



ASIAN EDGE



Celebrating 50 Years of Teaching and Research in Asian Studies

Ross King, *Department Head*

Welcome to the second issue of Asian Edge, the departmental newsletter for UBC Asian Studies! A great deal has been going on in the department since our inaugural issue appeared in the spring, but of all the things worth reporting at this juncture, the single most significant is surely the fact that 2010-2011 marks the 50th anniversary of the department. Founded in the spring of 1961, the Department of Asian Studies has been at the centre of UBC's teaching and research on Asia for half a century now. Please stay tuned to our website for upcoming events, and especially for special events connected to our 50th anniversary, but let me also call your

attention to two new initiatives currently in the early planning stages: a new push in connection with friends in Vancouver's significant Iranian community to start teaching Persian language in the department (with obvious connections to the Indo-Persianate world which is so important to our South Asianists) and plans on the part of both the Asian Library and Asian Studies to make significant upgrades to the Asian Centre and the grounds surrounding it. I am cautiously optimistic that both of these initiatives will soon gain significant traction, both inside the university and outside in the community.



Ross King

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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. Please see reverse for mailing address.

Department News

Virani Lectures in Islamic Studies



Performances took place on October 16th and 17th and were well attended by a broad cross-section of the South Asian community.

Film Screenings:

Monday, October 18, 6-9 p.m.

Two films by Ajay Bhardwaj, and discussion with the filmmaker in the Frederic Lasserre Building, Rm 102.

Kitte Mil Ve Mahi, ("Where the Twain Shall Meet") on Sufi and Dalit cultures in contemporary Punjab.

Rabba Hun Kee Kariye ("O Divine One! Tell Me, What Shall I Do Now?") on the Partition of Punjab followed by discussion with the filmmaker.

Tuesday, October 19, 12:30-3pm Additional films by Ajay Bhardwaj, in UBC Asian Centre Auditorium.

Scholarly Lectures:

Tuesday, October 19, 11-12:20 p.m.

UBC's own Ken Bryant, Associate Professor, Department of Asian Studies, on Islam and the culture of devotion in North India, in the UBC Asian Centre Auditorium.

Thursday, October 21, 4pm Lecture by Regula Qureshi, University of Alberta, on Performance Traditions in South Asian Islam, Rm 604, UBC Asian Centre.

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

Asian Studies' most talked about lecture series is back with a line-up of engaging talks on the study of Islam, performances and related events on the life of Islam in South Asia with the troupe of **Mukhtiyar Ali**, who represents the 26th generation in a family of Mirasi or traditionally nomadic singers of Rajasthan. He sings a wide range of devotional music, including Kabir, Mira, and Brahmanand, and a range of Sufi (Islamic mystical) poets such as Bulle Shah, Baba Sheikh Farid, Amir Khusro and others.

New waitlist helps students

A year after creating the Department of Asian Studies' customized online waitlist to address and document the increasing demand for Asian Studies and Asian language courses, demand is still overwhelming. Last 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.

Since last year's huge waitlists, some additional resources have been supplied and measures were taken inside the department to increase capacity and raise cap sizes, and as a result enrollment has increased by more than 800 students this year already. Despite these efforts, there are still nearly 1500 students on the waitlist today. 500 of these are for first-year Japanese.

The department continues to work with the Dean's office to identify additional resources and solutions to help us meet the seemingly insatiable demand for teaching on Asia.

Celebrating 50 years of excellence

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

Visit us online



About the Department of Asian Studies Logo:

At first blush, the Asian Studies logo suggests to many a lotus flower, with its symbolization of purity, non-attachment and enlightenment in Buddhist tradition. The design does indeed gesture in this direction, but the flower depicted is in fact that of *Camellia sinensis* or *Thea sinensis*, the tea plant whence all true teas are derived. A genus of flowering plants in the family *Theaceae*, *Camellia sinensis* is used to harvest white tea, green tea, oolong, pu-erh tea and black tea. Tea is the second-most widely consumed beverage in the world (after water), and has played and continues to play such a central role in all Asian cultures that it was a natural choice to symbolize the diverse Asian languages, literatures, cultures, histories, and religions represented in the Department of Asian Studies.



Celebrating Persian Heritage

In early October, the Department of Asian Studies hosted an extraordinary event entitled: "Building Towards a Persian Language Program at UBC: An Evening with Professor Abbas Milani." The evening featured a keynote address by Dr. Abbas Milani, Director of Iranian Studies at Stanford University, noted author and social commentator. More than 300 people were present to enjoy the excellent musical performance and inspiring keynote address.

