



Asian Edge

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The Newsletter of the Department of Asian Studies



www.asia.ubc.ca

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A Gala to Celebrate 50 Years of Asian Studies

Dear Friends of the Department:

Another fall term is whirling by, and the countdown to getting this newsletter out is breathless as usual. The Department continues to be busy with events and lectures. As part of its new initiative in Persian Language and Iranian Studies, the Department hosted famous Iranian poet "Sayeh" in late September at a packed event at the Kay Meek Theatre in North Vancouver; even more significantly, the Department has begun offering regular instruction in Persian language as of July 1, and this term Persian 100, Persian 104 and Persian 200 are all being taught by our new Lecturer in Persian Language, Mozghan Zolfi-Sistani. Two weeks ago we hosted our annual Yip So Man Wat Memorial Lecture, and plans are well advanced for the Virani Lectures in Islamic Studies to be held in the spring.

As most of you know by now, 2011 marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of the department, and we have been celebrating that milestone in various ways for more than a year now. Next month, on Tuesday, November 8, we will host the last of our "50th Anniversary Distinguished Alumni Lectures," featuring Dr. **Allison Busch**, Assistant Professor of Hindi-Urdu Language and Literature at Columbia University. On another South Asian front, the department was pleased to be included in the annual fundraiser hosted by the Canada-India Education Society two weeks ago, and the photo

here marks the receipt of a donation in the amount of \$25,000 from the CIES in support of our Punjabi language program and student mobility to partner institutions in India. Finally, we continue to work towards the gala banquet on December 3 in celebration of our first half century as a department. UBC Asian Studies currently leads the Faculty of Arts in alumni engagement, and we hope many of our graduates will come join current staff, students and faculty, as well as emeriti and fellow graduates of the

department at what promises to be a fun and memorable evening. I hope to see you all at the banquet!

Department Head, **Ross King**

*Remember you can still be entered into our earlybird draw by buying your gala tickets before **October 28th!***

Find more information at: www.asia.ubc.ca/gala



Imagine Day: "Welcome to your Major" Event



Department Head Ross King



Lena Huen, recently returned exchange student from Japan, giving a presentation



New Lecturer in Persian Language, Mozghan Zolfi-Sistani and a student



Department Administrator Majja Norman and her keen assistant Molly

On September 6th, our Department welcomed new and current students to their first day of UBC classes.

Yip So Man Wat Memorial Lecture

On Wednesday October 5th, the 2011 Yip So Man Wat Memorial Lecture took place with Professor **Leung Ping-Kwan (Ye Si)**, Chair Professor of Comparative Literature, Lingnan University, Hong Kong as the invited speaker. His talk focused on Hong Kong Cinema, with particular attention to some rarely seen films adapted from Lu Xun, Tolstoy, and traditional opera. Professor Leung highlighted the literary varieties in Hong Kong culture, clarified their historical links with Chinese and Western cultures, and at the same time traced the formation of these characteristics that contributed to the development of Hong Kong culture.



Professor Leung Ping-Kwan Photo Credit: Julia Paek



From L to R: Ross King, Chris Rea, Alex Watt, Leung Ping-Kwan, Chi Shum Watt, Emily Williams, Leo Shin

An evening with Sayeh, one of Iran's greatest living poets

On September 25th, at the Kay Meek Centre, the iconic Persian poet **Sayeh** read from his poetry along with a short performance of traditional Persian music. Having dedicated himself to his art for six decades, Sayeh (**Amir Houshang Ebtehaj**) has shown great perseverance in writing unfettered poems. A renowned poet of conscience, he has been an inspirational and unstoppable force for his country and its people in the age of totalitarian governments exercising brutal and vicious political, social and religious control over Iranian citizens. His deceptively simple poems – loaded with sublime allegories, penetrating ironies, visual images, sober elegies, literary allusions and masterly juxtapositions – evoke powerful mental pictures. The success of the September 25th event led to another poetry reading at UBC on September 29th.

Anight with "Sayeh"
in Vancouver

Sunday, Sep. 25 8:00pm to 10:30
Kay Meek Centre 1700 Mathers Ave. West Vancouver

Tickets: Student \$10, Public \$15
To buy tickets: 604.781.2103

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Photographer: Masoud Harati



Photographer: Masoud Harati

Undergraduate Update

Making new connections

Photos from the first Asia Club event:



Asia Club Meet and Greet



Asia Club President Parris Hemphill

Call out to former Pacific Rim Club members!

