

THE REED

Spring 2015



The Reed

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CONTENTS

- 3 WEAI & Alumni News
- 4 Unforgettable Nights of Poetry & Art with Xu Bing
- 8 Museums & Material Culture: East Asia
- 12 Dorothy Borg Research Program
- 13 10th Annual Lecture on Japanese Politics
- 14 Modern Taiwan Lecture Series
- 15 Q&A w/ Interact Fellow Jamyung Choi

COVER

[Xu Bing's *Phoenix* installation inside the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, which hosted two nights of poetry and art with distinguished guests](#)

CREDITS

Ross Yelsey
Publications & PR Coordinator

Reece Garrett Johnson
Designer/Editor

Laura Lechner
Student Affairs Coordinator



This spring, we are pleased to introduce you to the new redesign of *The Reed*. Featuring more stories and richer visuals, this incarnation of the magazine will more vividly present the Weatherhead East Asian Institute's events, academics, students, scholars, and accomplished alumni.

In this issue, we are delighted to announce the launch of the Dorothy Borg Research Program. Named in honor of Professor Borg, a leading scholar of U.S.-East Asian relations, this initiative will fund multiple research programs, postdoctoral positions, collaborative grants, and graduate fellowships that, together, will broaden and redefine our study of the connections between East Asia and the United States. In upcoming issues of *The Reed*, you will no doubt learn more about the scholars and research projects that this new venture will involve.

Following a remarkable year of events programming, including many lectures and conferences presented by our Modern Tibetan

Studies Program and Center for Korean Research, this issue also shares images and accounts from several of our noteworthy lectures and presentations. They include an unforgettable evening with the artist Xu Bing and ten eminent Chinese and American poets; Professor Gerald Curtis's much-anticipated tenth annual lecture on Japanese politics; a popular five-part series featuring curators, collectors, and academics who specialize in East Asian art and material culture; and the extensive modern Taiwan lecture series. We hope that *The Reed* captures some of the excitement that these events had created on campus.

Please enjoy the stories in the following pages and have a wonderful summer season. In the autumn edition of *The Reed*, we look forward to sharing stories with you about the new faculty and scholars who will join the WEAI during this time of innovation and expansion.

Eugenia Lean
DIRECTOR

WEAI NEWS

Distinguished Economist Takatoshi Ito Joins WEAI Faculty

WEAI welcomes to its faculty the distinguished economist Takatoshi Ito, former dean of the University of Tokyo's Graduate School of Public Policy and former deputy vice minister for international finance in the Japanese government. Professor Ito joined Columbia as a professor of international and public affairs in January 2015. He also serves as associate director for research at Columbia Business School's Center on Japanese Economy and Business.

Professor Carol Gluck Appointed Cleveringa Professor at Leiden University

WEAI professor Carol Gluck, the George Sansom Professor of History at Columbia University, was named the 2014-2015 Cleveringa Professor at Leiden University. A renowned historian of Japan who works on issues of historiography and collective memory, Professor Gluck provided a series of lectures and tutorials at Leiden in 2014 and 2015 about the ways that World War II is commemorated in Asia.

Taming Tibet, a Study of the WEAI, Wins Book Award

Emily T. Yeh's *Taming Tibet: Landscape Transformation and the Gift of Chinese Development*, a Study of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, recently received the 2015 E. Gene Smith Book Prize from the Association for Asian Studies. The book, published by Cornell University Press, examines — through years of ethnographic fieldwork — how Chinese development projects in Tibet served to consolidate state space and power.

