The Asian Edge, a bi-annual report, summarizes the main news and events of UBC's Department of Asian Studies.

Top Stories

The 2018 Yip So Man Wat Memorial Lecture featuring Dr. Rey Chow

Dr. Rey Chow is Anne Firor Scott Professor of Literature at Duke University, USA. She is an elected fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and serves on the boards of over 55 journals, book series, and research centers around the world. The public lecture, titled “The Guest’s View: Some Thoughts on Director Ann Hui's 許鞍華 Work,” is accompanied by a research seminar the following day on novelist Leung Ping-kwan 梁秉鈞 (1949-2013). We are excited to be hosting Dr. Chow for this year's event, on January 17th and 18th at UBC. Be sure to register online!
Our Lunar New Year Celebration is coming up soon!

On February 9th, 2018, we invite you to the Asian Centre to participate in fun activities that will celebrate the cultures of China and Korea on this special day. Join us in bringing in the New Year with friends, food, activities, and performances.

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Asian Studies Annual Careers Night to be held March 6th, 2018

A wonderful opportunity to gain advice and network with people who have found exciting careers after an Asian Studies degree. We invite all Asian Studies Alumni interested in participating or being a speaker at this year’s event to email our event coordinator, Oliver Mann at oliver.mann@ubc.ca.

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2018 Harjit Kaur Sidhu Memorial Program features Gurvinder Singh, award-winning filmmaker of "Anhe Godhe da Daan" and "Chauthi Koot"

This year’s program features Punjabi-language filmmaker Gurvinder Singh for film screenings and discussion of his award-winning films, which allow access to discussion of social issues, cultural history, and literary/cultural production. The event coincides with SACPA on March 2nd and 3rd.

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The 1st UBC Cantonese Singing Contest currently accepting contestants

The contest's preliminary rounds will take place on January 25th and 26th, and the final round will be held on March 9th, 2018, in the AMS Nest. The deadline for contestants to sign up is January 10, 2018, or until all spots are filled. Good luck to all contestants!

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The UBC Asian Library, in partnership with the Faculty of Arts and Alumni UBC, is offering four Asian-language book clubs from January to April 2018. A registration fee of $10 includes a copy of the book and light refreshments. Limited spots available.

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The 2017 John Howes Lecture postponed to first quarter of 2018

Originally postponed in November 2017, we hope to reschedule our annual lecture, with Dr. Peter Kornicki, for the first quarter of 2018. Register here to be notified when the date of the lecture is announced.

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UBC hosts South Asia Conference of the Pacific Northwest (SACPAN)

SACPAN has been sponsored by the University of British Columbia and the University of Washington since the mid 1960’s. This year’s conference will be held at UBC from March 2-3, 2018.

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Connect

Asian Studies Letterman Jackets are now available to pre-order for Spring 2018

The Asian Studies Letterman Jackets are back again for another season. Deadline to order is January 31st. See more details about jacket sizing and design online, and pre-order soon!

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Asian Studies is on Linkedin

With over 280 members, start reconnecting with other Asian Studies alumni and students today!

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Interviews
Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Christina Laffin
In our Faculty Spotlight Interviews, we ask our instructors about their early lives, career development and proudest accomplishments. This interview features Dr. Christina Laffin, Associate Professor in Classical Japanese Studies. Her studies focus on women’s writing, female education and literacy, and women’s professional work, but you can read even more about her journey to get there in her interview.

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Meiji at 150 Podcast with Dr. Christina Yi
Dr. Christina Yi reads the Meiji Period from the perspective of literary studies and discusses the impacts of the Meiji Restoration on writers in Japan, especially Korean and Korean-Japanese writers composing literature in Japanese.

Read More

Meiji at 150 Podcast with Dr. Peter Nosco
Dr. Nosco dispels several misconceptions about individuality in Japan prior to the Meiji Restoration, along with sharing several fascinating anecdotes of personal experiences of the 1960s student protests in the US and Japan.

