The Update

A bi-weekly roundup of news in the Department of Asian Studies
For our Students, Faculty and Staff

Featured Term 2 ASIA Courses

ASIA 369 Asian Folklore
A survey of oral and expressive traditions in Asia, including jokes, superstitions, fairy tales, myths, music, and foodways; practical training in collecting and archiving folklore.

Register now >>

ASIA 392 Classical Persian Literature in English Translation
Works of classical Persian literature dating from the tenth to the seventeenth century (in English translation).

Register now >>

One Asia Forum Talk Series
Hosted by Dr. Nam-lin Hur, this series will feature different speakers every other week throughout Term 1.
Upcoming events:

**Thursday, October 13, 2016**

**Cartography, Pirates, and Regional Formation in the Sixteenth-Century South China Sea**
With guest speaker Peter Shapinsky (Michigan State University)
4pm - 6pm
Room 604, Asian Centre, 1871 West Mall

**Thursday, October 20, 2016**

**Iconology of Kingly Screens: A Study of the Painting of Sun, Moon and Five Peaks and the Picture of Nine Dragons Behind the Statue of Guan Yu in the East Shrine, Seoul**
With guest speaker Shin Ae Kang (Seoul National University)
4pm - 6pm
Room 604, Asian Centre, 1871 West Mall

To view the complete list of talks, please visit [The full list of One Asia Forum talks >>](#)

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**Foreignness, Cultural Identity, and the Emergence of the Barbarian hero as a Literary Archetype: Using Zhang Fei as a Case Study**

In this talk, Dr. Isaac Yue (School of Chinese, University of Hong Kong) will consider the emergence of the barbarian-hero persona in Ming-Qing vernacular novels in connection to the development of Chinese cultural identity.

**Tuesday, October 18th, 2016**

12:30pm - 2pm
Room 120, C.K. Choi Building, 1855

To view details, please visit [Details >>](#)

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**Colloquium on Religion, Literature and the Arts**

Hosted by Dr. Anne Murphy, this colloquium will feature different speakers every other week throughout Term 1.

**Upcoming events:**
Tuesday, October 18, 2016

Why does the child Jesus kill people in the Second Century Infancy Gospel of Thomas?
With Rob Cousland
12:30pm
Room 604, Asian Centre, 1871 West Mall

Thursday, November 3, 2016

Islam and Empire in India: The Padshah’s Sacred Authority and Religious Pluralism in Mughal Times
With Corinne Lefèvre, CEIAS (Le Centre d’Études de l’Inde et de l’Asie du Sud)
4pm - 6pm
Asian Centre Auditorium, 1871 West Mall, Vancouver

Video: Dr. Chris Rea and The Age of Irreverence

Dr. Christopher Rea visits China File to talk about his latest book, The Age of Irreverence.

In his book he argues that from the 1890s to the 1930s there was a transformation in how Chinese people thought and talked about what was funny. Focusing on five cultural expressions of laughter—jokes, play, mockery, farce, and humor—he reveals the textures of comedy that were a part of everyday life during modern China’s first “age of irreverence.”
Video: Raymond Pai on FairchildTV

On October 2nd, Raymond Pai, our Cantonese Lecturer, was invited onto Fairchild TV's Chatting Platform to discuss the significance of conservation and education on Cantonese language and culture and whether or not Vancouver could become a conservation site for Cantonese.
One Hundred Poets Symposium - Recap

The *Hyakunin isshu* (HNIS, One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each anthology, 13th can.) symposium co-hosted by UBC Asian Studies and the Institut National des Langes et Civilisations Orientales (INALCO), co-sponsored by the Toshiba Foundation, successfully took place over two days (Sept. 19-20) at two venues: INALCO and at the Université Paris-Diderot. 14 speakers, delivering papers in French, Japanese, and English, including such topics as HNIS and divination, HNIS and woodblock prints, and translations of HNIS in French and Hungarian. Conference volumes in both Japanese and English are now underway.

Dr. Joshua Mostow on the far right
Ethnic Bai Tea Ceremony

Tea is an important part of Chinese life style. Tea ceremony is practiced in different ways and in different parts of China. On Friday, September 23rd, our special guests from China South West University performed a Tea Ceremony of the Bai ethnic group, living mainly in Dali Bai autonomous prefecture in south west China. Dressed in traditional costumes, the two girls shared a piece of their culture and their life with us through a cup of tea in the Tea Gallery of the Asian Centre.
Sustainable Feature: Fair Trade Coffee

A brief spotlight on what is being done at UBC and Asian Studies to create a more sustainable community.

