
Professor of Chinese  
July 14, 2020

*Zev Handel's five-year term as chair of AL&L began on July 1, 2020. He is Professor of Chinese Linguistics in the Department of Asian Languages and Literature, specializing in the study of the history of the Chinese language and East Asian writing systems. Professor Handel joined the faculty in 1999 after receiving his PhD from the University of California at Berkeley. A native of Boston, he now lives in Seattle with his wife and son.*

## THE NEW NORMAL? REMOTE TEACHING IN ASIAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

covered can also change—a lot of language instructors use interactive games (like bingo or cards) to teach vocabulary or get students engaged with reviewing material; this can be hard to replicate online. Professor Sandjaja said, “I substituted a lot of digital content for games. Through Zoom, we can use online resources like YouTube videos as a replacement for other teaching materials.” Professor Ohta noted that teaching classes remotely has made him re-think some traditional timed assessments, like exams, and that he has increased flexibility for students, especially those who may be taking quizzes or exams in other time zones.

### What are some of the challenges that language instructors face when teaching remotely?

One of the biggest challenges that instructors noted was the importance of creating classroom community and cohesion early on. Professor Ohta noted, “During an in-person class, people make jokes, laugh—we all quickly realize who the class comedian is. That can be hard to get online, because everyone is usually on ‘mute.’” However, Professor

Sandjaja, who teaches Indonesian language to a small class of three students, noted that although the students felt a bit awkward at first, they soon became comfortable with each other, and even expressed the desire to meet in person when it was safe to do so. Professor Yu also commented that, especially during her summer intensive online Chinese class, the students quickly became comfortable with each other. “Some students wouldn’t turn their video on at first, so it’s important to strongly encourage everyone to do that right from the start. This also keeps students from getting distracted and not paying attention in class.”

### What are the benefits to teaching online?

“It’s very efficient!” Professor Sandjaja says with a laugh. “It’s much more time efficient for students. They don’t have to worry about commuting with buses running late or stopping for coffee at the Starbucks before class. Everything is already ready to go when we start class.” She noted that no one has ever been late for class since she started teaching remotely. On the other hand, Professor Ohta mentioned that teaching

remotely has been really beneficial to his own teaching practice and caused him to re-examine some pedagogical principles that he always held—but he realized were not necessary. For example, he has built more flexibility into his classes. “When I thought about it, I realized there was no need to limit the number of times a student could listen to a sentence in a quiz, for example. These things were really not necessary. It’s a great opportunity to reflect on whether or not certain practices actually contribute to student learning.” Finally, Professor Yu notes the importance of coming together for language classes, especially during this time. During the spring quarter, she added a section on learning ways to express feelings around the pandemic, introducing vocabulary such as ‘scared’ and ‘depressed.’ She said, ‘We were able to cheer each other up in Chinese class because at the end we came to the conclusion that ‘We can be scared, but not hate; we can be quarantined, but not feel lonely.’ To me, this was not merely a language class, but a class where we can nurture each other through the beauty of language.”

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## ASIAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE DEPARTMENT AWARDED FLAGSHIP GRANT FOR CHINESE LANGUAGE

The Asian Languages and Literature Department at the University of Washington has been awarded a 2020-2024 Flagship Grant (about \$1.3 million spread over four years) for Chinese language. The UW Chinese Flagship Program is directed by Dr. Chan Lü and co-directed by Dr. Zev Handel, and will work closely with a variety of offices and programs on campus, including Office of Global Affairs, East Asia Center, Center for Global Studies, China Studies, Taiwan Studies, Student Life (especially CIRCLE), and other student services and organizations.

The Flagship Grant was awarded by The Language Flagship, a national organization based in Washington, D.C. and founded in 2002. The Language Flagship is a major initiative of the National Security Education

Program (NSEP), which is part of the Defense Language and National Security Education Office (DLNSEO). It offers a new way for students to reach professional levels of proficiency in languages that are less commonly taught in the U.S. Chinese is one of the seven languages chosen for this program. In this program, students will be able to combine high levels of proficiency in Chinese with a major in any field so that after they graduate they will be able to perform their job duties in English and in Chinese without linguistic or cultural barriers. Today, there are thirteen Flagship programs in Chinese around the nation.

The grant will be used to support students in any major to develop professional proficiency in Chinese. Aside from taking courses offered



THE LANGUAGE FLAGSHIP

*Creating Global Professionals*

through the program on campus, students will have access to scholarships to participate in summer intensive programs and a capstone year in mainland China, Taiwan, or the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, CA. By working closely with faculty members in the department as well as in China Studies and Taiwan Studies, the program will provide opportunities for students to take classes on topics ranging from Chinese linguistics and literature to Chinese history and politics entirely in Chinese. Tutors will also be hired to help students hone their skills in the language, and practice materials related to students’ own majors. The Flagship Program will also take serious steps in students’ language proficiency assessment, making sure that each Flagship student will meet the proficiency target before they participate in the capstone year.



