

THE REED

Winter 2016



The Reed

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Lantern festival in Hoi An, Vietnam

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During the fall 2015 semester, we were delighted to welcome three faculty members to the Weatherhead East Asian Institute community. They are Yao Lu, an assistant professor of sociology who studies demography and social stratification in China; Ying Qian, an assistant professor of East Asian Languages and Cultures who focuses on Chinese cinema; and Jonathan Reynolds, a professor of art history at Barnard College who specializes in Japanese architecture and visual culture. In this issue of *The Reed*, you will learn how Professor Qian, who joined Columbia in 2015, became interested in both studying and creating Chinese documentary films. Please look forward to articles about more new faculty members in our forthcoming issues.

The Institute also welcomed a vibrant community of postdoctoral scholars, three of whom are the inaugural Dorothy Borg Postdoctoral Scholars: Paul Busbarat, Borg Postdoctoral Scholar in Southeast Asian Studies; Tucker Harding, Borg Postdoctoral Scholar in the Digital Humanities; and Justin Reeves, Borg Postdoctoral Scholar in Japanese Politics. In this issue, you will learn more about Dr. Busbarat, a political scientist whose work explores U.S.-Southeast Asian relations and the role of identity in Thai foreign policy. Upcoming issues of *The Reed* will offer similar profiles of his colleagues.

The Institute also greeted INTERACT Postdoctoral Scholar Steffen Rimner, a historian whose work explores East and Southeast Asia's relations with the U.S. and Western Europe, particularly in regard to the emergence of global drug control. This issue of *The Reed* includes a Q&A with Dr. Rimner about the importance of looking at history through a transnational lens. In addition to teaching a popular new course on U.S.-East Asia relations in the fall semester, Dr. Rimner also participated in the first Dorothy Borg Research Program workshop, "Mapping Postwar Asia," which you can read about in the following pages.

We were pleased that Gal Gvili, a recent Columbia PhD, has returned to our community as a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures. Dr. Gvili, who studies modern Chinese literature, is currently organizing a Dorothy Borg Research Program workshop titled "Beyond Missionary Studies: New Approaches Toward Using Missionary Archives for the Study of Asia" that will take place this spring.

Finally, I am happy to announce that the Weatherhead East Asian Institute has launched a newly redesigned website that is both easier to navigate and more visually engaging. Please visit us (and bookmark us!) at our new web address: <http://weai.columbia.edu>.

Eugenia Lean
DIRECTOR

WEAI NEWS

Eugenia Lean appointed to 2015-2017 Provost Leadership Fellows program

WEAI director Eugenia Lean is one of thirteen Columbia faculty members selected for the 2015-2017 Provost Leadership Fellows program. The program is designed for faculty members at Columbia who seek to complement their research and scholarly activities with administrative and leadership responsibilities. Fellows will work with Columbia's senior administrators and collaborate with colleagues in the Provost's Office and in other academic and administrative offices across campus.

Roberta Martin Receives 2015 Ronald G. Knapp Award for Distinguished Service to Asian Studies in New York State

The New York Conference on Asian Studies (NYCAS) honored Roberta Martin with the 2015 Ronald G. Knapp Award for Distinguished Service to Asian Studies in New York State. The award recognized her work as the founder of the Asia for Educators program and many other initiatives to promote the study of Asia in New York state and beyond. The award was presented at the annual NYCAS meeting hosted by Vassar College on October 16 and 17, 2015.

Takatoshi Ito Receives Honorary Doctorate in Chile

Takatoshi Ito, Professor of International and Public Affairs, received an honorary doctorate from the Universidad de Chile in August. While in Chile, Professor Ito took part in a roundtable discussion of the economic and financial outlook for Japan, the United States, and Chile.

PROFESSOR GREGORY PFLUGFELDER LAUNCHES EDUCATIONAL WEBSITE

GROWING UP WITH GODZILLA

Gregory Pflugfelder, associate professor of Japanese history, recently launched a website about the global history of Japanese monsters. The site, titled "Growing Up With Godzilla," offers teaching modules that provide visitors with an interactive learning experience replete with textual narratives and visual images.