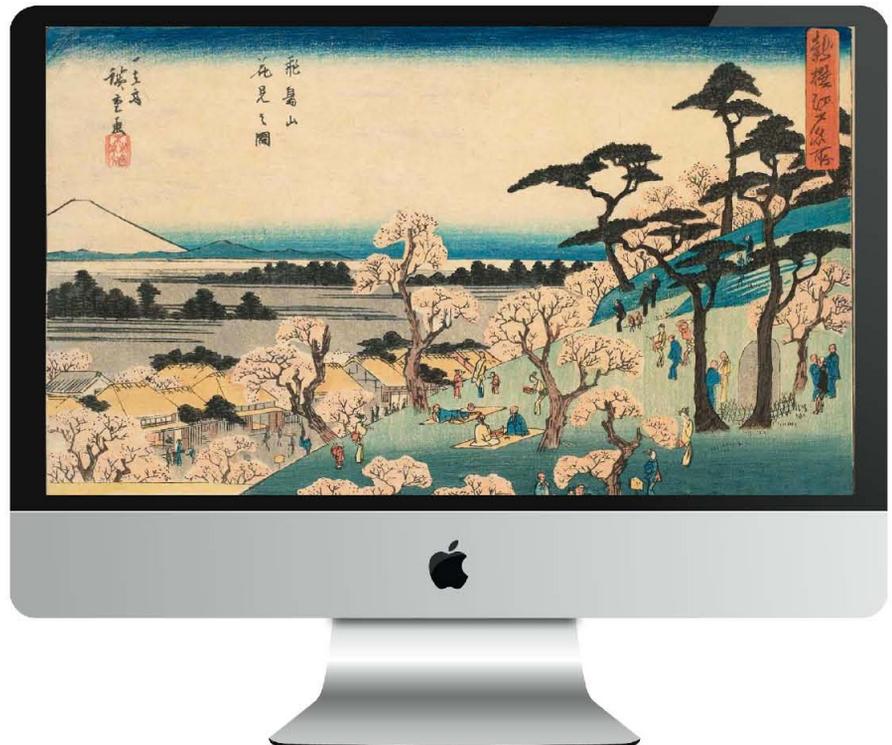
DIGITAL HUMANITIES WORKSHOP & RECEPTION

On March 6, 2015, WEAI and the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures hosted a day-long Digital Humanities Workshop that introduced students, faculty, and the public to new ways of using technology to conduct and present research. The workshop featured members of Ritsumeikan University's Art Research Center and Digital Humanities Center in Japanese Arts and Culture. Professors Ryo Akama, Keiko Suzuki, and Keiji Yano traveled from Kyoto to New York to discuss their efforts toward creating a digital museum and a searchable image database containing both digitalized works of art and digitalized books.

Their presentation was followed by a lecture by Columbia University's own Dennis Tenen. An assistant professor

of English and comparative literature and co-founder of Columbia's Group for Experimental Methods in the Humanities, Tenen discussed the new avenues of inquiry that digital archives and digital research can allow. Preceding this workshop, WEAI invited Richard Jean So, assistant professor of English at the University of Chicago, to speak in December about the computational methods and digital tools that can be used in the study of modern China.

As the digital humanities continue to expand at universities and museums, WEAI looks forward to continuing its conversation with scholars at Columbia and at institutions around the world about the most imaginative ways to use technology to further the study of East Asia.





On February 24 and 25, 2015, Columbia hosted a number of distinguished guests for a two-day series of events in honor of Xu Bing's monumental *Phoenix* installation. This work, which has been on display in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine since last year, consists of two enormous birds composed of materials recovered from urban construction sites in China.

On February 24, five of China's most renowned poets — Bei Dao, Zhai Yongming, Zhou Zan, Xi Chuan, and Ouyang Jianghe — joined Xu Bing, Professor Lydia H. Liu (The Wun Tsun Tam Professor in the Humanities, Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures), and Professor John Rajchman

UNFORGETTABLE NIGHTS OF POETRY AND ART WITH XU BING

(Adjunct Professor, Department of Art History and Archaeology) for a panel discussion entitled "Sound and Image: Chinese Poets in Conversation with Artist Xu Bing." Xu Bing described the influence of poetry — and, indeed, the work of these poets — on his own art. Among other things, the distinguished panelists discussed their experiences of living and working in America and how their return to China altered the character of their poetry and art.

Above all, the poets, all of whom share some connection with Xu Bing and his

project, engaged with the challenging and productive questions of how sound and image relate to each other across different spheres of artistic production in contemporary China.