Back in the mid-to-late 1990s there was a vibrant undergraduate club called the Pacific Rim Club, or "Pac Rim Club," for short - a predecessor of today's ASIA Club. We would love to hear from former members of the club.

Graduate News

Message from the Grad Reps

We created a Facebook group and a Google groups-based mailing list for the graduate students. Our hope is to use them to disseminate conference/journal calls for papers and organize events. Please click to join:

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/276491015696147/>

<http://groups.google.com/group/ubc-asiagrad/>

This year, we are hoping to have more frequent social gatherings. Stay tuned for the details of our first pub night! We're also planning to organize academic-related gatherings such as conference workshops and paper swaps, so that we can help each other improve the quality of our work and stimulate intellectual exchange. One of our long-term goals is to set up a conference where we can showcase the talents of our own graduate students and create networks with grad scholars from other universities.

Our main goal, however, is to create a stronger sense of community among the graduate students in the department. We were both new to UBC and to Vancouver last year, so we know how overwhelming and disorienting it can be, coming in with no idea of what to expect. Overall, we are hoping to have fun, make friends, and help our colleagues become more actively engaged in the Asian Studies graduate student community. Thanks!

Nicole & Ben

Join UBC's Asia Club

UBC ASIA, or Asian Studies Interest Association, is a place for UBC students with a passion for Asian language and culture. We strive to give students the chance to share their interests in social settings. In fact, we just threw our first event of the year, our icebreaker event. Over 200 students joined together to play games, eat food, and get acquainted with other students on campus that share a lot of common interests with each other.

Right now, we're working together with the Japan Association to do a fun halloween celebration on October 28th. Students can join in for some cultural games at the Asian Center, and afterwards we will be going down to Stanley Park to ride the ghost train. Look forward to these events as they are quite popular!

In addition to holiday events, UBC ASIA also does movie nights, snowboarding and ice skating events, and last year held a soccer tournament. We also try to do academic events, like "professor luncheons" where we highlight a person in the department, and have a fun lunch together with 12 students or so, where one can ask questions and get to know department staff a bit better.

From UBC ASIA, we really want students to come out and get social this year. Being at UBC is so much more than going to classes and studying at the library. Come join us at our events, and get to know fellow students on campus!

For more information on UBC ASIA, or to hear about our future events and activities, please visit our facebook page! www.facebook.com/ubcasia. You can also contact us at ubcasia@gmail.com.

Parris Hemphill
UBC ASIA President

Congratulations to our students!

The Department would like to congratulate our PhD students and MA students who defended their dissertations and theses recently. **Dafna Zur** defended a dissertation entitled "The construction of the child in Korean children's magazines, 1908-1950" under the supervision of Dr. **Ross King**. **Manneke Budiman** defended a dissertation entitled "Re-imagining the archipelago: the nation in post-Suharto Indonesian women's fiction" under Dr. **Tineke Hellwig**. **Yang Liu** defended a dissertation entitled "Imagery of Female Daoists in Tang and Song Poetry" under Dr. **Jerry Schmidt**. **Franklin Rausch** defended a dissertation entitled "The ambiguity of violence: ideology, state, and religion in the late Choson Dynasty" under Dr. **Don Baker**. **Matthew Hamm** defended a thesis entitled "Embodying perfection: the figure of the sage in the thought of Zhuangzi, Xunzi and Han Feizi" under Dr. **Edward Slingerland**. **Julien Butterlin** defended a thesis entitled "Imagining the Japanese nation: the politics of Mt. Fuji, 1760-1825" under Dr. **Joshua Mostow**. **Lorita Chiu** defended a thesis entitled "The construction of the 'ideal Chinese child': a critical analysis of textbooks for Chinese heritage language learners" under Dr. **Duanduan Li**. **Anthea Murphy** defended a thesis entitled "This too, too solid flesh: the representation of Ono no Komachi as an old woman in Noh plays" under Dr. **Stefania Burk** and Dr. **Joshua Mostow**. **Scott Wells** defended a thesis entitled "From center to periphery: the demotion of Literary Sinitic and the beginnings of Hanmunkwa: Korea, 1876-1910" under Dr. **Ross King**. **Mina Hattori** defended a thesis entitled "National and colonial language discourses in Japan and its colonies, 1868-1945" under Dr. **Ross King**. **Guy Shababo** defended a thesis entitled "The structure of the Doctrine of the Mean in diagrams" under Dr. **Don Baker**. Also, congratulations to current student **Nicole Go** who was awarded the William Holland Scholarship.