The website currently includes the modules "Remembering Uncool Japan: A Personal History" and "A King is Born: Godzilla's Multiple Origins." More modules will be added in the coming months.

Professor Pflugfelder's popular course "A Cultural History of Japanese Mon-

sters," was recently named the number one coolest class in the United States by Zipcar's Ziptopia website. In addition to his teaching, Professor Pflugfelder has also lectured throughout the world and has been interviewed by media outlets such as NHK about the history of Godzilla and Japanese monsters. He provided commentary on the Criterion Collection's DVD and Blu-ray editions of 1954's original "Godzilla" about the nuclear-testing accident that inspired the film.

To visit the website, please go to: <http://www.growingupwithgodzilla.org>



YING QIAN

Q&A with new professor of Chinese cinema, literature, and media studies

How did you become interested in Chinese documentary cinema?

I have been interested in cinema ever since when I was small. I grew up in Shanghai, a city with a long history of filmmaking since the early 20th century. As a child I performed in the children's dance and drama troupes at the city's Children's Palace, which was a socialist-era establishment. Film directors would often come to our rehearsals to select actors for their films. I acted minor roles in a few TV plays and one film, and did voice-acting for cartoons at the Shanghai Animation Film Studio, the oldest animation studio in the country. These close encounters with cinema left deep impressions on me. My interest in Chinese documentary film came

about in the early 2000s, when I was working as an assistant for *The Washington Post* in Shanghai and started experimenting with video-making. Through friends I got some indie Chinese documentary films on VCD – they were at the time circulating on disks from hand to hand in a Samizdat fashion – and after watching them, I realized documentary films could be more exciting than feature films. Indeed, Chinese independent documentary has been one of the most exciting developments in China's visual culture in the past few decades.

What led you to start making and studying films?

I didn't have much training when I started making films. Working in journalism in China, I got to meet many people

and hear many stories everyday. They inspired me to be a storyteller and so I wrote stories for a number of English and Chinese language magazines. But in the end, I became increasingly attracted to digital video as a versatile medium to document and understand the rapid changes in the society. I saved up, bought a camera and began to experiment. My first documentary, *A Village Across the World*, made together with Jie Li, followed a group of international volunteers into a mountain village in China's Anhui Province. It was a story about people from very different backgrounds and with very different life prospects encountering each other and reflecting together on the fruits and dilemmas of intercultural contact and economic development. Now looking back, I see that my interest in cinema has always been



tied with a wish to understand people's experiences, struggles and reflections in a changing society full of contradictions and uncertainties but also the potential for positive transformation. When I entered the doctoral program at Harvard in East Asian Studies, I had interests in literature, history and anthropology, and it occurred to me that by studying documentary cinema, I could combine these interests in an interdisciplinary way. Documentary films construct historical narratives. They are often inter-cultural, having affinities with ethnography. Finally, documentary films are texts full of rhetorical and aesthetic strategies, which literary theory could help us unpack.

Initially I focused on contemporary Chinese independent documentaries. Three PhD students at the time, Jie Li, JP Sniadecki and I, curated a film program called "Emergent Visions: New Independent Documentaries." That program very much nurtured us: it allowed us to see many new films coming out of China and bring exciting filmmakers to visit.

While contemporary documentary continues to be one of my interests, for my dissertation, I ended up spending more time studying documentaries made in the earlier historical period of the Mao-era. In China, there have been heated debates on Mao-era history. Evaluation of the Mao-era is important in deciding what lessons to learn from the past, and in which direction to go in the future. However, we can't evaluate the Mao-era if we don't understand how the Mao-era has been mediated to us and to people living at the time. Documentary film was an important media at the time. It was often screened outside conventional cinemas, and figured into many aspects of social and political life. It provided industrial training and scientific education, facilitated diplomatic ex-

changes, and served as visible evidence at legal trials. The whole practice of mobilizing the visible for the visionary, of organizing people to act and watch themselves, is very interesting to me.

