Dear Alumni and Friends,

I hope this newsletter finds you well. As I write this here in Seattle, we have just concluded the summer quarter and are experiencing the annual pause of breath known as intersession. Work crews are busy power washing the walkways and buildings and those of us who come to campus every day are enjoying the glorious sunshine and a few weeks of quiet. By the time you read this, it will probably be raining!

Before us lies another academic year: new students, new colleagues, new courses, new visitors, and new ideas. I feel the same excitement every autumn that I felt when I first started teaching and when I was a student myself. At this moment, it feels as if anything is possible.

This limbo between academic years is also a good time to reflect on what happened during the past academic year and what we should and should not be doing next year. During the past year, my first as department chair, I learned a great deal about my colleagues, even though I have taught alongside them for years, and my sense of respect for their commitment to teaching, scholarship, and the university has deepened even further.

Nyan-Ping Bi, senior lecturer in Chinese, was awarded the Distinguished Teaching Award in the spring, for her achievements in teaching Chinese language courses at UW over the past twenty-six years. This award is the highest award for teaching at the university, and Nyan-Ping's winning of it has brought credit upon the department as well as herself. She is the first member of the department to win the award since it was first given in 1970.

Richard Salomon, professor of Sanskrit, was named the William P. and Ruth Gerberding University Professor, in recognition of his achievements in scholarship about ancient India, early Buddhism, and the culture of ancient Gandhara.

Last autumn we added a new member to the faculty: Dr. Ping Wang, who was appointed assistant professor of classical Chinese literature. Ping was trained at UW, receiving her Ph.D. in 2006, and taught at the University of Wisconsin and Princeton University before joining us.
FROM THE CHAIR CONTINUED

This autumn, we welcome Dr. Chi Lan as assistant professor of applied Chinese linguistics. Dr. Lu will also be serving as coordinator of our growing Chinese language program. She received a Ph.D. from Carnegie Mellon University and comes to us having taught for several years at Loyola Marymount University. These scholars represent the future of our department and I am very pleased and proud to serve alongside them.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank our loyal alumni and donors, whose contributions make possible so many things that are essential to our operations, from student and faculty travel to book purchases for the library to special events and visiting lectures. We are grateful not only for your financial support but for the shared vision in our teaching and research mission that it represents.

Although the world economic crisis ended a few years ago and the Seattle economy is booming, these developments have not translated into windfalls for the university, the College of Arts and Sciences, or the department. We are still operating in an austere financial environment and need private support to maintain our reputation for excellence in the study and teaching of Asian languages, literatures, and cultures.

In early March, the department sponsored a cherry blossom viewing, tea ceremony, and calligraphy display to celebrate the blooming of our famous Japanese cherry blossoms on campus. Professor Paul Atkins served as host and organizer. The event was provided by Ms. Kaoru Hayashi of the Gardner Center for Asian Art and Ideas at the Seattle Art Museum. Professor Paul Yamada drew a distinction between ninja as they are portrayed in popular culture and shinobi, the real-life spies upon which the ninja were based. In contrast with the image of the samurai, who readily offered their lives for their masters, the duty of the shinobi was to survive, and bring back valuable information. Consecutive English interpretation of Professor Yamada’s lecture enabled participants to reexamine trends in Japanese Program, titled “Japanese Education, the Past and the Future.” There were also eight presentations whose topics ranged from the use of pop culture and TV commercials to content-based instruction using Japanese literature. The conference enabled participants to reexamine trends in Japanese language education in North America and to reflect on what they can do to motivate and encourage students to study the Japanese language.

NYAN-PING BI WINS DISTINGUISHED TEACHING AWARD

Nyan-Ping Bi, senior lecturer in Chinese, was awarded the Distinguished Teaching Award at the University of Washington’s 46th annual Awards of Excellence ceremony in June, 2016. This award, which is given each year to just seven faculty members (five from the Seattle campus, and one each from UW Bothell and Tacoma), recognizes instructors who demonstrate “mastery of subject matter, enthusiasm and innovation in the teaching and learning process, ability to engage students both within and outside the classroom, ability to inspire independent and original thinking in students and to stimulate students to do creative work, and innovations in course and curriculum design.” Award winners are inducted into the UW’s Teaching Academy, which promotes excellence in teaching and learning at the UW. Bi is the first member of the department to win this award since it was created in 1970.