Photos taken by Alexandra Smyth
In this busy exam season, coffee is our best ally. The appealing and delicious fragrance of the brewing drink is the reason why we drive ourselves out of bed every day. Our morning cup is a sweet addiction that we are proudly guilty of. Whether enjoying dark, medium or light roast, coffee-savvies cherish the quality and the price of their coffee cup.

Since 2002, UBC has adopted a Fair Trade policy on coffee sold on campus. Fair Trade guarantees equity, affordability and quality of coffee beans with the aim of establishing sustainable farming and improving the living environment of farmers. As a matter of fact, fair trade ensures a minimum price based on the cost of production, which promises a fixed income for producers. In the meantime, fair trade coffee cups are sold only a few cents higher than any other coffee cup coming from obscure trade deals.

In support of UBC’s sustainable vision, the Department of Asia Studies brews fair coffee beans. To encourage a more ethical way of satisfying our caffeine cravings, we offer a cup of coffee for 0.75 cents (with your own mug) or $1 a cup in our 4th floor lounge. Come grab a cup of coffee and connect with our UBC Asian Studies Community!

For more information on Fair trade >>

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**Student Opportunities**

- **Tianzhu -SSHRC Fellowships. Deadline Nov 30, 2016**
- **Sessional Lecturer Position (2016W T2) - FIST 230 Intro to Asian Cinema. Deadline Nov 10, 2016**
- **Student Discount: Piya Behrupiya, Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night in Hindi (October 11 -22nd)**
- **2017 Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme Recruitment. Deadline to apply Nov 18, 2016**
- **Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme – Applications Open**
B.C. Recognizes South Asian Canadian Heritage – Submissions accepted until Nov 6, 2016

Language Sciences Undegraduate Research Conference - Abstract Submissions open from Nov 1 - Dec 5, 2016

Learning Buddies Network Fall 2016 Application. Help struggling young children from inner-city elementary schools develop essential literacy and numeracy.

Japan Foundation Programs (2016-2017) guide and application forms available online

UBC Journal of Political Studies - Call for Editors

Chinese and Japanese-Language Book Clubs

On-Campus Events

Thursday, October 13, 2016
How China Escaped the Poverty Trap
12pm - 2pm
Room 120, C.K. Choi Building, 1855 West Mall

Thursday, October 13, 2016
That’s not Funny - Part of the MOA Visual and material Culture Research Seminar Series
4pm - 5pm
Room 213 at the Museum of Anthropology

Thursday, October 13 - Sunday, October 16
Japanese Studies Association of Canada (JSAC) 2016 Annual Conference
Allard Hall, 1822 East Mall

Friday, October 14, 2016
Japanese Studies Association of Canada (JSAC) Keynote Speaker: Chizuko Ueno
6pm
Peter Wall Sage East Conference Room, 6331 Crescent Rd

Friday, October 14, 2016
Why the Right Went Wrong: The State of U.S. Conservatism in the Year of Trump
6:30pm
Robert H. Lee Alumni Centre – Jack Poole Hall, UBC

Monday, October 17, 2016
Chinese Politics in the XI JINPING Era - Reassessing Collective Leadership
4pm - 6pm
Room 120, C.K. Choi Building

Wednesday, October 19, 2016
Experimentation and Ethnocentrism in Post-Colonial Indian Drama
4:30pm - 6:00pm
Room 120, C.K. Choi Building, 1855 West Mall

Wednesday, October 19, 2016
Diplomacy 101: Globalization Under Siege?
5:30pm
UBC Liu Institute for Global Issues, 6476 NW Marine Drive, Vancouver

Thursday, October 20, 2016
Rethinking the UBC Sexual Assault Policy through an Asian Canadian Lens
12:30pm - 2pm
Chilcotin Room (256), Irving K. Barber Learning Centre, 1961 East Mall

Thursday, October 20, 2016
Rehearsing Cosmopolitan Asianness: Practicing Koreanness in Thai Queer K-Fandom
3:30pm - 5:00pm
Room 120, C.K. Choi Building, 1855 West Mall

Wednesday, October 26, 2016
Examining the Nomination Process: How did we get here? Where are we going?
6:30pm
Robert H. Lee Alumni Centre – Jack Poole Hall, UBC

**Thursday, October 27, 2016**
Minorities and Terror Attack in Bangladesh: A Roundtable Discussion
12:00pm - 2:00pm
Room 120, C.K. Choi Building, 1855 West Mall