What challenges did you face in tracking down those Maoist films?

Initially it was difficult to find these films. The film archive in Beijing has many of them but most are inaccessible to researchers. I wound up getting support from private collectors because many of these documentary films were put on 16mm and sent to industrial sites and to the countryside. Many of the reels have fallen into the hands of private collectors, some of whom now own thousands of films and have made digital copies of them. In the end, I had more films from these collectors than I could handle.

Are there certain themes you traced in studying these films?

One theme that manifested itself during my research was cinema's omnipresence in the social history of the Mao-era. This is particularly the case if we look into non-fiction films. Writers, artists and dramatists tend to work on fictional films. For non-fiction filmmaking, such as documentary, a whole different group of people are involved: scientists, engineers, educators, entrepreneurs, social workers. Documentaries are often screened outside the movie theater and outside the context of entertainment. By tracing documentary's production and exhibition, I discover that many aspects of social life, which we traditionally think of as separate from cinema, are actually mediated by cinema.

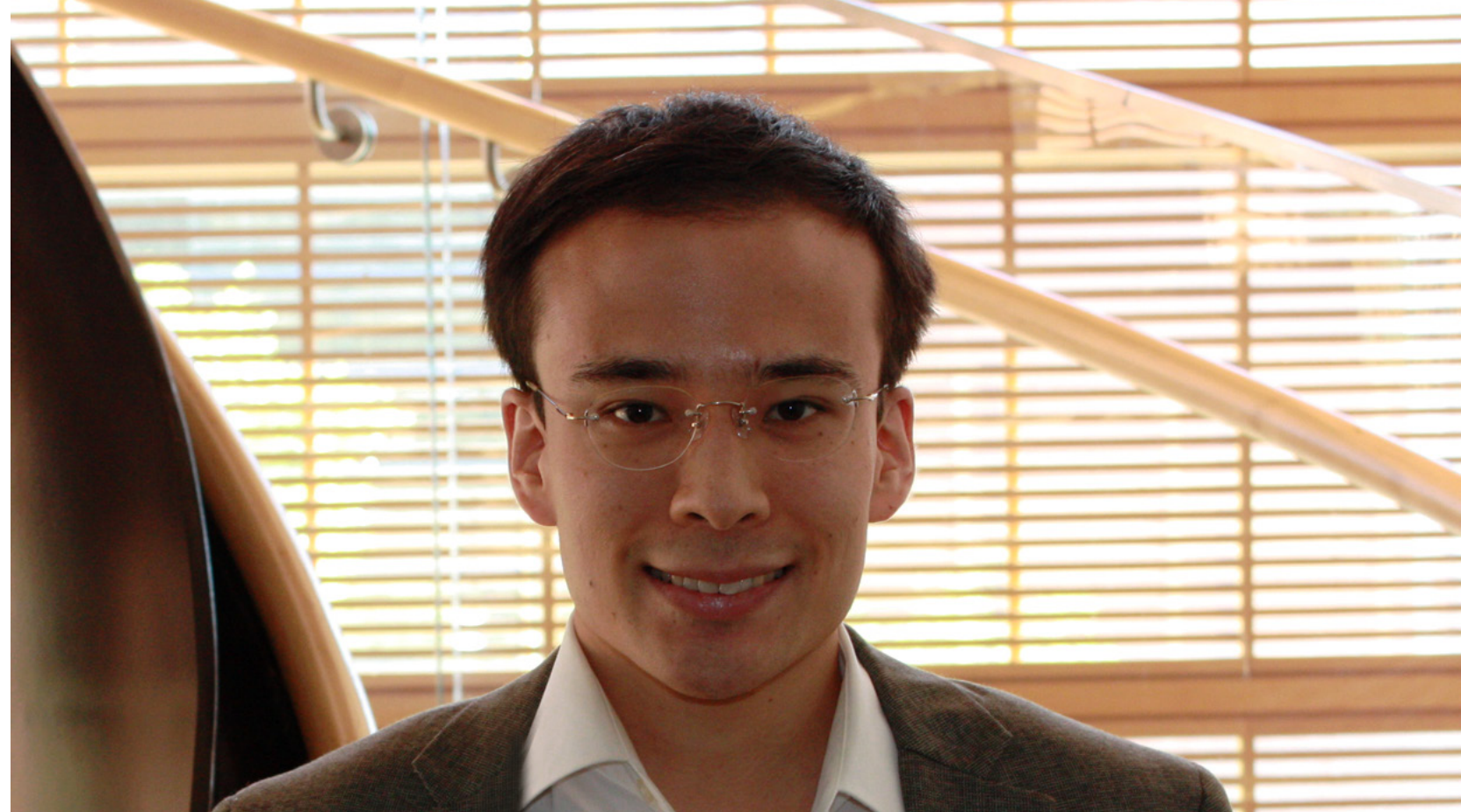
For example, documentary cinema trained industrial workers and propagated new and often fraudulent tech-