A language rich in culture and history, with records in Old Persian dating back to the Persian Empire of the 6th century BC, Persian

has been a cosmopolitan medium for literary and scientific contributions to Western, Central and South Asia for millennia. The Department of Asian Studies has long felt the need for teaching and research in Persian language and culture, and is developing a plan to establish permanent Persian Language instruction. The Department of Asian Studies was pleased to be partnering with members of the UBC and Vancouver Persian community as part of a long-term initiative to establish a much anticipated Persian Language program in the Department. The event took place at the Kay Meek Centre on October 1, 2010.



Building Towards a Persian Language Program at UBC:

An Evening with

Dr. Abbas Milani

Director of the Hamid & Christina Moghadam Program in Iranian Studies at Stanford University

The evening also features an Iranian music performance by UBC Persian Music Ensemble

Please join us on this auspicious occasion to celebrate Persian language, culture and history, and to learn more about the opportunities for Persian language studies at UBC. For more information please call: 604-822-4990. Tickets: \$30 - available soon for purchase online or by phone through the Kay Meek Centre www.kaymeekcentre.com or 604-913-3634



ایران شناسی



حرکت به سوی آغاز برنامه ایران شناسی در دانشگاه بریتیش کلمبیا با سخنرانی دکتر عباس میلانی از دانشگاه استنفورد و هنرمندی گروه موسیقی ایرانی دانشگاه بریتیش کلمبیا (همسول). مایید دست به دست هم دهیم و رویای ایجاد گروه ایران شناسی در این دانشگاه را به واقعیت تبدیل کنیم.

جمعه یکم اکتبر در Kay Meek Centre
۶:۳۰ تا ۹:۰۰ شروع برنامه از ساعت ۷
لطفاً برای اطلاعات بیشتر یا شماره ۶۰۴-۸۲۲-۴۹۹۰ تماس بگیرید.

نمط ۳-۶ و فال نه از طریق وبسایت www.kaymeekcentre.com یا شماره تلفن ۶۰۴-۹۱۳-۳۶۳۴ یا کت و بینشانی از این برنامه گوی دست بر حرکت شناسان فرهنگ، زبان و تاریخ خفته خود بخواهیم دانست. این برنامه به زبان انگلیسی اجرا خواهد شد.



Photos courtesy of Shaodan Cen

Undergraduate Update

Careers Night Success

The Centre for Arts Students Services (CASS) was pleased to partner with the Department of Asian Studies to host a Careers Night Panel last March. It was a great opportunity for students to hear from alumni about prospective careers obtained with an Asian Studies major. Thank you to **Clive Ansley** (BA '66, MA '68), **Amber Ballard** (BA '02), **Gerald Duffy** (BA '76), and **Colleen Leung** (BA '78) for returning to the Asian Centre to share their personal experiences and offer advice to our current students. Last year was also the first year Asian Studies offered the Tri-Mentoring program. We matched 10 Asian Studies students with alumni mentors over a 6-month program. Thank you to **Wai Lam Cheung** (BA '04, MA '08), **Jennifer Fabre** (BA '83), **Skye Lin** (BA '05), **Jamie Wilmott** (BA '99), **Alison Winters** (BA '86, MA '89), **Duncan Wright** (BA '08), and **Catherine Yamamoto** (BA '95, BEd '96) for connecting with Asian Studies students. If you are interested in volunteering as a mentor or speaker for upcoming programs, please contact Christine Lee, Alumni Relations Manager, at christine.lee@ubc.ca or 604-822-9359.

Student Success

Department of Asian Studies student **Liam Bates** (aka Li Mu) won First Prize in the 9th Chinese Bridge Chinese Contest, and also garnered the Best Eloquence Award after about 20 days of competition (July 16-August 8).



Last year Li Mu won only Third Prize because of a severe leg injury before the competition, which rather compromised the martial arts aspect of his performance. Kudos to Liam, but also to Asian Studies Lecturer in Chinese, **Wu Xinxin**, who dedicated much time and effort to coaching Liam over the past few years.



Undergrad Student Life

Greetings from the Asian Studies Interest Association! This year ASIA, in conjunction with the UBC Asian Studies Department, endeavours to continue to be both academically and socially involved with the department and student body.

October sees the ASIA club having already held a very successful membership sign up during the Clubs Days at the SUB. In addition, we have also hosted two very fun and rewarding ice breakers with UBC students, Japanese Ritsumeikan exchange students, and Korea University exchange students.

Upcoming academic events and club involvement include those such as luncheons with Dr. King and other department professors, Alum call-a-thons, Careers Night, Asia Voila, and the Asian Studies Department's 50th anniversary.

