



# ASIAN EDGE



## Asian Edge hits newsstands (and inboxes)

### *Connecting with the community*

Ross King, *Department Head*

Welcome to the first issue of Asian Edge, the UBC Department of Asian Studies newsletter.

We are delighted to share the latest information on events, initiatives and opportunities with current students, friends, and the hundreds upon hundreds of alumni who have graduated from Asian Studies since its founding in 1961.

In this issue, learn about the upcoming 2nd annual Asia Voilà open house event, the new summer language program, and meet two recently hired assistant professors.

Also, catch up on news from our undergraduate and graduate programs and share

in the excitement of two major publications connected to our distinguished professors emeriti.

I am particularly proud of the many new initiatives related to our undergraduate students, especially Careers Night and the Tri-Mentoring program.

Many of these activities and initiatives present excellent opportunities for alumni to get involved and stay connected. I encourage our graduates to visit the alumni section of our new website to post updates about themselves and read about the activities of other Asian Studies grads.

Enjoy the newsletter and please keep in touch!



Ross King

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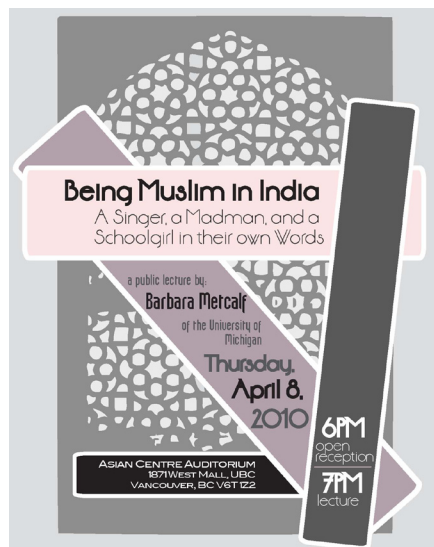
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Asian Edge is produced by the UBC Department of Asian Studies. Please send submissions and comments to Ross King: [ross.king@ubc.ca](mailto:ross.king@ubc.ca). Please see reverse for mailing address.

## Department News

### Virani Lectures in Islamic Studies



Asian Studies' most talked about lecture series is back with a line-up of engaging talks on the study of Islam.

Topics of the third annual Virani Lectures in Islamic Studies range from a century of female rule to Muslim identity based on the lived experiences of a poet, an ex-soldier, and a college girl – all from three different centuries.

The department will share research based on established approaches as well as new and innovative thinking.

**"The Fate of Urdu: Muslims, Language Politics, and Colonial Hyderabad"**

Kavita Datla, Mt. Holyoke College

April 1, 2010, 4-6pm  
Asian Centre 604  
1871 West Mall, Vancouver, BC

**"Two Weddings and a Funeral: What is Islamic about the "Muslim" Princely State of Bhopal?"**

Barbara Metcalf, University of Michigan

April 6, 2010, 4-6pm  
Asian Centre 604  
1871 West Mall, Vancouver, BC

**"Being Muslim in India: A Singer, a Madman, and a Schoolgirl in their own Words"**

Barbara Metcalf, University of Michigan

April 8, 7pm  
Asian Centre Auditorium  
1871 West Mall, Vancouver, BC

All are welcome to a reception before the lecture at 6pm.

The Virani Lectures in Islamic Studies are made possible through the generous support of Mr. and Mrs. Amir and Yasmin Virani.

#### New waitlist helps students

In anticipation of the increasing demand for Asian Studies and language courses, the Department of Asian Studies created a customized online waitlist that is now the envy of other departments as the Faculty of Arts at UBC struggles with enrolment management issues.

When students attempted to register for a course that was full, they were automatically directed to a website and invited to add their name to the course-specific waitlist.

By September, more than 2600 students were on waiting lists. The unmet demand was split between Asian Studies lecture courses, Mandarin Chinese language, and Japanese language (with a staggering 220 students being turned away from first-year Japanese).

The department is hopeful that the Faculty of Arts and UBC will allocate more resources towards additional courses that meet students' academic interests.

#### Celebrating 50 years of excellence

The Department of Asian Studies turns 50 next year and there is a lot to celebrate!