The following evening, over 400 people were in attendance as the poets honored Xu Bing's work with a reading at the Cathedral of St John the Divine. They were joined at the cathedral by five poets from the United States: Charles Bernstein, Afaa Weaver, Marilyn Nelson, Pierre Joris, and Meimei Berssenbrugge. The event, titled

“Birds of Metal in Flight: An Evening of Poetry with 5+5,” also featured opening remarks from the Very Rev. Dr. James A. Kowalski (the Cathedral of St. John the Divine) and Professor Lydia H. Liu. For the reading, the poets alternated — one American poet followed by one Chinese poet — in a unique event of unprecedented artistic interaction between China and the U.S. Most of the Chinese poets read their work in Chinese (with brochures providing the audience with written translations), giving the audience a rare opportunity to hear the works of these authors in their original language.

The last poet to read was Ouyang Jianghe, whose long poem *Phoenix* is in direct dialogue with Xu Bing’s installation. Following the reading, Xu Bing and the poets sat for a book signing

and met with members of the audience at a reception held directly under his striking sculptures — a fitting end to a grand occasion.

“The most important poets from contemporary China were in dialogue with some of the most renowned American poets about their world,” said Professor Lydia H. Liu. “It was an incredible encounter — an encounter that doesn’t happen often. It gave dignity to poetry in the same way that Xu Bing’s *Phoenix* gave dignity to migrant labor. That space in the cathedral made the event very unique. It was almost a musical experience.”

Complete video of this event can be found on WEAI’s YouTube page and blog.