Social and fun things we have planned are Asian Studies majors socials, movie nights, Stanley Park Ghost Train and dinner, ice skating, Big White ski trip, UBC ASIA Champions League soccer tournament, and much more!

We hope everyone can come out and join us and have lots of fun!

Belinda Wong, President

Learning on the road

Many of our department's graduates will testify that study or work abroad stints in Asia were life-changing experiences for them. UBC's GoGlobal office is in charge of managing UBC's many reciprocal student mobility agreements, and we are excited to note that it has been expanding the number of partner institutions in Asian countries. While Japan remains the most popular destination, many students are not taking advantage of international study, research and service learning opportunities available in China, Taiwan, Korea and India. A recent survey by GoGlobal revealed that finances were the single most significant barrier to study abroad. How can we incentivize study

abroad for our students? 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.

Visit the GoGlobal website for details.



International
Learning Programs

Internships Abroad

AISEC UBC, a chapter of the world's largest student-run organization, has had 50 years of experience sending UBC students and recent grads abroad on international internships. Each year AISEC provides 5,500 members the challenging opportunity to live and work in a foreign country in the areas of management, technology, education, and development. The internship could be located in AISEC's vast network of 107 countries and can last anywhere between 2 and 18 months. AISEC is recruiting this round for exchange participants to go abroad for the winter. The application deadline is coming up soon so move quickly! For more information, check out <http://www.aiesec.ca/ubc> or send us an email at exchange@aiesecubc.ca.

Graduate News

Congratulations to our students!

The Department had a particularly successful round of graduate admissions this past spring, and welcomed 8 new PhD students and 10 new MA students.

Many of our graduate students were successful in several different highly competitive grants competitions this past year, including Fulbright, SSHRC, Korea Foundation and Japan Foundation.

Fulbright Fellow and Asian Studies Masters student **Scott Wells**, will be looking at the transition from cosmopolitan (Classical Chinese) to vernacular language in Korea at the turn of the twentieth century and the reimagining or reinvention of the Classical Chinese tradition in Korea during this period at Seoul National University.



SSHRC recipient **Clayton Ashton** will focus his research on the idea of "ritual" in early Confucianism. Using a number of recently discovered archaeological texts, his research will help reconstruct the development of a

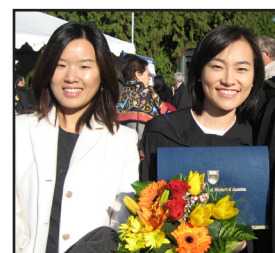
particularly interesting branch of Confucian thought whose views on human nature and ritual make up a much richer and more sophisticated moral theory than was previously believed.

Japan Foundation Fellowship recipients include **Gideon Fujiwara**, **Nathen Clerici** and **Gergana Ivanova**. Gideon Fujiwara's research examines the thought and actions of Hirata Atsutane's students based in Hirosaki domain. Nathen Clerici will be investigating the relationship between subculture and literature as a framework from which to examine literary scenes and their impact on broader cultural trends from the 1920s to the present. Gergana Ivanova will be working on a project entitled "Reception and Invention: Heian Women in Japanese Modernity" which will examine transformations in the reception of Heian women's writings and the images of their authors, focusing on the Edo and early Meiji eras.

Korea Foundation Fellowship recipients include **Jeonghye Son**, **Sinae Park** and **Jee-Yeon Song**. Jeonghye Son's research will focus on the



Korean language used by Korean minorities within the Korean diaspora in Japan and the relationship between language maintenance and their language ideologies. Sinae Park's research interests include the interplay between cosmopolitan and vernacular languages in Korean literary history and the formation and development of premodern/classical Korean literature as a field. Jee-Yeon Song's research focuses on women's history in premodern Korea, specifically Korean Catholic women in the 19th century.



Sinae Park and Jeonghye Son

The annual Japan Studies Association of Canada Conference was hosted by UBC in October. Graduate students from the Department who had the opportunity of presenting their papers were **Anthea Murphy**, **Eiji Okawa**, **Minami Orihara**, and **Jeongeun Park**.

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.

Koichi Ronald Shimoda (BA, 1975)

"I received a 2 year Mombusho Scholarship to do graduate research at Keio University after being a manning member of the Canadian participation in EXPO'75 Man and the Sea Okinawa Japan.

I began working in Japan in 1986 in the Financial Service Industry after transferring from New York where I worked for Peat Marwick Mitchell & Co Ltd Japanese Practice. I returned home to Vancouver BC in 1992 where I worked in the Financial Service Industry and Venture Capital. I returned to Tokyo June 2000 to take an executive role with a major European Financial Institution and am still here."