Alumni Corner

We caught up with Yoosik Oum who received his BA in 1994. He was born in Seoul, but grew up in Canada. After graduating from UBC, he continued his education at Vancouver Film School and majored in classical animation. Yoosik worked for over a decade in the animation industry for studios across North America on many television projects such as Dreamworks' "Neighbors from Hell" and FOX's "Bob's Burgers." We asked him some questions to get a bit of insight into his experience of Asian Studies and some advice for our grads:



Tell us about your studies at UBC. Was Asian Studies your primary major? Why did you choose to study Asian Studies?

Asian Studies was my primary major. For a while, I wasn't sure what to focus on while at UBC but decided on Asian Studies because it just seemed

fitting and had many interesting subjects that I felt I could relate to.

What were some of your fondest memories at UBC? More specifically, in the Department of Asian Studies?

The Asian Studies community was very welcoming and the people were easy to get along with. Some of my classes were very relaxed and laid back. I made some good friends from those classes, and even chatted socially with some teachers during office hours. One of our classes, we all got together at least a couple of times and had dinner together.

What was your favourite Asian Studies class? Who was your favourite Asian Studies instructor?

Korean language. It seemed to be the most useful of all the things I studied. I didn't know the language at all. When I took the class, I learned so much so fast. After the first class, I travelled to Korea and was able to converse for the first time with other Koreans and my relatives. They were so pleased. Dr. **Baker** organized these classes, and I enjoyed them a lot.

Have you been able to use what you learned in Asian Studies in your career?

Korean language was the most useful out of everything. In my particular career, there is potential for an Asian Studies education to benefit what I do, as many of my peers have worked overseas in places like Korea where shows like "Simpsons" and "Batman" have been animated. I have yet to work overseas because the workload is sufficient enough right here. When I was going through a hiatus in animation and considered other careers, I saw how an Asian Studies degree can be a huge benefit in other types of jobs that require a degree and/or a lot of education.

Do you have any advice for future Asian Studies grads?

I didn't have resources like the internet in my time. You do. Take advantage of that; use Twitter, online job boards, etc. to promote yourself and make connections and research all the careers you're considering. It's all there. And to get your foot in the door, to get a job, a lot of it is who you know. A lot of credentials, a degree on your resume does very little. Are you a people person? Are you the kind of guy people like to work with and get along with? Consider that.

Check out Yoosik's website:

<http://www.wix.com/koreancanuck/website>



Faculty News

Productivity at its Peak

Professor **Anne Murphy** while currently on sabbatical has been very productive getting a book manuscript ready and even more significantly, just had a baby. **Kabir David Murphy Rao** was born to Professor **Murphy** and **Rahgu Rao** on August 9th. His nickname at home is "Thamma," which means "little brother" in Kannada, his dad's first language. Kabir's "Anna," or older brother, **Aidan** is thrilled to have a little brother.



Kabir David Murphy Rao



Permenia Wang Tuozhen Rea

Professor **Christopher Rea** and wife **Julie Wang** just welcomed their new baby daughter **Permenia Wang Tuozhen Rea**. Her birth date is 26 September 2011. Permenia's big brother **Peregrin** (who's now 3-1/2) is equally as thrilled by the new arrival. The family is looking forward to a quiet autumn of family time before they move to Australia in December.

New Distance Studies Online Courses

The Department is now offering for the first time online courses. The new online course is Japanese 100-101. Ihwa Kim and Masahiko Nakata are the instructors for the course. This being the first year of offering online courses, the instructors are grateful for the support offered by CTLT and for the patience of their students. So far, the course has been well received by students.