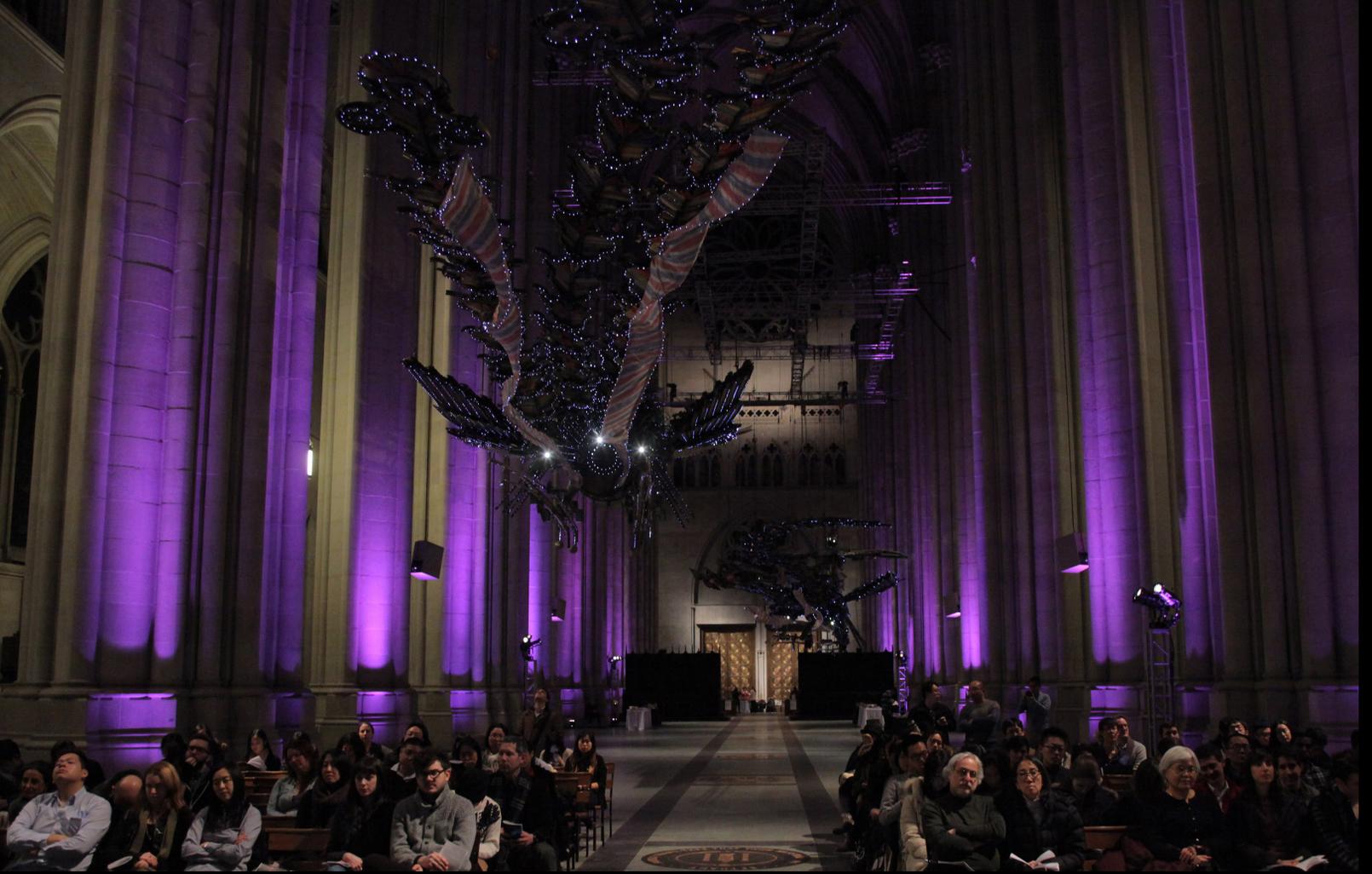
Written by Christopher Peacock

PHOENIX

An excerpt from the poem *Phoenix* by Ouyang Jianghe. Translated by Austin Woerner.

“ In the phoenix, we see our own reflection. Collectors buy birds because they cannot be them. Artists make birds because birds are not birds. Birds fly from the dictionary, flocking off of turtleshells into blockletter, passing out of the biological realm... ”





BOTTOM: Artist Xu Bing addresses the audience at the close of the "Birds of Metal in Flight" poetry reading on February 25th.





TOP: The poets, Xu Bing, and Professor Lydia H. Liu assemble for a photograph in the poet's corner at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine.



MUSEUMS & MATERIAL CULTURE: EAST ASIA





During the 2014-2015 academic year, the Weatherhead East Asian Institute and the Department of East Asia Languages and Cultures hosted a series of five events titled “Museums and Material Culture: East Asia,” which welcomed an array of museum professionals, academics, and art experts to Columbia. Taking full advantage of the many museums and galleries located in New York City, the WEAI invited leading curators and collectors to discuss issues surrounding the acquisition and exhibition of East Asian art and material culture.

On September 25, David Harvey, Laurel Kendall, and Ross MacPhee — all from the American Museum of Natural History — discussed the possibility of someday adding an Asia wing to the museum. On October 1, Ethan Cohen, the CEO of New York-based Ethan Cohen Fine Arts, provided an insider’s look at the contemporary Chinese art market. During the event, moderated by WEAI professor Dorothy Ko, Cohen discussed Xu Bing, Li Daiyun, and other Chinese artists whose work has become

Pictured: *Ermine fur lined embroidered robe, late 19th century*

Credit: *Higinbotham Textile Collection*

MUSEUMS & MATERIAL CULTURE EVENT HIGHLIGHTS



Ethan Cohen & Professor Dorothy Ko



John T. Carpenter of the Metropolitan Museum of Art

widely known—and widely coveted—around the world. In 1987, Cohen, who had been a designer for Diane von Furstenberg, established his own gallery of contemporary Chinese art, which, the following year, presented Ai Weiwei’s first solo show.

On February 26, John T. Carpenter, the Curator of Japanese Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, talked with WEAI professor Haruo Shirane about the ways that digital technology has impacted art research and exhibition. In an interactive presentation, Carpenter showed the audience the sophisticated art research resources available through the Met Museum’s website.

Also on February 26, BuYun Chen, a professor at Swarthmore College, and Rachel Silberstein, a lecturer at the Rhode Island School of Design, discussed the history of Chinese fashion with WEAI professor Dorothy Ko. Chen and Silberstein focused on the way textiles were produced and marketed. Finally, on May 1, Dominique Townsend, the Head of Interpretation and Innovation at the Rubin Museum of Art, joined Melissa Kerin, a professor at the College of William & Mary, and WEAI professor Gray Tuttle to talk about how Tibetan material culture is collected and presented in the West.