TRADITIONAL JAPANESE CULTURE COMES ALIVE AT UW

This past year was especially rich in events sponsored by the department that made traditional Japanese culture come to life for students, faculty, staff, and members of the community.

“The World of Classical Japanese Kimono” brought several professional kimonodressers from Japan in October to demonstrate and talk about the “twelve-layer kimono” (jūni-hitoe), an elaborate garment worn by female courtiers in Japan’s Heian era (791-1185). It figures prominently in such classic works as The Tale of Genji, but seeing one up close is a rare opportunity. The demonstrators, led by Ms. Ayako Nakayama of Tokyo, explained the various components and accessories of the jūni-hitoe, demonstrated the process of robing with the help of a student volunteer (S. Yui, ’16), and answered questions from the audience. Professor Paul Atkins hosted the event and provided consecutive Japanese-English interpretation. The department deeply appreciates the efforts of Ms. Nozomi Oida, who served as co-organizer, and Ms. Akiko Suganuma, whose strong support made this memorable event possible.

In early March, the department sponsored a cherry blossom viewing, tea ceremony, and calligraphy display to celebrate the blooming of our famous Japanese cherry blossoms on campus. Professor Paul Atkins hosted the event in the middle of the Quad, under a canopy of blossoms, and gave a brief talk about the depiction of cherry blossoms in classical Japanese poetry. Ms. Akemi Sagawa and Ms. Kari Shimizu of the East-West Center demonstrated a traditional Japanese tea ceremony. Calligrapher Shizu Usami wrote sakura (cherry blossoms) on strips of Japanese paper, using thirty-nine different forms of orthography, and her works were tied to the blossoming branches. Over seventy persons attended, thanks in large part to publicity provided by the co-sponsor, local Japanese website Junigeki.com. The department thanks all those who made this event possible, including Ms. Takumi Ohno, president of Junigeki Network.

A lecture titled “Ninja and Ninjutsu (Ninja Techniques)” was given by Professor Yōji Yamada of Mie University in May. An expert on medieval and early modern Japanese history, Professor Yamada drew a distinction between ninja as they are portrayed in popular culture and shinobi, the real-life spies upon which the ninja were based. In contrast with the image of the samurai, who readily offered their lives in the service of their masters, the duty of the shinobi was to survive, and bring back valuable information. Consecutive English interpretation of Professor Yamada’s lecture was provided by Ms. Kaoru Hayashi of Princeton University, and Professor Paul Atkins served as host and organizer. The department is grateful to the UW Japan Studies and the Gardner Center for Asian Art and Ideas at the Seattle Art Museum (SAAM) for funding Professor Yamada’s visit. He also gave a lecture and workshop for K-12 teachers at SAAM, wearing a decidedly conspicuous custom-made ninja outfit.

SECOND NORTHWEST CONFERENCE ON JAPANESE PEDAGOGY HELD AT UW

The Japanese program hosted the 2nd Northwest Conference on Japanese Pedagogy from May 21-22, 2016. It attracted approximately 45 college-level and secondary school teachers from the region, and other parts of the country. The conference’s theme was “How Can We Make Students Understand the Present and Future of Japanese Language Education in North America.” The conference opened with the first keynote speech by Professor Junko Mori from the University of Wisconsin-Madison titled “Liberal Arts Education in the Era of Globalization: Challenges and Opportunities for Japanese Language Programs.” The conference’s theme was “How Can We Make Students Understand the Present and Future of Japanese Language Education in North America.” The conference opened with the first keynote speech by Professor Junko Mori from the University of Wisconsin-Madison titled “Liberal Arts Education in the Era of Globalization: Challenges and Opportunities for Japanese Language Programs.” The conference continued with a second keynote address by Michio Tsutsui, Professor Emeritus of UW’s Technical Japanese Program, titled “Japanese Education, the Past and the Future.” There were also eight presentations whose topics ranged from the use of pop culture and TV commercials to content-based instruction using Japanese literature. The conference enabled participants to reexamine trends in Japanese language education in North America and to reflect on what they can do to motivate and encourage students to study the Japanese language.