**Call for volunteers:** we are assembling a committee of enthusiastic alumni and friends to help plan the department's 50th Anniversary celebration in 2011. If you would like to volunteer or submit an idea, please email Ross King (ross.king@ubc.ca).

#### Visit us online



**[www.asia.ubc.ca](http://www.asia.ubc.ca)**

#### Offering classes to learners beyond UBC

This year marks the launch of the new ESI Asian Languages Institute that will offer not-for-credit versions of the department's regular language courses to learners outside of UBC.

Beginning on June 28, 2010, the department will offer Cantonese and Persian in addition to Mandarin, Japanese, Indonesian, Korean, Punjabi and Sanskrit. Fees are approximately \$3700 for 96 hours of intensive instruction over seven weeks in the summer — the equivalent of a six-credit course.

Note: UBC students can receive placement equivalencies for the languages taught during the regular academic year, but not credit.

## Celebrating Asian Heritage

In April 2009, we hosted our inaugural open house event, Asia Voilà, partnering with more than 10 departments to celebrate Asian Heritage Month.

Visitors delved into rich Asian collections in the Asian Library, viewed traditional Asian dance and music performances, films, art and photo exhibitions, attended lectures on Chinese calligraphy, joined guided tours of the Asian Library and the Nitobe Garden, and capped off the evening with a reception for alumni, students and professors emeriti.

Mark your calendars for this year's signature event, including a Japanese Tea Ceremony, Korean percussion performers, savoury Asian foods, and much more.

**Asia Voilà**  
Saturday, April 10, 2010  
12:00pm - 4:00pm

Gala Alumni Reception  
Asian Centre Auditorium  
4:30pm

[asiavoila.arts.ubc.ca](http://asiavoila.arts.ubc.ca)



*Omote Senke Japanese Tea Ceremony*



*Gamelan Ensemble*



*Three Mice*



*Bhangra*



*Bhangra*



Clockwise from top left: artistic performance by the UBC Gamelan Ensemble; presentation of a collaborative work by a poet, a calligrapher, and a translator entitled *Three Honorable Mice*; dance performance by the UBC Bhangra Club; and capping off the day with a tasty reception.



# Undergraduate Update

## Building careers and academic excellence

Asian Studies launched four new undergraduate events in 2009 in conjunction with the Centre for Arts Student Services.

With participation from alumni, these events were successful in helping students develop their academic goals and spark professional aspirations.

### Careers Night

In March 2009, we hosted a panel featuring four Asian Studies alumni who spoke about the importance of their Arts degree in carving out successful careers.

The 2010 Careers Night is slated for **Thursday, March 18**, and we are eager to hear from alumni who would like to take part. If you would like to participate as a panelist or connect with students, faculty and other alumni at the reception, please RSVP to Christine Lee ([christine.lee@ubc.ca](mailto:christine.lee@ubc.ca)) by March 12.

### Majors Welcome Event

On the first day of term in September 2009, we welcomed more than 150 students majoring in Asian Studies. Held in front of the Asian Centre, the event was a high-energy kick-off to the academic year, with beautiful sunny weather and food for all.

### Lunches with the Head

This popular series of monthly pizza or sushi lunches have provided majors students with opportunities to give feedback and ideas in a casual environment. This term, lunches expanded to include other Asian Studies faculty members.

### Tri-Mentoring Program

This successful program matched 3rd and 4th year students with alumni mentors working in careers that are of interest to students.

The senior students, in turn, mentored junior students (2nd years) to help them make the most of their campus experience. Matches between mentors and mentees were based on area of study, academic and career interests, and long-term career goals.

Student participants had the opportunity to:

- conduct informational interviews and gain insight into potential careers;
- network in a friendly environment;
- receive practical training in preparation for establishing professional relationships; and
- learn how career choices play out in the life and career path of a graduate.

The department is grateful to the following alumni for participating as mentors in the inaugural year of this program:

Wai Lam Cheung  
Jennifer Fabre  
Skye Lin  
Jamie Wilmott  
Alison Winters  
Duncan Wright  
Catherine Yamamoto

**If you are interested in mentoring a senior student, please e-mail Christine Lee ([christine.lee@ubc.ca](mailto:christine.lee@ubc.ca)).**

## Learning on the road

While Japan is the most popular study destination for UBC Asian Studies students, amazing international study, research and service learning opportunities are also available in China, Taiwan, Korea and India.