Richard Liu, (BA, 1993)

"I started the network "Canadians in China" www.canadiansinchina.com over a decade ago, and founded the Canadian Alumni Network that brings together individuals currently in China who attended Canada's post-secondary institutions. Currently, I work for Alumni & Development at Western Academy of Beijing and am the Beijing Alumni Representative for the University of British Columbia Alumni Association."

Tony Fu Shing Tsang, (BA, 2009)

"Upon graduation from UBC, I studied East Asian Regional Studies, with a focus on East Asian Politics and Chinese Political Economy, at Columbia University. During my undergraduate years, I had worked on due diligence and marketing for Morgan Stanley and AIG investment fund proposals while interning at Savills in Hong Kong. And now my passion for East Asian cultures encourages me to intern again this time with Asian Contemporary Arts at Christie's New York."



We are excited to hear about the paths our alumni have taken. 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.



Faculty News

And the winners are...



Rebecca Chau, congratulations on receiving one of the prestigious Killam Teaching Prizes! You are the “backbone” of the largest Japanese language program on the continent. This award comes to you on behalf of the many students who have been inspired by your teaching over the years and whose

letters are an eloquent testimony to your continuing influence on their lives. Students praise Dr. Chau’s ability to broaden language learning beyond the language itself to its cultural context.

Researching around the globe

Professor **Christina Laffin**’s new book *Rewriting Medieval Women: Politics, Personality, and Literary Production in the Life of Nun Abutsu* will be published by University of Hawai’i Press. The book examines the life of Nun Abutsu (1222-1283), a prolific poet and diarist who broke gender and genre barriers by writing the first career guide for Japanese court women, the first female-authored poetry treatise, and the first poetic travelogue by a woman. Drawing from literary and historiographical sources, the book will show how thirteenth-century women were

responding to the institutional changes that transformed their lives as court attendants, wives, and nuns.



Professor **Tineke Hellwig** was offered a 3-month Visiting Senior Research Fellowship at the Asia Research Institute (ARI), National University of Singapore (NUS) for the period January-March 2011. These fellowships are intended for outstanding researchers whose work focuses on Asia. Dr. Hellwig’s research project in the ARI, “The Changing Family in Asia,” addresses social and cultural transformations in post-1998 Indonesia, which will contribute to new ways of understanding Indonesian society at the start of the 21st century.

Q&A with new faculty

Name: Pushkar Sohoni

Starting Date: Fall 2010



Current Position: Postdoctoral Teaching and Research Fellow in the Department of Asian Studies

Previous Position: Teaching at the University of Pennsylvania, PhD Candidate

Undergrad School: University of Pune (professional degree in Architecture)

Hometown: Pune, India

What is your area of expertise?

Most of my research has been on architectural history with a focus on Islamic sites and periods. My research over the past few years has focused primarily on the art and architecture of the Deccan sultanates in the late medieval and early modern periods. I also use other historical sources that contribute to our understanding of the visual cultures of societies, from coins to administrative documents.

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

It has been a real pleasure to have good students, and I would be very happy if any of the courses that they took with me shaped their academic lives or careers. I am looking forward to collaborating with many of the wonderful departments and faculty members here. There is a lot of potential for synergy between departments and people.

What course are you enjoying teaching the most?

I enjoy teaching the “History of Islam in South Asia.” It has an interdisciplinary focus touching on a bit of material culture as well. Of course, the seminar on Indo-Persian architecture is wonderful because it is subject matter that is very close to my research.

How do you cope with all the grey rainy days?

Actually, this is the kind of weather I enjoy most. I have had my quota of the sun doing fieldwork in South Asia, and so I am looking forward to a change in climate.

What attracted you to UBC?

Vancouver is probably the most Asian city in Canada and it only made sense to come to the Department of Asian Studies here. Also, UBC is one of the best universities in North America, and it is a privilege to have a chance to teach courses that have not been taught here before.

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Programs & Events

Distinguished Alumni Speaker Series

**50th Anniversary of
the Department of Asian Studies**
Distinguished Alumni Speakers Series

Andrew Horvat
UBC Asian Studies graduate, BA '68, MA '71
Tokyo-based reporter for the Associated Press, Christian Science, the
Los Angeles Times and American Public Radio

**Is Japan in Permanent Decline – or Just
Keeping Quiet while Doing Well?**

Twenty years ago, Japan's name was synonymous with success. Today the country is undergoing
political turmoil and international disputes. For with US and China at a crossroads, the global stock market
stands at a quarter of 1989 levels and Japanese employment has been eroded by more than half of
temporary workers who lack state or public pension. At the same time, the Japanese have been better for the
average Japanese – affordable housing is more complex, the gender gap is improving,
health care being applied to the disadvantaged.