# Asia Notes

## ANNUAL CONVOCATION AND AWARDS CEREMONY

Asian Languages and Literature's annual convocation and awards ceremony, held on June 12, marked the passing of another successful year for the department. It was also the first year we have ever held our ceremony entirely online, due to the global pandemic and health crisis. While this posed a logistical challenge for staff, faculty, and students alike, we were proud to welcome over 100 attendees to the online ceremony.

As always, featured front and center were the accomplishments of our graduating students. The Department conferred a total of 71 Bachelor of Arts degrees this year: 2 in Chinese, 35 in Japanese, 7 in Korean, and 27 in Asian Languages & Cultures.

A number of graduate students also received degrees. The Master of Arts degree was conferred upon Bo Jiang (Chinese), Benjamin Burton (Japanese), John Carlyle (Chinese), Genevieve Hill (Japanese), Fatuma Muhamed (Japanese), Aaron Steel (Japanese), Kisaki Takeuchi (Japanese), and Shiwei Zhou (Chinese). Sean Bradley (Chinese), Ross Henderson (Japanese), and Youngjun Kwon (Chinese) were granted the status of Candidate for Doctor of Philosophy, an important step towards the doctoral degree. Finally, our highest degree, Doctor of Philosophy, was awarded to three students: Michael Butcher (Buddhist Studies), for his dissertation entitled "The Emotionology of Anger in Early Buddhist Literature: Through the Lens of a Gāndhāri Verse Text;" Christopher Diamond (South Asian), for his dissertation entitled "Head for the Hills: Lateral Vernacular Adaptations and the Maithili Padas of Vidyāpati Ṭhakura (c. 15th-19th cents.);" and Kevin W. Tahmore (Chinese), for his dissertation entitled "The *Wenyuan yinghua*: Selecting Refined Literature."

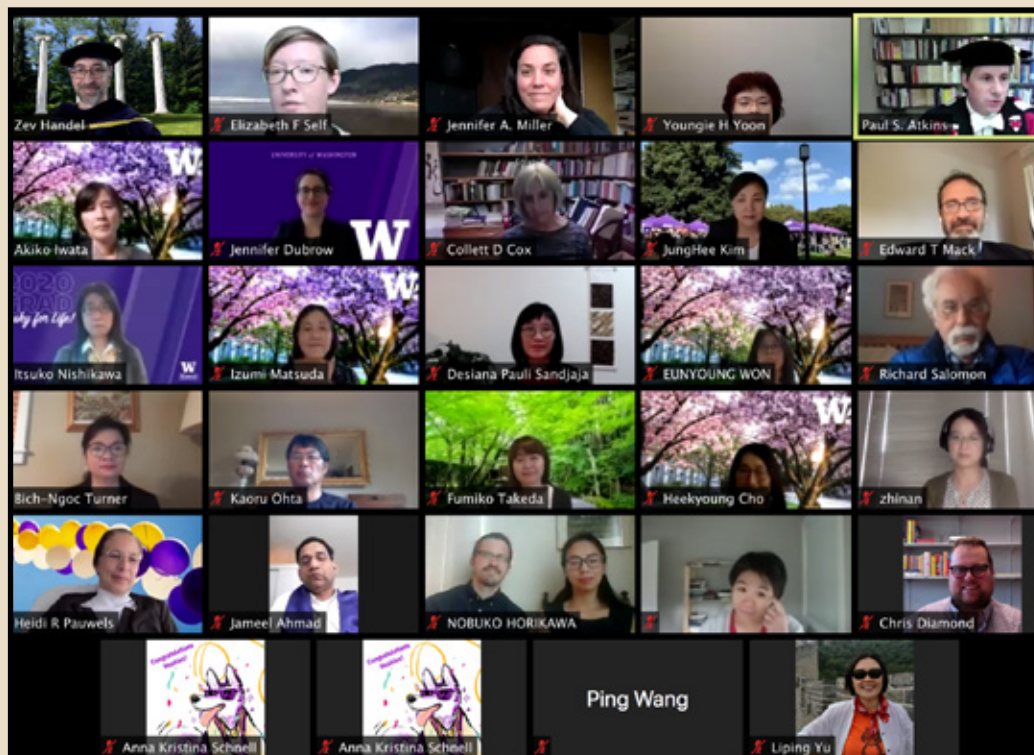
The faculty were also pleased to present awards recognizing the highest achievements of our undergraduate and graduate students. Graduate student Benjamin Burton (Japanese) received the Distinguished Teaching Assistant Award, while Ross Henderson (Japanese) and Chris Lowy (Japanese) received the Turrell

V. Wylie Memorial Scholarship Award. We also recognized the accomplishments of Christopher Diamond (South Asian), recipient of this year's Graduate Dean's Medal in the Humanities. Undergraduate awardees included Yen-Han Nguyen (Japanese, Asian Languages & Cultures), who received the Scott Swaner Memorial Book Award, and Sammi Chan (Applied and Computational Math Sciences), who received the Henry S. Tatsumi Award.