The UBC GoGlobal office organizes these transformational learning experiences. We are excited to note that it has been expanding the number of partner institutions in Asian countries.



International Learning Programs

Visit [www.students.ubc.ca/global](http://www.students.ubc.ca/global) for details.

# Undergrad Student Life

Led by President Belinda Wong and her enthusiastic executive team, the Asian Student Interest Association (ASIA), has been working hard to enhance the academic and social life of its student body. As the official student club of Asian Studies, it welcomes students from outside the department who are interested in Asian culture.

"The ASIA club executives strive to promote and participate in academic endeavours while organizing fun events for students outside the classroom," says Wong.

Events and programs in 2009 included:

- UBC-Ritsumeikan University Language Exchange Program;
- UBC-Korea University Language Exchange Program;
- Ghost Train and dinner nights;
- movie nights;
- Asia Champions League soccer tournament

The ASIA club is also looking forward to organizing this year's luncheons with Dr. King and department professors.

**"This is a great way to build personal relationships with our professors,"** says Wong. "We encourage students to join us and let professors know what's on their minds."

In addition to their long events roster, the club is also excited to help with the second annual Asia Voilà open house and an alumni call-a-thon, where students personally thank donors for their donations in support of student initiatives and scholarships.

The ASIA club looks forward to an exciting year ahead and thanks everyone for their continued support.

### Look out for upcoming sporting events:

- Korean Ssireum wrestling, the national sport of Korea; and
- the second annual ASIA Champions Cup soccer tournament in April.

The department encourages students to participate in this program and aims to increase the number of students studying abroad in Asia for periods ranging from one term to one year.

# Graduate News

## Bringing students closer together

The Asian Studies graduate community is composed of nearly 70 students from different disciplines and geographic and linguistic specializations who are at varying stages of their academic careers. Nevertheless, the group has made some impressive changes in bringing members closer together.

"Fostering a collegial atmosphere can be a real challenge," says Nathan Clerici, Graduate Student Representative. "But there have been several changes in the last few years that are really helping."

The **revised ASIA 570 course**, mandatory for all graduate students, introduces questions and problems that are common to all areas of Asian Studies. It also provides a great opportunity to meet faculty and discuss topics that may not normally arise in specialized fields.

In December 2009, the graduate community created an **online forum** to keep students connected. Particularly useful for students who live away from campus and often outside Canada, this valuable tool enables graduate

students to ask questions and post useful information such as special lectures and job resources.

"Since it is created by and for graduate students, it is a low-pressure environment in which we can be comfortable and seek the support of our peers," adds Clerici.

In April 2009, graduate representative Elliott Yates and Professor Sharalyn Orbaugh worked together to organize a one-day **career development workshop** to strengthen students' professional skills and help build their careers.

This informative and well-attended event included CV-writing and interpreting job postings. Two of the department's more recently hired faculty, Dr. Adheesh Sathaye and Dr. Christopher Rea, also offered insights into job hunting.

Fall 2007 saw the renovation of the **graduate space** at the Auditorium Annex. Complete with a quiet study room, TA carrels, a small conference area, and a lounge, this



Students at career development workshop

area was a far cry from the former disarrayed space of old books, random desks and unused shelving. Spearheaded by Robban Toleno (PhD), this warm and inviting space functions as a graduate student hub.

In a less academic vein, graduate students have formed a team for the **Vancouver Sun Run**, the world's second largest timed 10km race.

"A sound body goes a long way to maintaining the mind," says Clerici. "We'll be doing our best to represent UBC at the race in May. Wish us luck!"

## Where Are They Now?

Over the past year, we have heard from a growing number of Asian Studies graduates. Below are some updates that we have received from alumni around the world.

### Andreanne Doyon (BA, 2007)

"Asian Studies has taken me around the globe. Before graduating with a double major in Asian Area Studies and Sociology, I went to Beijing twice to study Mandarin, once for a month at a private school, then for a semester at the Beijing Language and Culture University.