Which is the real Japan? Or why does Japan seem to be doing so well? And which one will emerge triumphant in the decades to come?

Event Schedule:
Date: Friday, October 22
Location: Asian Centre Auditorium (1871 West Mall),
University of British Columbia
6:00-7:00 pm Catered reception
7:00-8:00 pm Lecture, Q & A
8:00-9:00 pm Casual reception
Coined by Shobuko Sake Bar and Bistro
Sake Tasting provided by Arisan Sake Maker @ Granville Island

Andrew Horvat, UBC Asian Studies alum (BA '68, MA '71) and now Tokyo-based reporter will be speaking on Friday, October 22nd at the Asian Centre auditorium. His talk will center around the following questions: Is Japan in Permanent Decline? Or just keeping quiet while doing well? Event details can be found online on the Department website.

From "Ni hao ma?" to "Hao ji le": a 2010 Asian Studies odyssey' is the talk **Dora Nipp** will be giving on Thursday November 25th. A graduate of UBC Asian Studies in 1980, today Dora Nipp is a human rights lawyer and chief executive officer of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario. Always having a penchant for Chinese Canadian history, Dora was inspired to give voice to Chinese pioneers by interviewing them, which then guided her work on human rights. The historian, lawyer and film-maker will speak on how UBC's Asian Studies program provided the impetus for an exciting and satisfying lifelong journey. She will be speaking at the Sun Yat-sen Classical Chinese Garden, pictured right.



DR. SUN YAT-SEN
CLASSICAL
CHINESE
GARDEN



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

Name: James Welker

Starting Date: September 2010

Current Position: Postdoctoral Teaching and Research Fellow in the Department of Asian Studies

Previous Position: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), PhD Candidate

Undergrad School: Bowling Green State University

Hometown: Nearby Toledo, Ohio

What attracted you to UBC?

Besides having an amazing Asian Studies program, it was a great opportunity to work with some of the best scholars in the field. UBC is a world-class institution so it is a really exciting place to be right now.



What is your area of expertise?

Some of my research interests are Japanese Modern & Contemporary Cultural History, Japanese Women & Gender Studies, and Japanese Queer History & Culture. At UBC, I am focusing on Japanese culture primarily, but the way I think about culture is very historically inflected. The way I think about teaching is that it is important for the students to know *why* something is the way it is by looking at history.

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

I'm really excited about the students. I had heard that students in Canada might be quieter than in the U.S., but I haven't had that problem at all. They are very quick to ask questions and eager to say what they think.

What course are you enjoying teaching the most?

Right now, I'm only teaching one course: "Introduction to Japanese Culture", which I have taught before, but I majorly revamped it this year. I am excited about teaching a course on "Women in Japan" next semester because it will be a new chance for me. I look forward to putting all the course materials together.

How do you cope with all the grey rainy days?

Well I haven't really experienced too much rain here in Vancouver yet. But I don't think I will mind it as long as I can figure out how to keep my ipod dry when running in the rain. Additionally, I never really minded the summer rainy seasons when I lived in Japan. And as long as Vancouver doesn't get as humid, I think I will be just fine.

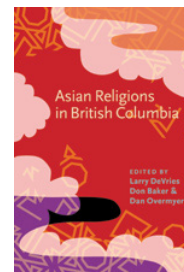
Professors Emeriti

Since Professor **Ashok Aklujkar**'s retirement in 2007, he has been honoured with the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung Fellowship, from October 1st to December 31st 2007, and will be a Mercator Visiting Professor at Philipps University in Marburg, Germany from this October to February 2011. Among many new publications since Professor Aklujkar's retirement, he has made substantial contributions to the volume, *Linguistic Traditions of Kashmir*, edited by Kaul and Aklujkar (New

Delhi: D.K. Printworld), and a chapter on "Traditions of language study in South Asia" in *Language in South Asia*, edited by Kachru, Kachru, and Sridhar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), all published in 2008.

Professor **Daniel Overmyer** released another book from UBC Press this past summer entitled: *Asian Religions in British Columbia*. It brings together fourteen local scholars who take a comprehensive look at Hindus and Sikhs from South Asia; Buddhist organizations from

Southeast Asia; and Tibetan, Japanese, and Chinese religions from East and Central Asia.



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.

A NEWSLETTER FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF UBC ASIAN STUDIES



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