In addition to the above awards, we also announced the winners of departmental fellowships. First, Zhinan Chen (Chinese) was awarded the Maurice D. and Lois B. Schwartz Dissertation Writing Fellowship. This fellowship is made possible by the generous support of UW alumnus Maurice D. Schwartz and his wife, Lois B. Schwartz to support the final stages of completing a dissertation. Secondly, the Washin Kai-Japan Foundation Fellowship was presented to Nobuko Horikawa (Japanese) by Professor Paul Atkins, department chair and professor of classical Japanese

literature, and Ms. Yumi Iwasaki, member of Washin Kai (Friends of Classical Japanese at UW). In addition, we awarded Jieyu Zhou (Chinese) the Li Fang-Kuei Chinese Graduate Fellowship in Linguistics.

The Honorable Anthony D. Gipe '00 (Law), Kent Municipal Court judge, gave the keynote address. In it, Judge Gipe discussed the many ways in which his love of language changed him and, as he put it, "even saved his life." His initial choice to study Chinese in university eventually led him to a career as a U.S. Navy intelligence analyst and interpreter. Above all, he urged our graduating students to use their knowledge and new skills to make a positive change in our world. As Judge Gipe told our students, "Language and literature become a bridge to cultural competence and compassion. [...] People trained in language and literature have the tools to speak against fear, isolation, oppression, and hatred. We need that more now than ever. Do not sell short the value of your degree and the impact your skills can have."



Asian Languages and Literature faculty and staff celebrate the accomplishments of graduating students via Zoom video conferencing software.

# THE VALUE OF THE HUMANITIES: A LITERATURE PHD IN THE TECH WORLD

By Elizabeth Self

Kevin Tahmoresi '20 recently graduated with a doctoral degree in Chinese literature from the Department of Asian Languages and Literature. His dissertation, entitled "The *Wenyuan yinghua*: Selecting Refined Literature," focuses on a Tang dynasty poetry and prose anthology that, until now, has been little researched in the West. It explores the *Wenyuan yinghua*'s importance in the reception and understanding of Tang dynasty literature. Mr. Tahmoresi is a busy man - in addition to completing his dissertation and welcoming a new member to the family, he is also employed as a software engineer at Workday, a company that provides enterprise cloud applications for finance, HR, and planning to many large companies, including UW. In this interview, we explore Mr. Tahmoresi's interests in combining tech with the humanities.

## Could you tell me a little bit about your educational background and how you first became interested in studying Chinese literature?

I first became interested in China when I volunteered in a high school in China at the age of 18. Although I didn't learn Chinese at the time, I became really interested in the culture. After that, I went on mission for my church to Taiwan, started learning the language and really fell in love with China. Later, I majored in Chinese at Brigham Young University; at that point, I really started to learn more about Chinese literature and literary history. After I graduated, I applied to the graduate program at UW and began working with Dr. David Knechtges, my PhD advisor.

## How about your work background? What do you do and how did you get started on that career path?

When I was an undergraduate at BYU, I worked in the IT office, and picked up some basic tech skills at that time. Later, Dr. Zev Handel recommended me for a position at the Language Learning Center at the University of Washington, and I started working there in 2013. During that time, a mentor really helped me learn more about technology and writing software. I was able to leverage that into an internship at Workday in 2015, and have been there ever since. I was entirely self-taught, and found that in the world of tech, people really respect skills rather than a specific degree.

## Have you found these two parts of your background work together well?

Definitely. Learning a new language, like Chinese, is much like learning a new coding language - you have to learn syntax, you have to learn rules of the language and apply them as you're trying so speak it. Graduate education also gave me the drive to drill down and look for deeper meaning

and deeper answers, which has helped tremendously in my work - in technology there's always a deeper problem or set of problems you're trying to reach for.

## What advice would you give to students interested in moving into a technology career?


Don't be afraid to apply for internships, or other opportunities in areas that you're interested in, even if they don't seem to match with your major. I found my internship at Workday by going to a UW career fair. I'd never even heard of Workday, but a recruiter started talking to me and asked what I studied - expecting Computer Science or something - and when I told him I studied classical Chinese but had coding skills, it made me stand out. We talked for a while and I was invited to an interview the next day.

Also, don't be afraid to work hard and put in time outside of classes - this is the time to put in the sweat equity. Develop a plan for this year, next year, and the year after. Things may not go according to plan but try to look ahead to where you're going. Focus is what matters - set goals and try to stick to them.

## What is the value of the humanities to you?

So many people come out of STEM background without soft skills and critical thinking skills to succeed in the workplace. What a humanities education brought to me was a set of skills that allow me to investigate problems more thoroughly and to identify patterns in behavior, work with others, and communicate effectively with those around me. I am extremely grateful for the outstanding faculty and classes that Asian Languages and Literature offered, and the general rigorosity of the program.