**Thursday, October 27, 2016**
Senses of Space: Religious Aesthetics and Political Group-Making in Santa Elena, Yucatan - Part of the MOA Visual and material Culture Research Seminar Series
4pm - 5pm
Room 213 at the Museum of Anthropology

**Friday, October 28, 2016**
Walk in Canada, Talk on Japan - A Q&A Panel with Ambassador Ichiro Fujisaki
11am - 12:30pm
Sage Bistro, 6331 Crescent Road

October 28 - November 5, 2016
Miss Hokusai - A Film by Keiichi Hara
Multiple times
Vancity Theatre, 1181 Seymour St, Vancouver

**Monday, November 7, 2016**
The Science of Healing: Tibetan Medicine as Local Practice, National Heritage, and Global Brand
5 pm -7 pm
Room 120, CK Choi Building, 1855 West Mall

**Thursday, November 10, 2016**
Narcissus at the Fountain - Part of the MOA Visual and material Culture Research Seminar Series
4pm - 5pm
Room 213 at the Museum of Anthropology

**Thursday, November 24, 2016**
Life after Death: The Rebirth of Buddhism in Modern India - Part of the MOA Visual and material Culture Research Seminar Series
4pm - 5pm
Room 213 at the Museum of Anthropology

**Thursday, December 1, 2016**
Tenzing Rigdol: Artist’s talk on contemporary Tibetan art
5 pm -7:30 pm
Room 102, Frederic Lasserre Building, 6333 Memorial Road

**Off -Campus Events**

**Saturday, October 15, 2016**
Book Launch: Becoming Sui Sin Far
2pm
Dr.Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden, 578 Carrall Street

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**Alumni Spotlight – Nick Stember, MA ’16**

The Alumni Spotlight is an interview series where we interview Asia Studies alumni about their career paths, how they became interested in Asian Studies and for any advice that would be useful to our students. This interview features Nick Stember, MA ’16, who works as a freelance Chinese to English translator in Vancouver, BC.
Tell us a little about yourself, your background and how you became interested in Asian Studies?

My first experience in Asia was a failed attempt to backpack from Bangkok to Yunnan after dropping out of high school. Basically, I ran out of money outside of Phnom Penh and ended up teaching English to monks and preschoolers. I wasn’t very good at it, I’m afraid! Growing up, my aunt got me into samurai movies and Chinese gardens—along with my uncle. The two of them have a small landscaping company, and she’s worked a lot on incorporating native PNW plants into East Asian-style junk gardens. That was my first job, moving rocks around and bonsaiing vine maples. My original major during my undergrad was comp sci, but I’ve always been a language nerd so I was taking French and Chinese on the side. I did a very cold year in Harbin to get away from doing tech support, which led to my decision to change majors to Chinese. When I got back to Portland State, I had the good fortune to be hired by Lisa Hatfield (now at OHSU) to teach Chinese in the Tutoring Center there, which was a pretty important development in my life, in terms of showing me that I could actually make a living as someone who geeks out on foreign languages.

While a student, was there anything you did to get ahead with your career? Or anything that you would recommend that other students do?

Well, I think first of all, I was really lucky to have the guidance that I did—PSU’s Chinese program is tiny, so when I was there I basically had two professors, Stephen Wadley and Jonathan Pease. They’re both pretty old school about things, which means they encourage their students to build a strong foundation in the language, from classic texts on up to soap operas and the like, and to definitely consider doing study abroad if you’re serious about learning the language. So even though our cohort was small, with maybe a half-dozen Chinese majors graduating around the same time I did, most of us went on to live and work in China or Taiwan, and a number of us ended up in graduate programs.

On a more personal level, I’m a big advocate of trying things out before you commit by taking out lots of debt or investing big chunks of time in one thing. Unpaid internships and volunteering can be a good way to get experience if you can afford to not work, or can squeeze them in on the side. Otherwise, as cliché as it sounds, I’d say I’ve learned something from every job I’ve done—how to manage time, how to manage people, how to manage customers. Although I’ve only worked as a translator for a couple of years now I often find myself falling back on skills that I learned from random jobs in my ‘misspent youth.’ And I sometimes get work through people that I met years and years ago. So building a network of people is just as important as polishing your CV. Early on I was reaching out to people like Brendan O’Kane, Eric Abrahamsen, and Jeremiah Jenne. The biggest thing is to put yourself out there—the worst thing that will happen is someone will say no, or maybe they’ll trash your work, but that’s just the cost of doing business, I think.

How did you get your first “adult” job after graduating? Was it a simple transition?