PARTICIPANTS SHU'I, USAMI, KARI SHIMIZU, AND AKEMI SAGAWA (LEFT TO RIGHT) PHOTOGRAPH BY KAYAKO SAREEN
Nineteenth Annual Markus Lecture Given by Prof. Robert Goldman

Professor Robert Goldman, the William and Catherine Magistretti Distinguished Professor of Sanskrit at the University of California, Berkeley, gave the nineteenth annual Andrew L. Markus Memorial Lecture on May 10, 2016. His presentation was titled “A Clouded Mirror: The Uttara-Kānda of the Vālmīki-Rām āyana as an Occluded Guide to Statecraft.” The lecture, which was eloquently delivered by Prof. Goldman and enthusiastically received by the audience, concerned the controversial reception and interpretations of the seventh and final book of Vālmīki’s epic Sārasvatīprakāsita poem, both in antiquity and in modern times. It included excerpts from the translation of the Uttara-Kānda by Prof. Goldman and his collaborator, Sally Sutherland Goldman.

Alumni Spotlights

Fusae Eikda (Ph.D., ’09) was appointed assistant professor of Japanese at Murray State University in Kentucky, where she teaches undergraduate-level Japanese and is conducting research on poetry matches and the construction process of poetic ideals in medieval Japan.

Jon Holt (Ph.D., ’10) was promoted to associate professor of Japanese at Portland State University.

Sachi Schmidt-Hori (Ph.D., ’12) was selected as a UW faculty facilitator and will be conducting research in Japan.

Michael Skinner spent the 2015-16 academic year in India on a Fulbright fellowship, conducting field research for his dissertation on the Kusāna Empire.

Grady Student News

Nathaniel Bond was selected by the Simpson Center for the Humanities as a Mellon Fellow for Reaching New Publics in the Humanities. He will be working with a faculty member at Seattle Central College to receive professional development and mentoring, and build connections between UW and two-year colleges.

Chris Lowy received a Japan Foundation Fellowship for the 2016-17 academic year, and will be conducting research in Japan.

SAVE THE DATE

Twentieth Annual Andrew L. Markus Memorial Lecture

Tuesday, May 9, 2017, 6:30 p.m.

Junko Mori, Ph.D.
Professor of Japanese, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Professor Robert Goldman (front and center) with Profs. Atkins and Salomon (front left and right) and Drs. Timothy Lenz and Jan Nattier (back left and right)
CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW GRADUATES

This year’s Graduation and Awards Convocation was held on a cloudy June day in Kane Hall. The department awarded 42 Bachelor’s degrees in Japanese, 12 in Korean, 10 in Chinese, and 3 in South Asian Languages. Doctoral degrees were conferred upon Cindi Testor and Li Yang. Jennifer Liu earned a Master of Arts degree, and Doctoral Candidate Certificates were presented to Wook-Jin Jeong, Christopher Lowey and Kevin Tahmoresi.

Mr. Jody Chafee, Director and Expert Counsel at the Starbucks Corporation, delivered a spirited address to mark the occasion. Mr. Chafee spoke eloquently on a sometimes overlooked benefit of a degree in Asian languages and literature: the lifelong skill of being able to interact with unfamiliar cultures and operate in foreign environments. Mr. Chafee argued that this skill would prove equally useful in the corporate boardroom and in private life, and would help students navigate environments ranging from the American South to countries halfway around the world. Learning to interact with other cultures, Mr. Chafee suggested, was a vital skill that would serve our graduates well for the rest of their lives.