*The faculty, students, and staff of the department are grateful to all the individuals and organizations who donated to our department over the past year for their belief in and support of our mission to teach and study Asian languages, literature, and cultures.*

धन्यवाद  
謝謝您  
XIN CAM ON  
감사합니다  
ありがとうございます  
कृतज्ञतया  
धन्यवाद  
Terima kasih  
  
ขอบพระคุณ  
Thank You!



## FACULTY NEWS

**Paul Atkins**, Professor of Japanese language and literature, gave three lectures: "The Souvenirs of Zekkai Chūshin" (at an international symposium entitled "The Many Shapes of Meaning: Object and Performance in Asia," held at Kyūshū University), "Reading China and Japan in the Works of Zekkai Chūshin," at the Modern Language Association Annual Convention), and "Zen Master Zekkai: The Life of a Medieval Japanese Monk" for Washin Kai (Friends of Classical Japanese Literature at UW).

**Heekyoung Cho**, Associate Professor of Korean language and literature, together with two colleagues (Richard Watts in French & Italian and Michael Biggins in Slavic), received a Large Scale Collaboration Grant for the "UW Translation Studies Hub" from the Simpson Center for the Humanities, for the year 2019-2020. The grant was renewed for a second year as well.

**Collett Cox**, Professor of Buddhist Studies, retired in the spring of 2020. Professor Cox joined the Department of Asian Languages and Literature in autumn of 1985, coming to us from Notre Dame University. During her thirty-five years at the University of Washington, she taught classes in Buddhist studies, Pali, Sanskrit, and comparative religion. She contributed greatly to the department, earning the respect and admiration of her colleagues and students. We wish her the best in the next stage of her life.

**Jennifer Dubrow**, Associate Professor of South Asian languages and literature, received an award from the Urdu Writers Society of North America in honor of her extensive work to promote the Urdu language, and in recognition of her research on Urdu modernism and the work of Urdu writers associated with the Progressive Writers' Movement. In addition, she recently published an essay in the online journal *positions* entitled "Singing the Revolution: India's Anti-CAA Protests and Faiz's 'Hum Dekhenge.'" This essay was recently republished as the cover story of the Sunday edition of Dawn, Pakistan's premiere newspaper. Finally, she received a grant for scholars from Friends of the UW-Madison Libraries for research on an upcoming book, *Voicing Dissent: Urdu Literary Modernism and the Progressive Writers in 20th century South Asia*.

**Chris Hamm** was promoted to Professor of Chinese language and literature.

**Zev Handel**, Professor of Chinese language and literature, was appointed as chair of the Department of Asian Languages and Literature for a five-year term. He previously served as associate chair of the department.

**Justin Jesty**, Associate Professor of Japanese language and literature, was awarded the 2019 ASAP (Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present) Book Prize for his book titled *Art and Engagement in Early Postwar Japan* (2018).

**Chan Lü** was promoted to Associate Professor of Chinese with tenure.

**Joseph Marino** will join the department as Assistant Professor of Buddhist Studies. He previously served as Lecturer in Sanskrit, teaching beginning and intermediate Sanskrit classes.

**Izumi Matsuda-Kiami** was promoted to Teaching Professor of Japanese.

**Yen Nguyen** will join us in fall quarter as Assistant Teaching Professor of Vietnamese.

**Itsuko Nishikawa**, Associate Teaching Professor in Japanese, organized a colloquium titled *Teaching Writing in Context* in February. The speaker was Paul Kei Matsuda, Professor of English and the Director of Second Language Writing at Arizona State University. The colloquium attracted a wide range of audiences: both language teachers and non-language teachers, from middle school to college- and university-level instructors.

**Heidi Pauwels**, Professor of South Asian languages and literature, was awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship to work on a book entitled "The Voice of India's Mona Lisa: Songs by Rasik Bihārī of Kishangarh." In addition, she co-edited a special issue of the Oxford-based journal *South Asian History and Culture* with the title *Vernacular Performance, Memory Construction, and Emotions*. In addition, she gave two invited lectures.

**Bich-Ngoc Turner**, Associate Teaching Professor of Vietnamese (second from right), and colleagues at the OPI-OPG Workshop for Southeast Asian Language Teachers, held at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.



**Richard Salomon**, William P. and Ruth Gerberding University Professor Emeritus of Buddhist Studies, was awarded the 2020 Khyentse Foundation prize for Outstanding Buddhist Translation for his 2018 book *Buddhist Literature from Ancient Gandhāra*.

In addition, a Chinese translation (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 2019) of his 1999 book, *Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhāra*, was recently published. His 2018 book, *Buddhist Literature from Ancient Gandhāra: An Introduction with Selected Translations*, is also being translated into Chinese and is expected to appear next year.