nologies during the Great Leap Forward. It also mediated diplomatic relations, serving as gifts of exchange in state diplomacy while educating the audience about international affairs. At the end of the Cultural Revolution, when historical narratives had to be rewritten, documentary footage was mobilized as evidence during the trial of the "Gang of Four" and in biographic films to rehabilitate persecuted cadres. I also look at how documentary films re-organized history and brought innovations to historiography in the 1980s.

Now as I revise my manuscript for publication, I am adding a lot of new material looking at how documentary films participated in war mobilization during the early and mid 20th century, and in colonial expansion to make new subjects out of people with ethnic minority backgrounds. I also examine how production of documentary films interacted with the productions of science and technology in the society. Overall, I am interested in tracing "cinema" as a mediating technology that cuts through many aspects of the society, and move cinema studies closer to social history.

What will you be teaching this year at Columbia?

Next semester I am teaching a 4000-level course for both advanced undergraduates and graduate students on "Chinese Documentary Cinema" and a graduate seminar on the "History of Chinese Cinema and Photography." The graduate seminar will guide students to examine understudied topics in Chinese film studies. The "Chinese Documentary Cinema" course will focus on Chinese independent films from the contemporary period—the films that inspired me. I hope that they, in turn, will inspire my new students at Columbia.



STEFFEN RIMNER

Q&A with WEAI's INTERACT Postdoctoral Scholar

Steffen Rimner received his historical training at the University of Konstanz and Yale University and holds a PhD in International History from Harvard University. His work focuses on global histories of East and Southeast Asia, especially their transnational, social and political relations with Western Europe and North America.

[How did you first become interested in transnational history?](#)

I received my undergraduate degree from the University of Konstanz, near the border of Germany and Switzerland. It was a very interesting setting for me because it allowed me to develop, at a very early stage, a dual focus that has remained my interest until today. This dual focus consists, on the one hand, of a concentration on East Asia—especially on China, Taiwan, and Japan—and, on the other hand, it consists of a broader, transnational

and global outlook that I integrate into both my teaching and my research.

[Did something inspire you to take a global approach to history?](#)

I was very fortunate to have a mentor in college who introduced me to a variety of transnational and global approaches to history - Jürgen Osterhammel, whose *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century* was recently published by Princeton University Press. Thanks to his inspiration, I was able to study historical problems in a context other than area studies as traditionally conceived. At a very early point, I also had the opportunity to consult archives whose transnational sources written by Chinese, Japanese, and other highly mobile historical actors actually change our understanding of some of the landmark events of

the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

[What challenges do you find in doing research on a global scale?](#)

The question of logistics is very pertinent to every researcher. I do believe that graduate school at Harvard afforded me an unusual opportunity to do multi-archival and multilingual research, which is why I was able to conduct research in more than half a dozen countries and on four continents, all of which yields insights for my first book on the origins of global narcotics control. The logistical challenges have to do mostly with the financial resources that universities are willing to offer for humanities research. A second challenge is, of course, the responsibility of the researcher who has to find methodologies to synthesize oftentimes very new perspectives that haven't necessar-

ily become part of a public discourse, public memory or national historiography in any of the countries discussed.