Several awards were conferred at the ceremony. The Henry S. Tatsumi Award was presented to Farzoo Aiyah Binti Ahmed Zamir, Christopher Kessler, and Wilhelmina McMichael. Cindi Testor received the Turrell V. Wylie Memorial Scholarship Award. The Scott Swamer Memorial Book Award was presented to Hannah Herzog, Vincent Lawson, and Ashley Phillips. The Distinguished Teaching Assistant Award was presented to Japanese teaching assistant Christopher Lowey.

A lively reception was held immediately following the ceremony.

OUR DONORS

The faculty, students, and staff of the department are grateful to the following individuals and organizations for their belief in and support of our mission to teach and study Asian languages, literatures, and cultures.

RECOGNITION OF OUR DONORS

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Michael Butcher received his BA in History and Comparative Religion from California State University-Chico and his MA in Religious Studies from Indiana University-Bloomington, and has come to UW to study Sanskrit and the various Prákrítś, notably Gandhari. Michael’s interests are in Indian inscriptions and writing systems and ancient Buddhist manuscripts from India and Central Asia. Outside of school, Michael is a fervent reader of Tolkien and enjoys collecting ancient Hellenistic and Indian coins.

Xinzhan Chen received her master’s degree in Modern Chinese Cultural Studies at the University of Edinburgh, UK, and is working with Professor Chris Ham in her pursuit of a PhD in Chinese literature. Xinzhan’s research interests are modern and contemporary Chinese literature and culture.

Harumi Maeda is from Kobe, Japan, and received her BA in International Studies from Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, Japan in 2014. Harumi is working with Professor Amy Ohta and is interested in Japanese linguistics, foreign language pedagogy, and second language acquisition. She has served as a Japanese language teaching assistant for the department since Spring, 2015. Besides her studies, Harumi reports that she enjoys teaching foreign languages, watching baseball, movies, and TV dramas. Ichiro (although he is not with Seattle Mariners anymore) and Brad Pitt are her heroes, and she has started to enjoy hiking in the Pacific Northwest.

Sayo Sakamoto completed her MA in Cultural Studies at Tokyo Metropolitan University. Her research interest lies in postwar Japanese literature and popular culture. Specifically, she focuses on the revival of classic themes as a response to dramatic social and cultural changes, the representation of women in the context of masculinity, and descriptions of hardship and violence not only in Japanese literature, but also in films, theaters, and music in the postwar period. Outside of her research, she enjoys cooking, watching movies, and hopping used bookstores as well as thrift stores.

Aaron Steel graduated from Oglethorpe University with a BA in French and is delighted to be spending this year at UW studying Japanese linguistics in the graduate program with Professor Amy Ohta. Although born in Tacoma, Washington, he has lived the majority of his life on the east coast, particularly in Nashville, Tennessee, and is enjoying his return to the Pacific Northwest. Aaron’s major interests are second language acquisition and pedagogy, particularly related to Japanese, and also in languages in general. In addition to his studies, Aaron enjoys developing his photography and cooking in his free time.

Mr. Jody Chafee, Director and Expert Counsel at the Starbucks Coffee Company

From left to right: Aaron Steel, Xinzhan Chen, Sayo Sakamoto, Michael Butcher, and Harumi Maeda.

From left to right: Aaron Steel, Xinzhan Chen, Sayo Sakamoto, Michael Butcher, and Harumi Maeda.
RICHARD SALOMON RECEIVES HUMANITIES ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Richard Salomon, William P. and Ruth Gerberding University Professor, was selected by the Puget Sound Association of Phi Beta Kappa to receive its Humanities Achievement Award.

The prize is given to “individuals or organizations whose contributions to the humanities or arts are considered to be outstanding.”

The board of trustees of the association voted to award Professor Salomon the award in recognition of his study of the Gandharan manuscripts, which illuminate the oldest period of Buddhist culture for which documents exist, and the dissemination of its results. It was presented to him in May, 2016.

The Phi Beta Kappa Society, founded in 1776, is America’s oldest academic honor society. It recognizes and promotes excellence in the study of the liberal arts and sciences.