**Bich-Ngoc Turner**, Assistant Teaching Professor of Vietnamese, received a Henry Luce Foundation grant to participate in the OPI-OPG workshop at University of Wisconsin–Madison in December 2019 and was invited to be a co-leader of the Vietnamese Oral Proficiency Guideline Project.

**Pauli Sandjaja** was promoted to Teaching Professor of Indonesian.

**Liping Yu** was promoted to Teaching Professor of Chinese.

*Note: Effective September 16th, 2020, the UW faculty code has been amended to replace the titles of full-time lecturers with "teaching professor" ranks and titles. For example, "senior lecturers" are now titled "associate teaching professors". The titles given in our newsletter reflect this change.*

## GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

**Nathaniel Bond** continued to work as a Visiting Assistant Professor at Western Washington University for the academic year 2020-2021.

**Liyao Chen** attended two conferences and presented different topics related to writing studies and Sinographic writing in premodern Japan and Korea: "Crossing Language Borders: The Adaptation of Chinese Writing and the Use of Sinograms in Non-Chinese Languages" (at the 23rd Annual Harvard East Asia Society Conference) and "The Adaptation of Chinese Writing and the Validity of Logography" (at the 29th Annual Columbia Graduate Student Conference on East Asia).

**Ying-Hsiu Chou** has been awarded the 2020-2021 Digital Humanities Summer Fellowship to support her work on "Deconstructing the Construction: The Female Images in Chinese Detective Films, 2010-2020." This will be one of six digital projects under development by eight faculty and doctoral students this summer with the support of the UW Simpson Center for the Humanities.

**Chris Diamond** was awarded the 2019-2020 Dean's Graduate Medal in the Humanities, a prestigious award presented annually by the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of

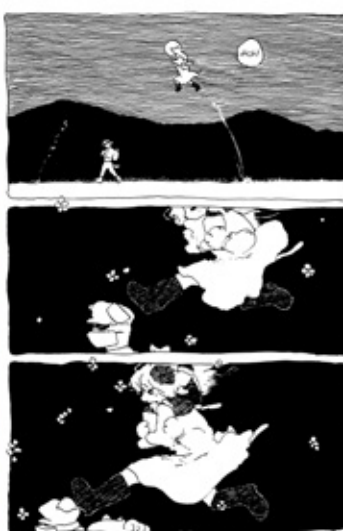
Washington. The medal is awarded to one exceptional graduate student in each of the College's four divisions, based on faculty recommendations.

**Ross Henderson** was awarded a Fulbright Research Grant. He plans to travel to Japan to conduct research for his dissertation studies.

**Bo Jiang** presented his paper "Analysis of Confucian hermeneutics on the 'fragrant herbs and beauty' image in Early Chinese poems from a deconstructive viewpoint" at the 2019 Annual Convention of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association in El Paso, Texas. In addition, he co-authored an article entitled "Collection, Analysis and Research on Bǎoshān Nàxī Dōngbā Manuscript," funded by the National Social Science Fund of China, was published by Guangxi Normal University Press.

**Anna Schnell** has been working with Oregon-based independent book publisher Glacier Bay Books, a small press that specializes in publishing independent and non-mainstream Japanese-language comics in English translation. Her first translations were published in 2020, including "That Child" by Shinnosuke Saika, "Tsukiko and the Satellite" and "Audrey Hepburn 2049" by MISSISSIPPI, as well as the forthcoming "Sazanami" by Hagiwara Rei.

Manga translated by graduate student Anna Schnell. From left to right: "Tsukiko and the Satellite and Other Stories" by MISSISSIPPI, "Sazanami;" by Hagiwara Rei, "That Child;" by Shinnosuke Saika (cover and interior page).





## ALUMNI NEWS

**Hannah Herzog '18** (BA, Korean and Computer Science) was one of three English-speaking students to receive a scholarship to attend the Literature Translation Institute of Korea, a two-year program. She graduated from the program this June, and was accepted to the special summer translation course "Cultural Contents," where she heard guest lectures from people in the movie and animation business, including Darcy Parquet, translator for the well-known film *Parasite*.

**Jacob Rawson '09** (MA, Chinese), has recently published a series of travel essays about climbing the nine sacred mountains of China in 2010 in Brush Talks ([www.brushtalks.com/](http://www.brushtalks.com/)).

**Sachi Schmidt-Hori '12** (PhD, Japanese), assistant professor of Asian Societies, Cultures, and Languages at Dartmouth, has announced a forthcoming book entitled *Tales of Idolized Boys: Male-Male Love in Medieval Japanese Narratives* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2021).

**Elizabeth Thelen '06** (BA, Asian Languages and Literature and Comparative History of Ideas) received her Ph.D. in History from the University of California, Berkeley in the summer of 2018. Shortly thereafter, she began work at the University of Exeter in the UK as a postdoctoral research associate on the project 'Forms of Law in the Early Modern Persianate World, 1700-1900.' Her current research analyses the history of the use of Rajasthani and Persian in legal documents and state administration in western India.