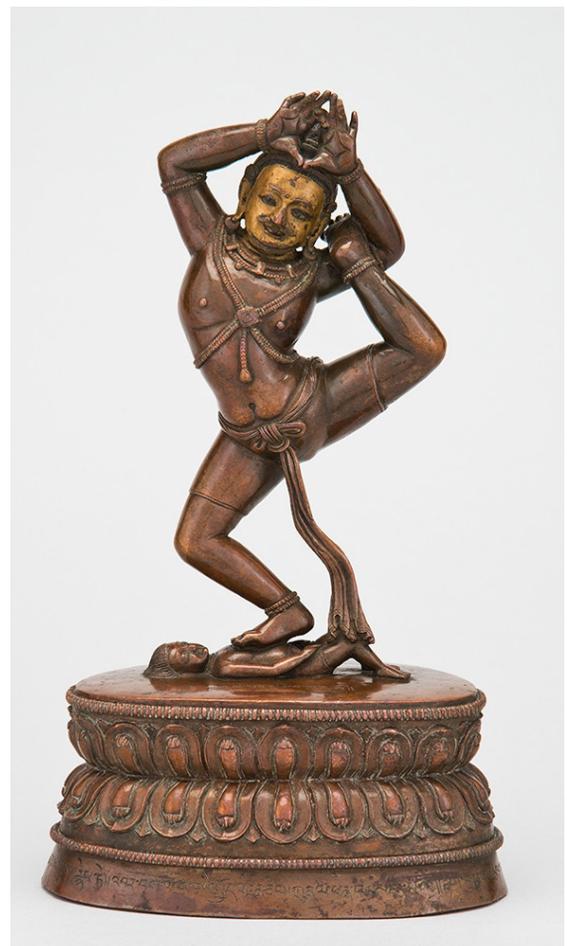
“A great aspect of this series is that it draws on the strengths of our faculty, many of whom have expertise and interests in material culture,” said Eugenia Lean, WEAI director. “What is also great about this program is that it draws a large public audience because these topics appeal very much to New Yorkers.”



*Illustration of the Commanders who Pacified Western Japan by Yoshu (Hashimoto) Chikanobu, Meiji Period (1868-1912)
Credit: The Metropolitan Museum of Art*



*Mt. Fuji from the series Famous Mountains in Japan
by Utagawa Yoshimori, CA. 1865.
Credit: The Metropolitan Museum of Art*



*Mahasiddha Jalandhara, CA. 16th century
Credit: The Rubin Museum*

The Weatherhead East Asian Institute is proud to announce the inauguration of the Dorothy Borg Research Program. The program is named in honor of Dorothy Borg (1902 – 1993), a historian of United States-East Asia relations whose influence on academics such as Gerald L. Curtis, Andrew Nathan, Robert Jervis, Carol Gluck, and many others helped to bridge the work of history and contemporary analysis.

Designed to prepare scholars for the challenge of studying transnational issues involving the United States and East Asia, the program will facilitate the exploration of new conceptual strategies and themes for understanding the study of U.S. — East Asia. Ultimately, the program is designed to encourage scholars to move beyond focusing solely on the U.S. or East Asia, and instead to broaden their scope to analyze global linkages and areas of convergence. Toward this end, the program will offer postdoctoral opportunities, graduate fellowships, and collaborative grants that support research that crosses geographic, temporal, and disciplinary boundaries.



DOROTHY BORG RESEARCH PROGRAM

The program is divided into four research projects: **America and East Asia: Past and Present** (Co-chaired by Gerald L. Curtis and Carol Gluck); **The Making of the Modern Pacific World** (Core Faculty Members: Mae Ngai, Charles Armstrong, and Theodore Hughes); **Global Circuits, U.S.-East Asian Archives, and Future Directions** (Steering Committee: Eugenia Lean, Professor Haruo Shirane, Gray Tuttle, and Madeleine Zelin); and **The United States and Southeast Asia: Past Legacies, Present Issues and Future Prospects** (Co-chaired by Professors Duncan McCargo, Ann Marie Murphy, and Amy Freedman). Although the individual projects are divergent in their missions, they are convergent in fulfilling Dorothy Borg's vision of furthering U.S.-East Asian studies at Columbia University.



10TH ANNUAL LECTURE ON JAPANESE POLITICS

NEW DIRECTIONS IN JAPANESE POLITICS AND FOREIGN POLICY

On February 5, 2015, the Weatherhead East Asia Institute and the Columbia Business School's Center on Japanese Economy and Business hosted Professor Gerald L. Curtis' Tenth Annual Lecture on Japanese Politics. Professor Curtis is the Burgess Professor of Political Science at Columbia as well as a Distinguished Research Fellow at the Tokyo Foundation. An internationally renowned expert on Japanese politics, he served as Director of the WEAI for a total of twelve years between 1974 and 1990.