What is your current book project about?

My first book explores the Asian origins of global narcotics control. I begin with identifying the sources of anti-opium opposition in East and Southeast Asia. I pay particular attention to the transnational dynamics triggered by anti-opium opposition, which ultimately led to an expansion of anti-drug sentiment more generally from Asia to Western Europe and North America. The book hopes to explain why Asian countries carried such remarkable weight in the drug control politics of the League of Nations, which was the predecessor of the United Nations.

What drew you to Columbia's INTERACT program?

I was very encouraged when I first learned about the INTERACT program. It's a long overdue move to use area studies as a basis for developing more encompassing, transnational and global approaches. These approaches are familiar to every keen observer of twentieth-century and twenty-first century politics around the world. But on the level of teaching, most universities around the world haven't had very specific conversations about which particular objectives a new, trans-regional, and truly global curriculum should pursue. In this context, I think Columbia, along with a few other schools, is at the forefront of what I hope will be a broader effort to inspire school curricula in the U.S. and in different regions of the world.

THE SOUTH CHINA SEA: THE VIEW FROM THE PHILIPPINES

On October 7, Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio of the Republic of the Philippines spoke at an event organised by the South East Asian Student Initiative, discussing China's assertions over territory in the South China Sea and the consequential dispute that developed concerning a number of Southeast Asian nations.

The address, moderated by WEAI Senior Research Scholar Ann Marie Murphy, touched upon a brief history of the dispute, its legal ramifications for all parties involved, and the way ahead for those involved in the territorial dispute. As both a lawyer and a member of the Philippine judiciary, Justice Carpio focused on the claims of the parties and their validity from the lens of a legal practitioner.

Justice Carpio explained that China's claims in the territorial disputes were based on its historical assertion that the islands and reefs within the South China Sea were part of Chinese maps dating back to the Song dynasty (960-1279 AD) that conferred Chinese sovereignty over these territories. This claim extended Chinese territorial waters, exclusive economic zones (EEZ), and the continental shelf far beyond the guidelines set by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which conclusively placed its southernmost point in Hainan.

Despite objections by the countries involved, such as the Philippines, which would stand to lose up to 80 percent of its EEZ – a main source of revenue for the country given its resource rich areas in the West Philippine Sea – Chinese hegemony over the South China Sea

is steadily growing. According to Justice Carpio, the reclamation and the construction of Chinese military bases (complete with harbours and landing strips) clearly send a signal of Chinese intent within the area. The Chinese Navy and its Coast Guard have been systematically “protecting” and “enforcing” these territorial zones by driving away ships from other nations and preventing them from conducting their necessary economic activities.

For Justice Carpio, the inability of international mechanisms to resolve the dispute highlights the perpetual tension between state sovereignty and the dominance of international institutions. China, he noted, has rebuffed assertions of competence by arbitration mechanisms under the competence of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) by arguing that the dispute concerns sovereignty that the convention does not have jurisdiction over. China's unwillingness to appear as a party to any tribunal complicates matters, as international mechanisms have no power to compel a state party to come under its jurisdiction.

At present, Justice Carpio noted, the situation clearly highlights the practical weaknesses of UNCLOS in particular. It also echoes realist views that power is absolute authority in spite of the international integration that has taken place in the 20th and 21st centuries.

- Jia Rong Lee, *MARSEA '16*

PAUL BUSBARAT

Q&A with WEAI's Dorothy Borg Postdoctoral Scholar in Southeast Asian Studies

How did you decide to pursue the study of Southeast Asian politics?