My first job after graduating with my BA in Chinese was teaching English at a VIP cram school (even today, I still get people telling me that they saw me in ads on the Shanghai metro). It
wasn’t a super exciting job, but it paid the bills for a couple of years and gave me the chance to keep working on my Chinese and also travel around a bit. It also helped prepare me to work as a teaching assistant. If your Chinese is still shaky, I wouldn’t recommend it for your first China experience, since it’s pretty hard to pick up a second language while teaching your first. If you’ve already picked up spoken Mandarin and just want to get back in the country though, there definitely are worse ways to spend your time.

**After your first job, how did your career progress and what are you currently doing?**

After two years of teaching English I started applying to grad programs in Asian Studies, which is how I ended up at UBC. Long story short, I applied to 14 programs, got accepted at 7 and funded at 3. Of those 3, Chris Rea’s research had the best fit with my interests. I finished my MA program last December, but I’d been doing translation gigs on the side since the summer of 2014 which is what convinced me to take some time to explore this career path rather than jumping straight into a PhD.

Last year I worked on a sample translation of a three-part novel that we pitched as the ‘Chinese Game of Thrones,’ and I finished a big 300-hundred page project for the Ministry of Culture (MoC) in Taiwan, putting together sample translations of manhua, with lettering and everything. Although we haven’t been able to find any publishers to sign off on full translations of anything yet, there’s been a lot interest so I’d say I’m cautiously optimistic that something will happen there, eventually. And I think the MoC was happy with the end product, because I’m actually in the middle of ‘Part II’ of that project right now.

In March this year, I was able to visit China for the first time in about three years, which was really fun. Paper Republic invited me to participate in a roundtable at the Beijing Bookworm Festival, which had always been on my bucket list, and I also got to give a short talk on translation at the Jia Pingwa Art and Culture Center in Xi’an. Thanks to that talk, they asked me to put together a project to publish sample translations of four of Jia’s best-known novels and get those out to publishers and critics, who are finally starting to show interest in his work. And I have a few other things making the rounds, plus the usual assortment of shorter assignments for my regular clients.

**Go Global Interview Pt. 3 – Osaka, Japan with William Strausser**

*Recently returned from a 1-semester exchange to Osaka University in Japan, William Strausser, a 4th year Asian Area Studies major, agreed to share his experience as it unfolded. This is the final part, of a three-part interview, chronicling his exchange abroad. The first interview was conducted after his first week in Japan, the second, halfway through his exchange and the third, after he returned.*
Can you bring us up-to-date on your last couple of weeks? How was the last leg of your exchange?

August was absolutely crazy! For the first half of the month, I was just spending time around Osaka. I visited some matsuri (festivals), saw some fireworks, and explored some nearby cities, but the highlight had to be seeing some games of the Koshien tournament. Koshien is the national high school baseball tournament which takes place every year at Osaka’s Koshien stadium in August. It is a huge deal in Japan – even bigger than the Olympics – so being able to see it in person was a special experience.

For the latter half of August, I spent two weeks travelling with my parents. We visited Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka, walking nearly 10 miles (16 km) per day. Showing them around the country was a great experience. It helped me realize just how comfortable I had become navigating Japan compared to when I was fresh off the plane.

How were exams? Were they any easier or harder than the ones at UBC?

They were much easier than at UBC. I don’t mean to put down Osaka University – especially given the fact that I was merely in the English-language exchange program – but my courses this summer made me appreciate the depth and rigor of the Asian Studies program at UBC. Our department is pretty incredible, and I feel very fortunate to be able to earn my degree here.

Your Japanese must have improved a lot. What have you accomplished using Japanese that you are most proud of? Do you have any plans on how to maintain your new language skills now that you are back?

It’s hard to come up with any tangible accomplishments I’ve made in my Japanese ability, but it has certainly improved quite a bit since before I left. Though it’s still difficult for me to have any meaningful conversations with people, I am able to understand and say significantly more than I could before. Rather than having to carefully think through every word that comes out of my mouth, I’ve been able to build up some “muscle memory” with a number of phrases.

I’m not yet sure exactly what the best way to maintain my language will be now that I’m back. I definitely plan to watch more Japanese films; I’ve found that watching movies with subtitles is an immense help now that my listening ability has improved. I also hope to make use of the programs available at UBC to meet native speakers.

We Welcome your Submissions

If you have a story that you would like featured in our biweekly update please submit your story here and it could be featured in the next Update!

Missed an Update?

All past newsletters may be found here.