This year's lecture, "New Directions in Japanese Politics and Foreign Policy," focused on recent developments in Japanese foreign relations and security policy. Although numerous critics have pointed to current Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's hawkish policies as foreshadowing the return of Japanese militarism, Professor Curtis argued that Japan's evolving security policies are a natural response to structural changes in the post-Cold War Asian security environment. He noted that, for



example, the rise of China as a regional power, the increased nuclear threat from North Korea, and the relative decline of U.S. power and influence in Asia have caused Japan to pursue policies that will enhance its security independence while simultaneously strengthening ties with the U.S. and its Asian neighbors. Professor Curtis noted that these changes are bipartisan, and would be a natural course for Japan even in

the absence of Prime Minister Abe's leadership. However, he also explained that Prime Minister Abe's controversial positions on historical issues may be undermining international support for what might otherwise be considered moderate, normalizing change in Japan.

Written by Jacqueline Hearne

MODERN TAIWAN LECTURE SERIES

This spring, the wide-ranging Modern Taiwan Lecture series took place at Columbia University for the second time. Arranged by professors Myron L. Cohen and Murray Rubinstein and supported by the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) in New York, this lecture series offered thirteen seminar-style lectures, each with a different scholar who spoke about his or her area of specialization concerning Taiwan.

This lecture series — which also can be taken as a course by Columbia students — was first offered in 2011. The series covers Taiwan history, anthropology, economic development, culture, political development, women's studies, and Taiwan identity. With each lecture given by a different professor, those attending the series gained exposure to much of the recent scholarship on Taiwan and to the diversity of current Taiwan studies.

On the history of Taiwan, this year's series featured such scholars as Brandeis professor Xing Hang, who talked about the historical roots of Taiwan in seventeenth century. It also presented lectures by U.S. Merchant Marine Academy professor Robert P. Gardella, who spoke on Taiwan in the Qing dynasty; and Academia Sinica professor Hui-yu Caroline Ts'ai, who described the Japanese colonial rule in Taiwan.

Addressing the contemporary period, the series featured University of Washington professor Stevan Harrell, who gave a

talk on Taiwan identity issues; Davidson College professor Shelley Rigger, who introduced the contemporary parties and politics of Taiwan; Tufts professor Jonathan Brookfield, who explained the economic transformation of Modern Taiwan; and University of Minnesota professor Joseph Allen, who discussed the historical development and transformation of urban lives in Taipei.

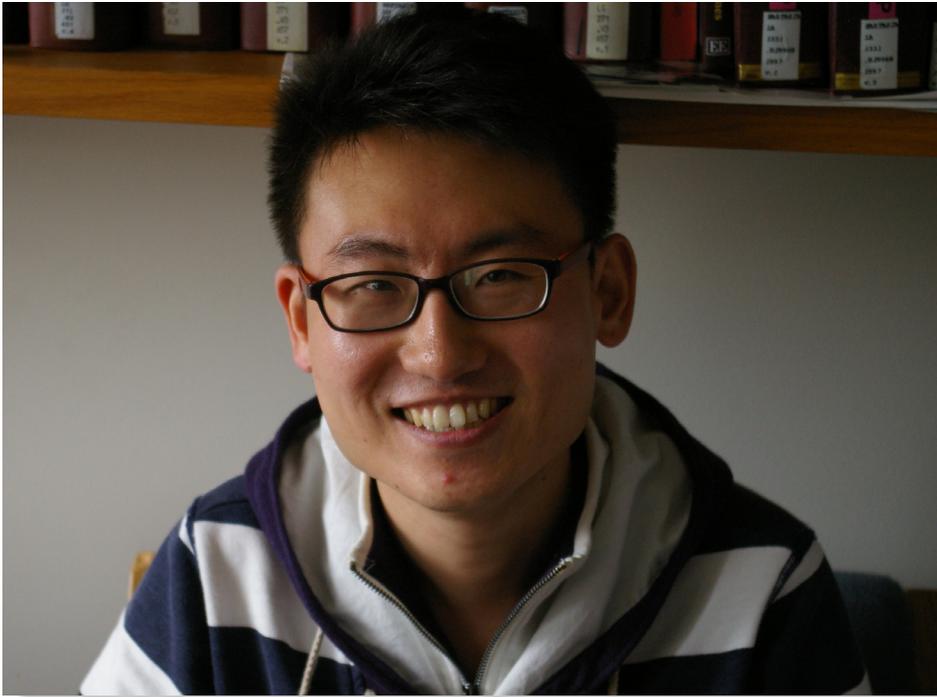
The series also included lectures by UCSD professor Richard Madsen, who discussed religion in Taiwan; University of Ottawa professor Scott Simon, who spoke about native people's lives; University of South Carolina professor Marc L. Moskowitz, who addressed popular culture in Taiwan; and University of Richmond professor Vincent Wang and Tamkang University professor Szu-yin Ho, who co-presented a lecture on Taiwan's global influence. Additionally, the series featured lectures by Clark University professor Ya-chen Chen and John Jay College professor Anru Lee about feminism in Taiwan.