My interest in Southeast Asia started out quite strangely. I grew up in Bangkok; I remember that when I was in primary school, I was interested in ancient Southeast Asian languages. I wanted to be an archaeologist, reading those old scripts. I tried to study by myself and some of my friends started teasing me that I was a nerd because instead of going to play football with my friends, I was studying something people of my age would not study. That's the starting point of my interest in Southeast Asia. I did my bachelor's degree in Thailand as well, and a lot of regional and national events in Thailand drove my attention to the politics of Thailand and then to ASEAN as a whole. That was my turning point to deepening my understanding in Thai and Southeast Asian politics. I moved to England to do my master's degree at Cambridge and then I came to New York to earn another one at Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs.

I then did my PhD at the Australian National University. My focus throughout this education has been on the region.

What is your current research about?

My PhD was on identity in Thailand's foreign policy making. I looked at how nationalist sentiment in the country influenced the Thai policy elite's perception of Thailand within the dynamic of Southeast Asian political and economic development after the Cold War. My argument is that nationalist sentiment in the public and policy elite helped shape the self-image of Thailand as a significant country in the region. A lot of policies in the post-Cold War period were trying to put Thailand in the center of development in the region. In many circumstances, policymaking was not strictly rational—by which I mean it did not reflect cost-benefit calculations as much as we might have expected. In a lot of cases in policy, initiatives were pushed because of this self-image that Thailand wanted to portray; to





position itself as the pivotal actor in Southeast Asia.

What are you teaching at Columbia?

I'm currently teaching "Politics of Southeast Asia." It is a survey seminar course providing students with general knowledge about how the current politics of the region have come about. We're focusing on the influence of the democratization process in the region. The class is especially relevant now, as we have witnessed many important events going on within the region in the past few years, including the military coup in Thailand in 2014, Indonesia's presidential election in 2014, the Bersih movement in Malaysia, and Myanmar's general election in November 2015. Next semester, I am going to teach a class on U.S.-Southeast Asian relations. It will look at the ways historical interactions between the two parties inform their current ongoing adjustment and cooperation. The class will also help raise the issue of how Southeast

Asia in fact has a significant influence on current U.S. foreign policy and strategy in the Asia-Pacific region.

How has the Borg Program, which focuses on U.S.-East Asia relations, impacted your work?

The program enables me to offer a different perspective on the study of U.S.-Southeast Asia relations. I am now applying an ideational approach to look at U.S.-Southeast Asia relations. Normally, international relations are taught within the framework of rational decision-making, military strategy, or cost-benefit analysis approaches. I am trying to see if ideational approaches—such as self-images and self-perceptions of countries—actually factor in the state relations in this region, which is normally overlooked in conventional approaches.

Above Image: Red Shirt Political Protest in Bangkok, April 2010



Dorothy Borg Research Project Workshop

MAPPING POSTWAR ASIA

Seventy years after the end of World War II, we are still living with the territorial demarcations in East Asia and the Western Pacific that were established in the conclusion and immediate aftermath of the war. How were these demarcations initially established, how have they managed to remain in place despite intervening changes in the Asia-Pacific region, and how do they play into current tensions over sovereignty and identity in the region today? During the October 5, 2015 event “Mapping Postwar Asia,” the first workshop of the Dorothy Borg Research Program’s “The Making of the Modern Pacific World” Project, Charles Armstrong asked these questions of participating scholars. They examined how post-war Asia was mapped and looked

at implications for the future through the lenses of cartography, environment, technology, and propaganda initiatives.

Alexis Dudden, professor of history at the University of Connecticut, used the release of Japan’s official new map, in which Japan lays claim to a number of disputed island territories, as a tool for examining the current re-imagining of Japanese sovereignty and what it means for the future stability of the region. Paul Kreitman, incoming assistant professor of Japanese history at Columbia University, similarly explored Japanese territorial claims, but through the lens of nature conservancy. In a paper examining the history of “sovereignty conservation,” specifically in regards to the

Senkaku albatross, he analyzed the use of conservation movements as a means of staking claims to new territory. Yukiko Koshiro, professor in the College of International Relations at Nihon University, also used Japan as a focal point for her research, but looked instead at the role of the country as America’s “co-creator of the Pacific” in postwar East Asia. She unpacked how Japan took on this role and how it developed close ties to the United States in the years following the war through a shared passion for technological advancement and exchange.

