Mission & Vision

Department Mission
The mission of the Department of Asian Languages and Literature is to serve the University, the region, the nation, and the world at large by:

- providing instruction, at the elementary through advanced levels, in important representative languages of East, South and Southeast Asia;
- contributing to the general education function of the University, through instruction on the literatures, civilizations, and cultures of Asia;
- offering courses of study leading to the BA, MA, and PhD degrees in Asian Languages and Literature;
- training undergraduate and graduate students, who go on to use their knowledge of and proficiency in Asian languages and literature in diverse professions and enterprises, including business, government service, and academia;
- expanding knowledge, through research in diverse areas, whether historical or descriptive, basic or applied, concerning the languages, literatures, and cultures of Asia;
- promoting educational and cultural exchange between the University of Washington and educational institutions throughout Asia;
- collaborating with other academic units in interdisciplinary curricular and research endeavors;
- assisting educational institutions by training future teachers;
- serving the region by means of the expertise and knowledge possessed by members of the department; and
- sponsoring talks, colloquia, conferences, and symposia that expose the general and University communities to intellectual and cultural trends related to Asian languages, literatures, and civilizations.

Department Vision
The University of Washington’s Department of Asian Languages and Literature is a nationally and internationally renowned department engaged in teaching, research, and service with regard to representative languages and literatures of East, South, and Southeast Asia. The Department places particular emphasis on treating Asian languages and literatures in a broad humanistic context, taking care to examine them with reference to the cultures and cultural traditions within which they exist and have developed.

The Department seeks to achieve an effective balance among its various activities. Through its language classes, it seeks to inculcate in students, both undergraduate and graduate, advanced abilities to utilize Asian languages for a multiplicity of purposes in a rapidly changing world. Through its courses on literature, culture, and civilization; the Department seeks to spread awareness of the
contributions of Asia to the literary and cultural traditions of the world as a whole. And through its research, in areas as far-ranging as literature, linguistics, language pedagogy, philology, religion, epigraphy and paleography, and cultural studies; it attempts to increase knowledge about a geographical region that includes approximately forty percent of the world's population.

The Department of Asian Languages and Literature is situated in one of the thriving cultural and economic centers of the Pacific Rim, and serves as a vital resource to Seattle, the State of Washington, and the Pacific Northwest as a whole. As this region continues to expand its influence on the world stage, knowledge of Asia, its languages and cultures, is indispensable. The Department plays a vital role in training the next generation of citizens to meet the challenges of an increasingly interrelated world. The Department also takes pride in its status as a visible link in a chain of first-tier institutions throughout the world dedicated to the study of the languages and literatures of Asia.

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