Professor Cohen, a renowned anthropologist of Taiwan, noted, "The focus of the series is on Taiwan's development in different areas as shaped by truly massive transformations internal to Taiwan but also conditioned by regional and global factors." The Modern Taiwan Lecture Series has been a wonderful opportunity for the students and the public to interact with leading scholars and to gain insight into Taiwan's past and present.

Written by Mengqiao Wang



Q&A WITH INTERACT FELLOW JAMYUNG CHOI



This year, WEAI hosted Jamyung Choi as its 2014-2015 INTERACT Postdoctoral Fellow. Professor Choi received his doctorate in history at the University of Pennsylvania in 2014. He works on higher education and the social construction of a middle class in Japan and its empire. His dissertation, titled “Cultivating Class: Tokyo Imperial University and the Rise of a Middle Class Society in Modern Japan,” highlights how educators, bureaucrats, and social aspirants institutionalized the formation of middle-class citizens at Tokyo Imperial University.

[Please tell us about the course you're teaching this semester: East Asia and the Rise of a Global Middle Class.](#)

The primary purpose of this course is to define the term “middle class.” An absolute majority of us think that we belong to the middle class, but still

we don't have a clear idea of what it is. We read about class in Marx and in a number of classics in sociology and history. In looking at the experience of Japan, Korea, and China, my framework is called the “Global Middle Class.” Normally we tend to confine a definition to the boundaries of nation states, but I would argue that the middle class experience is itself transnational and global.

Throughout the course I define it by the separation of “class-self” and social status in which we legitimize ourselves by our meritocratic endeavors. This is not an imported idea from the West, but rather is intertwined with modern life. In the course we review how this happened in the West and in East Asia, how East Asia mimics the global trend. Yet, we also consider how it has some specificities defined by Western imperialism, state initiated economic development, Communist revolution, and the American occupation.

What do you think is the benefit of looking at the middle class through this transnational lens?

The biggest benefit is that we obtain a global definition of the middle class experience itself. Normally, we have a nominal Eurocentrism when we think of the middle class experience in East Asia. There is a tendency to see a norm out there in Europe and consider why, or how, the middle class experience falls short of the European experience. Now, however, we have a more distilled, changing form of the definition of the middle class as the embodiment of the separation of “class-self” and social status. We are now able to address the global trend and its regional variations in a more balanced way. We don't assume that the European experience is the norm, and the East Asian experience is its flawed imitation. Rather, we come to see how these two experiences are variations of a global experience.

[Has the INTERACT program inspired you to pursue any new avenues of research?](#)

I always consider teaching to be a source of research. In fact, I developed the definition of the middle class by teaching it from the global perspective. What benefits me is to consider new aspects of middle class life. For instance, I'm writing a new paper about Korean soap operas and how the idea of “free love” evolved from the global middle class experience and how it unfolded in the context of Korean history.

Interview by Daniel Kriske



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
MC 3333
420 West 118th Street
New York, NY 10027

Would you like to participate in a job talk?
Network with current students and alumni?
Market an internship or career opportunity to students?

Contact Laura Lechner at ll2963@columbia.edu or by phone at 212.854.9206

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