Programs & Events

Distinguished Alumni Speaker Series

Allison Busch, BA '92

Allison Busch's research centers on early modern Hindi literature and intellectual history, with a special interest in courtly India. She did her Ph.D. (granted with distinction in 2003) at the University of Chicago in the department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations. She also received her B.A. in Asian Studies at the University of British Columbia. She has published several articles on the literary and intellectual life of seventeenth-century sub-imperial courts. *Poetry of Kings*, her new book on Mughal-period Hindi literary culture, was released this year from Oxford. An edited volume (with Dr. Thomas de Bruijn of Leiden University) in progress focuses on the circulation of culture in late pre-colonial India. Her current research is on local histories from the Mughal period that were recorded in Hindi's classical dialect, Brajbhasha.

50th Anniversary of the Department of Asian Studies
Distinguished Alumni Speaker Series

Allison Busch
Tuesday, November 8th
Asian Centre Auditorium

**"Seeing from the Outside In
and the Inside Out"**

Allison Busch's research centers on early modern Hindi literature and intellectual history, with a special interest in courtly India. She did her Ph.D. (granted with distinction in 2003) at the University of Chicago in the department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations. She also received her B.A. in Asian Studies at the University of British Columbia. She has published several articles on the literary and intellectual life of seventeenth-century sub-imperial courts. *Poetry of Kings*, her new book on Mughal-period Hindi literary culture, is forthcoming from Oxford in 2011. An edited volume (with Dr. Thomas de Bruijn of Leiden University) in progress focuses on the circulation of culture in late pre-colonial India. Her current research is on local histories from the Mughal period that were recorded in Hindi's classical dialect, Brajbhasha.




Tuesday, November 8th
Asian Centre Auditorium

6:15 Catered Reception
7:00 Lecture and Q&A
8:00 Closing Reception

Check: www.asia.ubc.ca
for RSVP details

Recruiting Alumni for Careers Night!

Thank you to the Asia Club and department for hosting another successful Asian Studies Careers Night on Thursday, March 22. The event was a new format called "Speed Networking." Alumni had a chance to rotate among a few groups every 15 minutes and have a chance to meet new students. A big thank you to our alumni - **David Wallace, Duncan Wright, Gary Matson, Kenneth Wong, Erika**

Thomas, Yoosik Oum, Lin Chen - for sharing your unique career experiences, offering advice, and connecting with students. If you are interested in participating this year (March 2012), please email your contact information to **Christine.lee@ubc.ca**. We are aiming to recruit 15 - 20 alumni for the 4th Annual Asian Studies Careers Night.

Professors Emeriti

John Howes Autobiography Project

Five of Professor **John Howes'** former students (**Tad Hosoi**, **Bill McMichael**, **Tom Whalley**, **Rick Berwick**, and **Gary Matson**) have been setting up regular meetings with Professor Howes since September 2010. They have digitized 39 hrs of video footage and are completing numerous pages of notes and realia from those meetings. The project originated with a group of friends who meet on the first Friday of every month at a local Indian restaurant. All had some connection with Japan and many had a connection with John Howes. In late 2009 Bill invited John to a session and the stories he told about his life in Japan and at UBC were an immediate hit. One of the regulars commented that they should "get this stuff down" and they all agreed.

In the spring of 2010 they started to make plans to systematically record Professor Howes' recollections. They used as an organizational framework an annotated chronology that he had developed for a potential autobiography. Their plan was to film and transcribe video sessions, then pull the transcriptions together into a grand narrative as different themes emerged. They also planned to establish a site on Wikipedia that linked to his many accomplishments and publications and to the document they had developed. The resulting document is not intended for publication. It will likely end up as a bound document for distribution within the family and also will be available in the John Howes fonds at UBC's Special Collections. They also plan to make the document available digitally to researchers through UBC's ciRcle online resource.

Photo Credit: Tad Hosoi



Q&A with Professor John Howes: Our Asian Edge Editor decided to sit in on a couple of these recording sessions and ask Professor Howes a few questions herself

What have been some of the most memorable events in the past half century of the Department of Asian Studies?

My first day of teaching in September 1961. I had been hired to deal with Japanese history. At that time there was, to my knowledge, no full-time undergraduate teacher in North America with that speciality. That had a number of implications: there was no accepted syllabus, no textbook, no colleagues at other institutions. I started with my notes for graduate courses I had taken and with a textbook that had been first published in Britain in 1929. Inconvenient as this was, I remember a feeling of great elation. From the president of the university on down, the new department had a green light. The courses proposed by Bill Holland, head of the new department, had in the spring all been approved. I was the first person in the department who had come up for my whole education in the North American system and so felt I could fit in what I did to what other universities did or would do when they began to have undergraduate courses on Japanese history. My first lecture was in the morning on the first day of classes. I met with about ten very brave students in a classroom in the Buchanan Building that looked straight up toward Squamish, a view that the Chan Centre later blocked. And somehow the ten students and I together made it to April.