Charles Armstrong, Korea Foundation Professor of Korean Studies in the Social Sciences at Columbia University, also examined the role of the United

States in East Asia in his paper on the Committee for a Free Asia (today's Asia Foundation) in the 1950s and 1960s. His paper analyzed the unique role of the CFA among numerous other CIA-backed organizations with missions of cultural and intellectual exchange, specifically focusing on the methods by which the CFA chose to project a pro-U.S., anti-Communist message. Unlike other organizations at the time, the CFA concentrated on fostering intra-Asian networks through art initiatives, particularly film, with the goal of spreading U.S. core values in a cultural Cold War. Chien Wen Kung, a PhD student in history at Columbia University, analyzed projections of identity across borders in East Asia, looking at the relationships between the governing Nationalist Party in Taiwan (Kuomintang) and overseas Chinese communities, particularly those in the Philippines. In doing so, he examined larger issues of how non-state entities like diasporic communities and governments-in-exile define themselves and survive in a world where the nation-state is the primary actor.

As Steffen Rimner, INTERACT Post-doctoral Fellow at the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, noted in his closing analysis, all five papers attempted to disentangle the complex relationships between memory and history that are undeniably visible in the postwar legacies within the East Asian region. Going forward, he proposed that scholars more closely engage with and examine the relationship between territorialization and national identity, as well as keeping in mind the question of what makes East Asia unique as a region in these areas of historical territory and identity.

- Fiona Masland, SIPA '17



CHINA TOWN HALL

U.S. - China Political and Economic Relations

Following Xi Jinping's first state visit to the United States in September, Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) and WEAI hosted a panel to discuss the importance of the Chinese president's U.S. tour.

This panel took place before the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations' annual China Town Hall telecast. This year, the telecast's participants – which included Robert Rubin, Dan Rosen, Sheldon Day, and Stephen Orlins – focused on Chinese foreign direct investment in the U.S.

The Columbia panel, moderated by SIPA Dean Merit E. Janow, featured WEAI professors Gerald L. Curtis, Xiaobo Lü, and Andrew J. Nathan. Joining them was Lanlan Zhang, CEO of CICC US Securities, Inc.

Professor Curtis believed that President Xi's visit made progress on the cyber-security issue that has been strain-

ing China's relationship with the U.S.

Professor Nathan was similarly optimistic about the visit, noting that China and the U.S. talked about pragmatic and plausible solutions to their ongoing problems.

Professor Lü provided various statistics showing that there has been a change in the way Americans view China as a superpower nation. He specifically mentioned that American opinion of the Chinese was much better in 2011 than today.

Lanlan Zhang focused her comments on China's current economy. She believed that the Chinese Communist Party would continue to push forward with anti-corruption measures and expressed a positive outlook about the future of China's stock market in relation to the world economy.

- Jessica Park, MARSEA '16

FELLOWSHIP REPORT: CLAY EATON

Exploring history in the Kansai region of Japan

With the support of my Weatherhead PhD Training Grant, I was able to spend over two weeks in August 2015 at the Kansai branch of the National Diet Library in Japan.

My main purpose in visiting this branch of the Diet Library was to work with a microfilm copy of the *Syonan Nippo*, a Chinese language propaganda paper published by the Japanese military administration of Singapore during the Second World War. While the Kansai branch of the library (located in Seika, Kyoto prefecture) is a little off the beaten path, their facilities are wonderfully modern and easy to use. Luckily I was able to stay with my former host family in Hirakata, Osaka prefecture, which made my daily commute to the library much easier

than it would have been if I stayed in cities such as Osaka or Kyoto.