Read More

Dr. Chris Rea and Dr. Bruce Rusk talk to ChinaFile about their recently published translation of *The Book of Swindles*.
Our department’s very own Dr. Christopher Rea and Dr. Bruce Rusk have translated *The Book of Swindles*, a chronicle of scams and deception from Ming China. ChinaFile interviews them here on their new translation. Check out other videos, interviews, and articles that have featured Rea and Rusk [here](https://secure.campaigner.com/CSB/Public/archive.aspx?args=MjM5NTI5MTA%3d).

**MA student Chen Xin featured in interview on the popular literary genre of “Boys’ Love” in China**

Interviewed by Slutever, UBC student Chen Xin discusses “Boy’s Love”, the power of slash fiction, gay male eroticism, and what the phenomenon means for notions of gender and sexuality in China.

**Meet our Students: Minami Orihara, PhD student in Japanese Social History**

Minami discusses why UBC faculty members were key to her decision to study here. Her dissertation involves an examination on the evolution of trust and cooperation in Tokugawa Japan.

**PhDivas features “Dealing with Diaspora: Kiran Sunar on Punjabi Legacies & Queer of Color Community**

As a PhD student in Asian Studies at UBC, Kiran Sunar reads, translates, and speaks multiple languages as a part of reclaiming Punjabi literary forms from Orientalism. In this interview with PhDivas, Sunar asks “How do we keep our wounded?” in a conversation about generosity, kindness, and creation in activism and literature.
Meet our Students: Casey Collins, PhD student in Modern Japanese & Korean Religion

Casey studies contemporary Japanese and Korean esoteric Buddhism and new religious movements. He talks about graduate studies as an "opportunity to consider difficult questions, test [his] ideas, and strive for new knowledge."

Meet our Students: Scott Wells, PhD student in Korean Linguistics

Scott reveals why he chose UBC, and how the university and its faculty have supported him in his graduate studies journey. His studies mainly involve examining the development of a Korean education that centered vernacular Korean as the primary medium of instruction.

Meet our Students: Ajay Bhardwaj, PhD Student in Punjabi Literature and Religion

Ajay's film work has explored "local histories, personal memories, social lives, and the vibrant lives of the texts in performance today." After Dr. Anne Murphy invited him to screen his films at UBC in 2010 and 2012, Ajay decided soon after to apply for a PhD at the Department of Asian Studies.

Featured Term 2 Courses
ASIA 351: Modern Chinese Fiction in Translation
Reading of selected novels and stories written between 1750 and the present. Taught by Dr. Christopher Rea.

ASIA 302: Theravada Buddhism
History, story, and culture of the major form of Buddhism primarily focused on the regions of Sri Lanka, and mainland Southeast Asia. Taught by Dr. Jessica Main.

ASIA 324: Literature in Hong Kong
A survey of the literature of Hong Kong, from classical times to the present. Important periods in literary history, major authors, and important genres, including poetry, essays, and fiction. Instructor to be announced.

ASIA 398: Narrative Literature in Premodern India
Stories of gods, goddesses and religious heroes from the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Puranas, Avadanas and in classical poetry and drama. Taught by Dr. Adheesh Sathaye.

ASIA 302: Theravada Buddhism
ASIA 365: Punjabi Cinema
ASIA 367: Contemporary Korean Culture

Research

Dr. Peter Nosco’s new book: Individuality in Early Modern Japan
Two of the most commonly alleged features of Japanese society are its homogeneity and its encouragement of conformity, as represented by the saying that the nail that sticks up gets pounded down. The primary goal of Nosco’s volume is to challenge these and a number of other long-standing
assumptions regarding Tokugawa (1600-1868) society, and thereby to open a dialogue regarding the relationship between the Japan of two centuries ago and the present.

Dr. Christina Laffin invited to join the Royal Society of Canada College of New Scholars, Artists, and Scientists

Those named to the College represent the emerging generation of scholarly, scientific and artistic leadership in Canada. Laffin’s studies include women writers in medieval Japan.