Another memorable moment was the opening of the Asian Centre in 1981. **Iida Shōtarō**, an enterprising professor of Buddhism in the Department of Religious Studies, had persuaded the Sanyo Corporation to contribute the huge steel beams that defined the shape of their building at the World's Fair in Osaka to UBC. To complete the construction of the new building with the same shape as the original took a decade, devoted mostly to fund raising. A Japanese-Canadian architect had designed the beautiful building as we now have it. A Japanese prime minister came to UBC by helicopter to participate in the ground-breaking ceremony. And finally we moved in. Later the Institute

of Asian Research became housed in an equally outstanding building of its own. Now UBC, with the Nitobe Garden, the Asian Centre and the Institute of Asian Research enjoys the most beautiful physical surroundings for the study of Asia in North America.

What are your hopes and aspirations for the next 50 years for the Asian Studies Department?

It is impossible to say. In general, though, I hope that what we achieved in the original development of infrastructure for the study of Asia can be continued as the development of Asia itself changes along with the way the University addresses that change. Instead of the two Asian languages that were being taught in 1961, there are now eight including Persian. We can expect similar shifts in the next half century, and I feel confident that the basic framework for the study of Asia now in place is up to the additions that will become necessary.

Do you have any advice for our future graduates who are worried about careers and job prospects?

Of course students have to worry about jobs. The fact of the matter is, however, that those who are turned on enough as undergraduates to stick with language and culture courses can use the ability in analysis gained in their undergraduate training to make their own way. One survey has shown that, though a graduate in pharmacy, for instance, can immediately get a job on graduation in a drug store, by the end of their careers, it is the graduates in humanities that are the presidents of their corporations. One young man who majored in languages thirty years ago, is now, half way through his career, in charge of research in Japanese equities in the Tokyo office of a very large stock brokerage. No one could have predicted when his interest in languages as an undergraduate led to majoring in them what his career trajectory would be. The basic rule seems to be: if the study of something turns you on, just do it and then work out how to use your training after you graduate.

Photo Credit: Tad Hosoi



You're invited!



Department of Asian Studies
50th Anniversary Banquet

Faculty of Arts
UBC Alumni Affairs

Saturday, December 3, 2011

6:00 pm - Champagne Reception
7:00 pm - Dinner and Presentations
9:00 pm - Dance and Mingle

Renaissance Vancouver Harbourside Hotel
1133 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, BC

For Details: www.asst.ubc.ca/gala

RSVP before October 28th to be entered in the early bird draw to win a one-night stay in the Marriot Renaissance Vancouver Harbourside Hotel

Come join us as we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the UBC Department of Asian Studies! Enjoy light snacks and champagne followed by a delicious supper buffet with wine, and a performance by the UBC Persian Music Ensemble.

We will be screening the premier of our documentary film featuring many of our notable alumni. You don't want to miss it!

RSVP before October 28th to be entered in the early bird draw!

Tickets: \$50 per person. Guests and children welcome. Current students and young alumni (graduation years 2006-2011) are eligible to purchase tickets at the special discounted rate of \$25 per person.

Please register and purchase your tickets online by Saturday November 26, 2011. For more information contact Julia Paek at 604-822-3512 or at jpaek@mail.ubc.ca.

Let us know what you have been up to. We would love to feature you in our documentary film or next newsletter!

Check us out on our **Facebook** and **LinkedIn** pages under *UBC Asian Studies* and let us know what you have been up to since graduation.



Thank You!

The Department of Asian Studies works closely with colleagues in the Development and Alumni Engagement Office in the Faculty of Arts. Together we would like to thank the alumni and friends who support our programs and our students. With your help, we continue to enrich the university experiences of our students and prepare them to be innovative leaders, global citizens and agents for positive change.

Support the UBC Asian Studies Department

Please make cheques payable to "The University of British Columbia" with a note "Asian Studies Annual Fund" and mail to:
UBC Annual Giving,
500 - 5950 University Boulevard
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z3