

2019 August Newsletter



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
Weatherhead East Asian Institute



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Throughout August, the Weatherhead East Asian Institute (WEAI) has been preparing for a robust fall schedule of events and initiatives. Highlights of fall events include innovative workshops, conferences, and the next installments in the special anniversary events series: Reporting Asia, Modern Tibetan Studies at 20, and Science and Society in Global Asia.

The Institute continues to actively expand its work on Southeast Asia. As part of the fall 70th anniversary programming, the Institute's new Vietnamese Studies initiative is organizing two exciting events. On October 4, the Global Hồ Chí Minh conference will bring experts from Vietnam to Columbia to share new multilingual and multi-archival research on the life, career, and legacy of Hồ Chí Minh. The second event, "Sustainable Fashion & Alternative Modernity in Kilomet 109," will be held on October 10 and features leading Vietnamese designer Vũ Thảo, who will speak on her process of discovery, working, and building her line of production with the Hmong and Dao communities, as well as her vision of a sustainable fashion line that combines innovation with traditional techniques. Pieces from the Kilomet 109 line will be on display.

Collaborating with the New York Southeast Asia Network and the School of Journalism, the Institute is cosponsoring a two-day event, "Disinformation and Elections in East and Southeast Asia: Digital Futures and Fragile Democracies," which will examine the salience of digital media in political campaigns and insidious modes of electoral manipulation following recent elections in Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines. The workshop will be held on October 3-4.

For the next event in the Reporting Asia series on October 21, the Institute turns to journalistic coverage of Japan. The panel discussion will feature Bill Emmott, former editor-in-chief of *The Economist*, whose latest book, *Japan's Far More Female Future*, was published by Nikkei Publishing in June 2019 (in Japanese); and Tomoko Kubota, former Tokyo Broadcasting (TBS) journalist and anchor, for a timely discussion on journalism and women's representation in Japan. Additional Japan-focused events this semester include a talk by Ambassador Kenji Yamanouchi, Consul General of Japan in New York, and a workshop with a group of visiting Japanese scholars led by Professor Narita Ryūichi, Japan Women's University.

WEAI's milestone year also coincides with the 20th anniversary of the Institute's Modern Tibetan Studies program (MTS). Following a successful spring semester of programming, the Modern Tibetan Studies at 20 event series will continue throughout the fall to bring leading experts to campus to address new directions in international Tibetan studies. As part of the series, Gyelmo Drukpa will give a talk on September 24 on the next generation of Tibetan studies scholarship in China.

The Science and Society in Global Asia series will conclude with an archive workshop featuring the C.V. Starr Library's collection of ephemera on science, medicine, law, and technology in 20th-century China. The half-day workshop will invite historians and visual culture specialists to lead graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and faculty in examining materials from the recent acquisition by the library of posters and ephemera related to science, technology, and medicine in Republican era and especially post-1949 China. An announcement about the date of the event is forthcoming.

On October 5, the Institute will cosponsor the 2019 Urban China Forum event "Urbanization and China: Understanding Impacts, Projecting Future." Organized by the Urban Planning Program and Urban China Network, Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation; and the China Center for Social Policy, School of Social Work, the forum will explore the impact of China's sweeping urbanization on the country's economic growth, environment and land resources, urban form and lifestyle, social fabric and welfare, and population and health.

Stay up-to-date with the latest on these and other fall events at the Institute's website: weai.columbia.edu

WEAI welcomes the
2019-2020 Master of Arts
in Regional Studies-East
Asia (MARSEA) cohort



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DIRECTOR PROFILE

Andrew J. Nathan (1991-1992, 1993-1995)



Professor Nathan with Szu-chien Hsu, Deputy Foreign Minister of Taiwan



Andrew J.
Nathan

Andrew J. Nathan was the eighth director of the East Asian Institute (renamed the Weatherhead East Asian Institute in 2003) and served from 1991-1992 and 1993-1995.

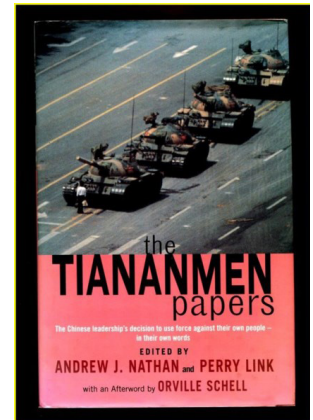
Dr. Nathan is Class of 1919 Professor of Political Science at Columbia University, where he is also chair of the steering committee of the Institute for the Study of Human Rights and chair of the Morningside Institutional Review Board (IRB). Professor Nathan received his BA in History (1963), MA in East Asian Regional Studies (1965), and PhD in Political Science (1971) from Harvard University. He joined Columbia in 1971 after teaching for a year at the University of Michigan.