**Isa Thompson '17** (BA, South Asian) recently received an MA in South Asia Studies from University of Pennsylvania. Subsequently, she attended the Telugu language program at the American Institute of Indian Studies. She is currently working on a number of Telugu translation projects.

**Benjamin Weymiller '18** (BA, Chinese and Business Administration) has been working as a Customer Success Representative, Strategic Accounts at Smartsheet.

**Betsy Zhang '18** (BA, Chinese and Economics) has been working as an Import Compliance Coordinator at Amazon.



Isa Thompson '17 (BA, South Asian) at the Telugu language program at the American Institute of Indian Studies

## STAFF NEWS

Asian Languages and Literature's four staff members, Youngie Yoon (administrator), Elizabeth Self (counseling services coordinator), Jennifer Miller (program coordinator), and Anna Schnell (assistant to the administrator), have been working hard to adapt to new social distancing guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Starting in early March, the office shifted to remote operations, with staff members communicating over chat, email, and video conferencing. While working remotely has at times posed logistical challenges, office morale remains high and staff have quickly implemented new technologies to maintain good communications with each other and with the faculty, students, and community members that we serve, including an office chat room and weekly 'virtual' office hours.

This summer has been a particularly complex time to work from home, since the office has sadly said goodbye to outgoing department chair Dr. Paul Atkins, and has welcomed a new chair, Dr. Zev Handel. In addition, the College of Arts & Sciences made the decision to move undergraduate advising out of individual departments in order to better serve students through a centralized hub. The Humanities Advising Services Center (HASC) launched this summer, posing another logistical challenge. As a result, Dr. Self's role has shifted to focus primarily on academic services and graduate student advising.

Youngie, Liz, Jen, and Anna are looking forward to working with the new chair and addressing the unique challenges of 2020 during the upcoming academic year. We wish all of you health and happiness.



Youngie, Anna, Jen, and Liz (left to right) gather at a celebration.



## THOUGHTS FROM A DONOR: WHY I SUPPORT THE DEPARTMENT OF ASIAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

By Yumi Iwasaki

I became acquainted with UW's Department of Asian Languages and Literature when a good friend, Naomi Minegishi, invited me to join her in her efforts to start a support group for classical Japanese literature studies in the department. I was born in Japan but have spent all my adult life in the U.S. Growing up, I was an avid reader and enjoyed literature, Japanese or otherwise. Although I chose computer science as my field of study, Japanese classical literature, especially poetry and drama, has always been close to my heart.

I learned from Naomi and Professor Paul Atkins about the need for funding for graduate studies in classical Japanese literature because it was difficult for Ph.D. students to undertake dissertation research while supporting themselves through teaching assistantships. It surprised me to hear that Ph.D. students lacked support, because, when I had been a Ph.D. student, I as well as all other students were fully supported by my department throughout our graduate school careers. Undertaking a dissertation-worthy research in any field is a full-time endeavor and can take any number of years. I knew I wanted to help.

Naomi assembled a group of like-minded people from the community to form a fund-raising committee. I thought the group needed a name and that the name should reflect both Japan and the University of Washington. So, I named the group Washin Kai (和心会). "Washin" (和心) means "heart of Japan," while also sounding like "Washington," and Kai (会) means "meeting" or "society."

With support of the members of Washin Kai as well as generous gifts from the broader community, and also thanks to special, one-time help from the Japan Foundation, Washin Kai managed to award our first graduate fellowship in 2019. After this first year of success, we wanted a multi-year plan, so that there would be some predictability in funding and also to give us time to work towards a larger goal. Thus, I joined three other members of Washin Kai in making a three-year commitment to the department. We are very grateful

that our commitment was rewarded with a 50% match by the Provost, which ensured enough funding to provide for a graduate fellowship for the next three years. Our goal now is to raise money to establish an endowment to fund a graduate fellowship in perpetuity.

On a more personal note, besides my gratitude to this country, which gave me the best education in the world, my other reason for supporting graduate students in classical Japanese literature is my father. Even though my father, Hiroji Iwasaki, did not grow up in Japan, he spent most of his adult life in Kyoto and loved the city and the Japanese traditional culture the city was steeped in. He knew all the sites in Kyoto: temples, shrines, gardens, festivals, and street markets. Kyoto was his adopted

hometown, and he built his career there. An avid reader, he passed his love of books to all of his three daughters. He also loved to travel the world, especially the United States, which he visited many times. He said he would have loved to study in U.S. as a young man if the time had been different. He told me that the best way to get to know a country was to partake with gusto of the local food and drink together with the people there. An enthusiastic guest as well as a gracious host, he welcomed all opportunities to show visitors around in Kyoto. He is long gone, but I feel his presence in me when I am in touch with Japanese traditional culture. I think he is smiling to know that I am doing my small part to support the teaching of Japanese classics in this country.