As part of my MA in Planning at the School of Community and Regional Planning, I participated in a field study program with the National University of Singapore and pursued fieldwork for my thesis in Indonesia, comparing urbanization and development in the east and west.

I'm currently working with the City of Vancouver and UBC on a research project on historical conservation in Vancouver's Chinatown."

### Jennifer Wood (BA, 1995)

"I joined the Foreign Service pretty much right after graduation, and I am currently a Consul at the Consulate General of Canada in Guangzhou. Hope other 1995 grads are well."

### Paul Yin (BA, 2004)

"I am currently studying for my MBA degree in Shanghai, China. If any of you happen to be in Shanghai, please let me know!"

Editor's note: Paul is the president of the UBC Alumni Society of Taiwan.



We are excited to hear about the paths our alumni have taken. Check us out on our Facebook page, **UBC Asian Studies - Alumni**, and let us know what you have been up to since graduation.

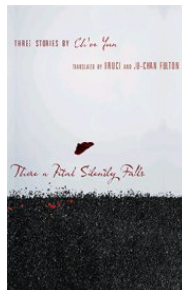
# Faculty News

## And the winners are...



**Bruce Fulton**, associate professor and inaugural holder of the Min Young-bin Chair in Korean Literature and Korean-to-English Literary Translation, and his wife and co-translator, **Ju-chan Fulton**, were awarded the prestigious 17th Annual Daesan Translation Prize by the Daesan Foundation in Seoul in the fiction category for their recent book.

***There a Petal Silently Falls: Three Stories by Ch'oe Yun*** (Columbia University Press, 2008) was one of 37 works considered in this category, and the prize comes with a cheque of ₩30,000,000 (CDN \$30,000).



of Tokyo Historiographical Institute where she is part of a collaborative project called "Bridging the Gap: Strategies for Translating Premodern Japanese Historiographical Materials and Terminology."

Professor **Nam-Lin Hur** has been splitting his time between Vancouver, Seoul and Tokyo. He is also busy managing a five-year, million-dollar collaborative research grant from the Academy of Korean Studies.

Assistant Professor **Anne Murphy** (Sikh Studies and Punjabi Language and Literature) is currently on leave in the Punjab while professors **Joshua Mostow** and **Sharalyn Orbaugh** are spending time in London.

Senior Instructor in Korean Language, **Insun Lee**, is also on study leave finishing off her new textbook, *Elementary Korean for Heritage Learners*.

## Researching around the globe

This year has been a banner year for Leaves of Absence on the Japan side of the department.

Professor **Christina Laffin** won the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) Postdoctoral Fellowship for Foreign Researchers. She is holding it at the University

## Q&A with new faculty

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Jessica Main</b>
<b>Starting Date:</b>	Summer 2009
<b>Current Position:</b>	Instructor, Tung Lin Kok Yuen Canada Foundation Chair, Buddhism and Contemporary Society Program
<b>Previous Position:</b>	McGill University, PhD Candidate and Teaching Assistant
<b>Undergrad School:</b>	University of Calgary
<b>Hometown:</b>	Calgary, Alberta



### What attracted you to UBC?

Besides the strong Asian Studies Department, I am attracted by UBC's great research facilities and location, particularly the Asian Studies Library, which holds one of the best collections of its kind in North America. With diverse East Asian cultures, I find that Vancouver is the perfect place to work and conduct research. I enjoy being near my family, who now reside in Vancouver.

### What is your area of expertise?

The focus of my research has been modern ethical and moral thought within the Buddhist tradition, mainly in Japan. I am currently interested in a sect of Pure Land Buddhism called Jodo Shinshu, or Shin Buddhism, and looking at contemporary and historical human rights issues and discrimination within the sect.

### What are you looking forward to most in your teaching career at UBC?

I am looking forward to expanding the Introduction to Buddhism class, which will become an Asian Studies major requirement option next year. I am also looking forward to developing upper level undergraduate courses, such as ones that deal with specific forms of Buddhism. I hope to help religious studies grow as a discipline within the department.

### What course are you enjoying teaching the most?

I really enjoy teaching an Introduction to Buddhism, an undergraduate 200-level course; and Buddhism, Violence and the State in Modern and Contemporary Asia, a graduate-level seminar.