The microfilm of the *Syonan Nippo* at the library was incomplete, but it was of remarkably good quality. I had worked briefly with the *Syonan Nippo* at the National Library in Singapore, but its microfilm was also incomplete and the copy at the Kansai branch allowed me to fill in important gaps in the run of the newspaper, specifically in the last eight months of 1944 and the first four months of 1945. This period is particularly important to my work and the notes I took and the copies I made in Seika will help me to understand how the Japanese attempted to explain their declining fortunes in the war to a Chinese-speaking audience (I already have propaganda publications from that

time period in English and Malay). And I cannot emphasize enough the high quality of the microfilm held by the Diet Library: the lower resolution of the microfilm in Singapore makes the more complicated characters (the newspaper is entirely written in traditional Chinese characters) in the smallest type difficult to read.

On the few days that the library was closed I spent my time reconnecting with the Kansai region. I first lived with my host family in 2005, and the three children have grown from toddlers into teenagers since I met them. During my weekends and evenings I spent time with them re-exploring the city of Hirakata. I also accompanied my former host mother to her work at a local community center on a day that the library was closed. While there I spoke with local seniors in English about my research and previous experience in Japan and elsewhere. I also took one Sunday to visit the ruins of Azuchi Castle, the headquarters of sixteenth century warlord Oda Nobunaga, in nearby Shiga prefecture.

This semester, I am a teaching assistant for Intro to East Asian Civilizations: Japan and will give a guest lecture on Japanese castles and castle towns. As a prototypical example of Japanese castle architecture, Azuchi Castle will be the central focus of my guest lecture and the pictures I took will help students understand its surroundings and the state of castle ruins in Japan today.



FELLOWSHIP REPORT: JULIA NETHERO

Working in gender and development in China



During the summer of 2015, I completed an internship with the gender team at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)'s Beijing office. As a Master of Public Administration candidate at the School of International and Public Affairs who focuses on gender and development, I found this summer internship to be an excellent way to enhance my professional experience and maintain my Chinese language skills.

Funding from WEAI's MA Training Grant allowed me to take an unpaid internship abroad that was truly aligned with my future career aspirations and has given me new skills that better prepare me for the job market upon graduation. My internship at UNFPA was definitely one of my most substantive and rewarding professional experiences. Even though I was a graduate student, UNFPA viewed me and treated me as a consultant, rather than as an intern

or a student, which allowed me to take on more responsibility and have a larger impact on their work.

My first major project was the management of a grant application to the Dutch government for UNFPA's program work on gender-biased sex selection. UNFPA's proposal was to scale their pilot programs in three provinces to twice as many sites, an endeavor that requires over \$600,000.

For the first month of my internship, I was immersed in the editing, writing, and rewriting of the grant, and managed meetings and coordination between other team members to meet the grant deadline under a tight timetable. Before my arrival at UNFPA, the proposal was stalled and had not been touched in weeks. Under my management, we accelerated the completion of the grant by many weeks.

With experience in grant writing from a SIPA course I took last spring, I was prepared for this project and enjoyed the opportunity to apply what I learned in the classroom to the real world.

I also served as organizer and speaker at a Youth Peer Educator conference on sexual and reproductive health, which was hosted by UNFPA and the China Family Planning Association. As this year is the twentieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women hosted in Beijing, UNFPA wanted to hold a commemorative event in recognition of the gains and gaps since that landmark event. UNFPA decided to integrate this commemoration into the conference so as to educate college-aged participants about this important anniversary. I took on the role of co-organizer for these events and designed a three-part commemorative event, including a lecture, a panel, and a social media campaign.

In addition to planning the event, I travelled to the conference in Zhengzhou to serve on the panel and shared with the participants, in Chinese, the impact of the Fourth World Conference on Women for me as a young American woman. The students loved the event and reported that they learned a lot about the 1995 conference.

None of this would have been possible without the financial support from WEAI. The grant gave me the freedom to take my dream internship, unpaid, and allowed me to focus my summer on my work at UNFPA.



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