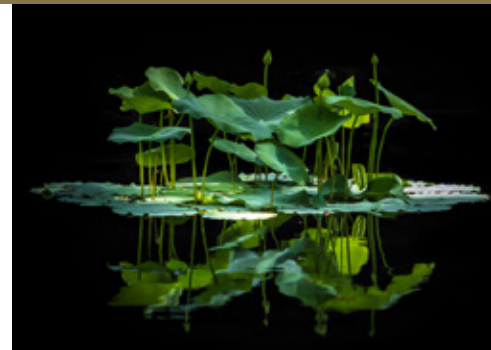


**Paul Atkins, Professor of Japanese, gives a lecture on the poet Zekkai at a Washin Kai-sponsored event. (March 3, 2020, at Kane Hall.)**

# Asia Notes

## ANNOUNCING THE GEORGE TAKAHASHI ENDOWED FELLOWSHIP IN JAPANESE STUDIES

*The Department of Asian Languages and Literature is pleased to announce the newly created George Takahashi Endowed Fellowship in Japanese Studies. Mr. Takahashi's generous donation of \$500,000 will aid graduate students in the Japanese language and literature program for many years to come.*



For Mr. Takahashi, appreciation for Japanese language teaching is deeply personal. He taught Japanese for many years at the University of California, Los Angeles, and is passionate about the importance of language learning and higher education. As a young man, he put himself through both undergraduate and graduate school. Even after graduating, he continued to innovate and think outside the box through his many inventions (including a Shiatsu massage board). He has also written books on new ways of thinking about teaching Japanese and learning English grammar.



**Mr. George Takahashi.**

Molly Purrington, Director of Advancement for the Humanities at the University of Washington, noted that Mr. Takahashi cares deeply about the value of education. "When Mr. Takahashi was a young man, his relatives discouraged him from attending college," Ms. Purrington said. "Mr. Takahashi strongly disagreed with that. His donation comes from a place of warmth and caring about the future of MA and PhD graduate students."

We are grateful to Mr. Takahashi for his forward-thinking commitment to our students.

You too can make a valuable contribution to the life of the department. Donations of all amounts help to sustain essential and enriching activities including colloquia, symposia, workshops, and faculty and student research travel. Gifts to our discretionary Friends of Asian Languages Fund provide us with maximum flexibility to address the most pressing needs of the department. In addition to supporting the department's five programs in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, South Asian, and Southeast Asian languages, your donation will also support teaching and research activities that benefit university, local, and international communities. We also have many targeted funds that are dedicated to support specific programs and activities. Find more information at [asian.washington.edu/support-us](http://asian.washington.edu/support-us).

## INCOMING GRADUATE STUDENTS



### **Jamie Ding**

BA, Asian Studies, Seattle University, 2019  
**RESEARCH INTERESTS:** Japanese Popular Culture, Japanese, Japanese Literature, Shoujo Manga/Literature, Women's Studies



### **Ami Tanahashi**

BA, Liberal Arts, Soka University of America  
**RESEARCH INTERESTS:** Zainichi Korean literature, minority literature, women's literature



### **Yasuko Yukimoto**

Certificate, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), City University of Seattle, Seattle, Washington; BA, English Literature, Nihon University, Tokyo, Japan  
**RESEARCH INTERESTS:** Japanese, Language Pedagogy, Second Language Acquisition



### INTRODUCING THE TRANSLATION STUDIES HUB AT UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Heekyoung Cho (Associate Professor in the Department of Asian Languages & Literature) and two UW colleagues (Richard Watts in French & Italian and Michael Biggins in Slavic) received a Large Scale Collaboration Grant for the “UW Translation Studies Hub” from UW’s Simpson Center for the Humanities for the year 2019-2020. After a successful first year the grant has been renewed, so the Hub will continue through this academic year as well.

The Translation Studies Hub at the University of Washington aims to coalesce energies on campus and beyond by building on existing and emergent faculty and graduate student research projects, courses, and initiatives in public engagement around translation. Tangible outcomes include increasing the visibility of current research and promoting new research in translation studies, program building at the graduate level (with follow-on effects at the undergraduate level), and creating additional/alternative professional pathways for graduate students.

Among other activities, the Translation Studies Hub offered a team-taught graduate seminar in spring 2020 that explored translation theory and practice in its various dimensions from the classical period to the extreme contemporary.

### NEW “HUMANITIES FIRST” CLASS TAUGHT BY PROFESSOR OF CHINESE LITERATURE CHRIS HAMM

The Humanities Division of UW’s College of Arts & Sciences, with funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, is launching a new course co-taught by Professor Chris Hamm in Autumn 2020. Xi Zhu, a graduate student in the Department of Asian Languages and Literature, will work as a teaching assistant for the course. Topics will change each year. For the inaugural cohort this fall, Humanities 101 will be titled *What Do We Talk About When We Talk About Journeys?*

The program aims to help students think broadly about human life—from science, to art, to literature, to culture, and beyond—and to explore the questions that matter. This humanistic thinking is critical as students begin their college experience and prepare to not only build a career, but to also contribute to society and build a meaningful and fulfilling life. Along the way they will learn from alumni, community partners, and ultimately themselves about how what they learn in the humanities classroom translates into real world impact.