### How do you cope with all the grey rainy days?

Once I get into my office in the Choi building, it's easy. The offices are nice and I can look out at the wonderful grove of trees situated between the two buildings I consider my second home: the Choi Building and the Asian Centre. I also enjoy walking my five-month-old dog, a bulldog mix, who likes the rain, and, unfortunately, rolling in all the mud.

*continued on pg. 7*

# Programs & Events

## Untold stories of the Chinese civil war



Lung Ying-Tai press photo.

**Something extraordinary happened at UBC on a rainy October Saturday afternoon**, and it happened almost completely under the radar of the non-Chinese community in Vancouver.

A public intellectual from Taiwan, based in Hong Kong, drew a crowd of more than a thousand people to the Chan Centre to hear her talk in Chinese about her best-selling new book, *Big River, Big Sea: 1949*, for the annual Yip So Man Wat Lecture.

**Lung Ying-Tai**, former Cultural Minister of Taiwan, spoke about the stories of ordinary people whose lives were torn apart because of war and power struggles.

This timely talk on the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic and of the retreat of Nationalist forces to the island of Taiwan drew an audience from all sections of the Chinese diasporic communities. All ages were represented, from the under 20s to the over 80s.

Please visit our website for a complete list of programs and events.

*continued from Q&A with new faculty, pg. 6*

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Chris Rea</b>
Starting Date:	Summer 2008
Current Position:	Assistant Professor of Modern Chinese Literature
Previous Position:	Columbia University, PhD Candidate, Harvard University, Visiting Fellow and Teaching Assistant
Undergrad School:	Dartmouth University
Hometown:	Berkeley, California

### What attracted you to UBC?

I was attracted by the department's strong reputation and the influence it holds at both the undergraduate and graduate level. The faculty seem very focused on research and work well together. There's a feeling here of Asian Studies being more mainstream than elsewhere, largely due to Vancouver's unique demographics. My family and I also enjoy Vancouver, with all the outdoor activities it has to offer.



### What is your area of expertise?

Chinese literature, cinema, pop culture, and drama, from the late 19th century to the present have been the main focus of my research. I am particularly interested in investigating the use of comedy and satire as a form of popular discourse during the republican period. I am exploring how this form of discourse was expressed through literature, cinema, and drama and how it has tied into later representations of Chinese history.

### What are you looking forward to most in your teaching career at UBC?

It's all about the students. I am really looking forward to finding and cultivating exceptional students, taking the kernels of interest that they bring to class and expanding upon them. I am also looking forward to exposing new students to the numerous possibilities that exist within the field of modern Chinese literature and then helping them to explore their interests.

### What course are you enjoying teaching the most?

Last term, I enjoyed teaching a 300-level course on modern Taiwanese literature and film in translation, as well as a 400-level Chinese language course that looked at a range of modern Chinese fiction.

### How do you cope with all the grey rainy days?

I love spending time with my son, who is a little over one and a half. Besides reading books and playing with toys at home, my family and I take advantage of nearby Pacific Spirit Park, as well as some of Vancouver's community centers.



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## Professors Emeriti

Professor **Ken Takashima** retired some five years ago, but was spotted in the department office in early January sending off a huge tome (which he described as his 'life work') to Academia Sinica in Taiwan for publication.

This magnum opus continues the work begun by his teacher, Father Serruys, and is some 1600 pages long: *Studies of Fascicle Three*

*of Inscriptions from the Yin Ruins, Volume I: General Notes, Texts and Translations, and Volume II: New Palaeographical and Philological Commentaries.*

Professor **Daniel Overmyer** also stopped by the office in mid-January to present yet another hefty volume, a 542-page Festschrift in his honour put together by former students and colleagues: *The people and the dao:*

*New studies in Chinese religions* in honour of Daniel L. Overmyer, edited by Philip Clart and Paul Crowe. Monumenta Serica Monograph Series LX, Sankt Augustin. 2009.



## 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.

## E-Newsletter

Would you rather receive this newsletter electronically? Do you have an address change or correction?

E-mail us at [ubcasianstudiesalum@gmail.com](mailto:ubcasianstudiesalum@gmail.com).

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A NEWSLETTER FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF UBC ASIAN STUDIES



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