New Translation by Christopher Rea and Bruce Rusk: The Book of Swindles

Dr. Christopher Rea and Dr. Bruce Rusk have translated The Book of Swindles, a chronicle of scams and deception from Ming China. These stories are of fortunes made and lost, of cunning crooks and unsolved crimes.

Dr. Askari’s research on a sixteenth-century illustrated Persian manuscript featured in University of Oxford series on the Bodleian Archive

Nasrin Askari’s research project “Elite Folktales: An Exquisite Sixteenth-Century Illustrated Persian Manuscript in the Ouseley Collection of the Bodleian Libraries,” concerns a finely illustrated Persian manuscript, dated 1565, that contains four folktales. She conducted a close textual and contextual study of its tales, while paying attention to the themes of its miniature paintings, in order to understand who commissioned it and why.
The FROGBEAR team's textual and related evidence now available in public database

The database features and will continue to grow a collection of photographs of manuscripts and texts, "serving as a unique virtual library for use by scholars, students and the public." See what is available here.

Donald Baker and Bruce Fulton named Distinguished Friends of Korea

Dr. Donald Baker and Dr. Bruce Fulton were honored by the Friends of Korea organization, which is dedicated to enhancing cultural awareness and friendship between Americans and Koreans.

Fall Highlights

HKSI hosts Professor Bell Yung for a series of events on Hong Kong's historical folk music

The second season of the UBC Hong Kong Studies Initiative kicked off with a reception, a special lecture on Hong Kong's folk music, and a School of Music colloquium by Prof. Bell Yung of the University of Pittsburgh. For webcasts and photos of the events, please see here and here.
**Artists' Roundtable for Canada at 150+: Trauma, Memory and the Story of Canada with SACHA**

Artists Umesh M.S., Sonny Assu, and Hyung-Min Yoon participated in the roundtable, organized by the South Asian Canadian Histories Association. The event was made possible with generous funding from the Canada 150 Fund. **Read More**

**Everything You Wanted to Know about Grad School (but were afraid to ask): An Asian Studies Information Session**

If you missed the event, videos of the session will soon be posted on our website. Aimed at students interested in graduate studies, this event addressed questions about the grad school experience, application, and other aspects. Speakers at the event included faculty, current graduate students, and recent graduates. **Read More**

**Department lays plans to grow Persian language and culture courses**

The initiative is to fill the "absence of a strong tradition of 'Middle Eastern' Studies at UBC," as Department Head Dr. Ross King, who is currently on leave, puts it. In seeking secure funding for a full-on professorial position in Persian Language and Literature or Persian Literature and Iranian Studies, we hope that UBC can then offer a more diverse, well-rounded, and inclusive study of Asia. **Read More**

**The First Annual Dr. B.R. Meiji at 150 Podcast initiative**

**Meiji at 150 Podcast initiative**
Ambedkar Annual Memorial Lecture held on November 2

The lecture, given by Professor Vivek Kuma, discussed B.R. Ambedkar, India's first Law Minister, as well as an economist and social reformer. He campaigned against social discrimination, while also supporting the rights of women and labour.

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explores recent research of prominent scholars of Japan

Host Tristan Grunow interviews specialists of Japanese history, literature, art, and culture. Tune in to hear more about scholars' approaches to one of Japan's most transformative periods. Past guests have even included our very own department faculty!

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Student News

UBC students take home prizes in 2017 BC “Chinese Bridge” Mandarin Singing Contest

The contest was successfully held on November 4th, 2017, with 7 UBC students winning awards. Congratulations to our students who participated!

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Annual Japanese Movie Night proves to be a hit once again this year

The Japanese Language Program hosted another successful movie night this past October. UBC and Ritsumeikan House students shared laughs, food, and language!

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Check out photos from Imagine Day, where our year began!

Held on September 5th, students had the opportunity to join the Asian Studies community, and kick off the new school year with faculty, fellow students, and alumni.

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