Humanities First consists of three separate courses: a team-taught lecture course offered in Fall (Humanities 101: Foundations), small “into the field” seminars offered in Winter (Humanities 102: Campus Connections) and Spring (Humanities 103: Community Connections). All three courses emphasize teamwork and public engagement, and students who complete the whole series will earn the designation “Humanities First Scholar.”

### SOUTHEAST ASIA CENTER RECEIVES HENRY LUCE FOUNDATION GRANT

The Southeast Asia Center has received a Henry Luce Foundation grant to further Southeast Asian studies at UW, which will allow a new faculty hire in Asian Languages and Literature.

The University of Washington Southeast Asia Center has received a four-year \$1,000,000 grant from the Henry Luce Foundation’s LuceSEA initiative for a project titled, *Tracing Authoritarianism: Linking Southeast Asia with Southeast Asian America Through Archives, Language, and Pedagogy*. Through the lens of critical archival studies, SEAC’s project will examine authoritarianism and develop new pedagogies that bridge Asian studies and Ethnic studies to engage SEAsian American audiences. Work with American and SEAsian partners in museum and archival collections will connect heritage communities to their homelands and histories and offer opportunities for empowerment and recovery from acts of violence and appropriation. Grant funds will also seed a tenure track line in the Department of Asian Languages & Literature and fund needed training in SEA librarianship. SEAC Faculty who developed the project are Raissa DeSmet, Jenna Grant, Judith Henchy, Celia Lowe, Linh Nguyen, Vince Rafael, and Pauli Sandjaja.



Ms. Kima Hotta recites the story of Benkei at the barrier.

### RECITATION OF THE STORY OF BENKEI AT THE BARRIER

In October 2019, Washin Kai (Friends of Classical Japanese) presented a special event in cooperation with the Department of Asian Languages and Literature: a *rodoku* (recitation) performance of the story of Benkei at the barrier. This famous story deals with the warrior Benkei, retainer of the brilliant general Minamoto no Yoshitsune.

Yoshitsune distinguished himself in battle as a masterly strategist during Japan’s longest civil war, the struggle between the Minamoto and Taira clans that lasted from 1180 to 1185. However, not long after Yoshitsune destroyed the Taira at Dan-no-ura, he was suspected by his elder half-brother and commander-in-chief Yoritomo of disloyalty, and fled the capital, Kyoto.

Among his most trusted retainers was the formidable Benkei, a warrior and Buddhist monk renowned for his fearlessness, resourcefulness, and steadfast loyalty. Disguised as traveling ascetics raising funds to rebuild a temple ruined during the war, Yoshitsune and his band of retainers were stopped at the Ataka barrier by a suspicious guard, Togashi Yasuie.


In this traditional *rodoku* performance, Kima Hotta recited a modern retelling of the legendary incident based on Hirokai Toda’s novel, *Ninjō: Ataka no seki*. The novel fleshed out the story for contemporary audiences and added a clever twist. The recitation, in Japanese with live-captioning in English, saw around one hundred people attend.



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**TOWN HALL AND WASHIN KAI PRESENT  
RAKUGO WITH KATSURA SUNSHINE**

**Tuesday, October 20, 2020**

7:00 P.M. PDT - ONLINE

**THE TWENTY-THIRD ANNUAL  
ANDREW L. MARKUS MEMORIAL LECTURE**

*[rescheduled from last year]*

**DAVID SHULMAN, PHD** *Professor Emeritus of Asian Studies at Hebrew University*

**Spring 2021** LOCATION TBD

**ASIAN LANGUAGES & LITERATURE CONVOCATION AND RECEPTION**

**Friday, June 11, 2020, 3:30 to 6 pm** LOCATION TBD

Katsura Sunshine in a rakugo performance.

SAVE THE DATE

*Asia Notes* is the annual newsletter of the Department of Asian Languages and Literature, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Washington.

**Editor:** Elizabeth Self

All photographs not credited otherwise were taken by Program Coordinator Jennifer Miller.

**We'd like to hear from you!**

Send comments, feedback, or corrections to Elizabeth Self ([asianapp@uw.edu](mailto:asianapp@uw.edu)).

For address and subscription changes, contact [asianapp@uw.edu](mailto:asianapp@uw.edu).

For information on how to support the department and to see a list of giving opportunities, visit our donations page at [asian.washington.edu/support-us](http://asian.washington.edu/support-us). If you would like to discuss targeted donations to the department, please contact the chair directly at [asianlchair@uw.edu](mailto:asianlchair@uw.edu).

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