Professor Nathan is the author of a vast body of scholarly work, including the books *Peking Politics, 1918-1923* (1976); *Chinese Democracy* (1985); *China's Crisis* (1990); and *China's Transition* (1997). He is the coauthor of *Human Rights in Contemporary China* (1986), with R. Randle Edwards and Louis Henkin; *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress* (1997), with Robert S. Ross; *China's Search for Security* (2012), with Andrew Scobell; and others. Professor Nathan is known also for his contributions to a number of revelatory books centered around leaked Chinese government documents, including *The Tiananmen Papers* (2001), which he coedited with Perry Link; and *China's New Rulers: The Secret Files* (2002), coauthored with Bruce Gilley.

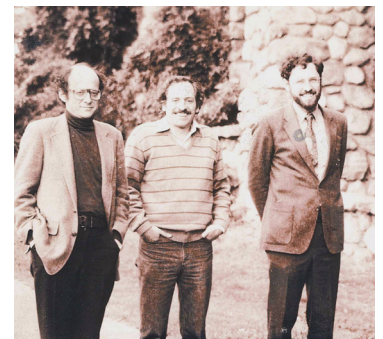
As a leading expert on Chinese politics and foreign policy, Professor Nathan is frequently interviewed by print and digital media. He is the regular Asia and Pacific book reviewer for *Foreign Affairs* magazine; and a member of the editorial boards of the *Journal of Democracy*, *The Journal of Contemporary China*, *China Information*, and others. His articles have appeared in *World Politics*, *Daedalus*, *The China Quarterly*, *Journal of Democracy*, *Asian Survey*, *The New Republic*, *The New York Review of Books*, *The London Review of Books*, *The Asian Wall Street Journal*, *the Boston Globe*, and the *International Herald Tribune*, among others.

Twenty years after joining the Columbia faculty and the East Asian Institute, Professor Nathan became director of the Institute. During his leadership, he oversaw the visits of many esteemed speakers, including officials from the United States, Singapore, Japan, China, Malaysia, and Taiwan; human rights activists; journalists; bankers; lawyers; and scholars from across the US and East Asia. Today, Professor Nathan continues to be active at the Institute as a scholar and teacher, and organizes many popular and timely events at WEAI.

Off campus, Professor Nathan has served on the boards of the National Endowment for Democracy, Human Rights Watch, and Freedom House, and is currently a member of the board of Human Rights in China and of the Advisory Committee of Human Rights Watch, Asia, which he chaired, 1995-2000. He is also a member of the steering committee of the Asian Barometer Surveys.



The Tiananmen Papers, edited by Andrew J. Nathan and Perry Link.



Left to right: Former WEAI directors Myron L. Cohen, Gerald L. Curtis, and Andrew J. Nathan.



Andrew J. Nathan, former director of WEAI



Kenneth Harlin, Manager of Access Services and Facilities Coordinator of the C.V. Starr East Asian Library.

A constant amid change: Kenneth Harlin discusses the history of the C.V. Starr East Asian Library

Interviewed by Ariana King

Within the hallowed stacks of the C.V. Starr East Asian Library, tens of thousands of newly restored books wait in neat rows, ready to be perused after nearly a year away from the shelves.

The calm of the stacks, two levels beneath the library's main reading room, was interrupted on a Sunday in September of last year when a pipe burst, spewing water from an opening in the ceiling above. Over the next four days, more than 100 volunteers from Columbia's libraries and University Facilities worked quickly to remove, pack, and deliver the approximately 52,000 wet books to a disaster recovery contractor to be freeze-dried, dehumidified, and cleaned. Thanks to the volunteers' efforts—not to mention the dedication of the library staff who painstakingly worked to ensure that each volume was returned to its rightful place—the stacks were reopened this month. No books were permanently damaged.

"We were all very worried that first day," said Kenneth Harlin, manager of access services and facilities coordinator at the library. "However, with the help of the conservation department and volunteers from libraries across the campus, we were able to get all the affected items packed and shipped out for remediation." He added, "Once items started coming back, it was heartening to see what good condition they were in. A few were misshapen, but still readable, and it was great having them back home on the

shelves in the library."

Harlin has seen the stacks through it all. Harlin first joined the East Asiatic Library, as it was known, in the late 1960s after working as a student assistant in the Geology Library as an undergraduate at Columbia College. Fifty years later, he oversees many of the library's operations and is its most senior staff member. For Harlin, reshelfing 52,000 titles may have seemed a relatively manageable task compared to the massive renovation and reclassification projects of years past.

When the library arrived at its current location in Kent Hall in the early 1960s, books were sorted through various language-specific classification systems. Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Western collections were cataloged separately and located on different sides of the library. In 1981, these "four libraries under one roof" were brought together, when a decision was made to reclassify all books in line with the Library of Congress system.

Collections were completely reordered by subject, regardless of language. Online cataloging records for new acquisitions were also created for the first time, with Chinese, Japanese, and Korean scripts, in RLIN, the database of the Research Libraries Group. This reorganization took place as construction began to expand stack space: Thanks to an endowment from the C.V. Starr Foundation, the skylight room, Kress Seminar room, and rare books stacks were added to the library.

In the years following this major renovation, the library's visitorship has grown. "We serve a wide range of people here. While known primarily as a



A popular study spot in the stacks of the C.V. Starr East Asian Library.

research library, we also have current novels, magazines, and newspapers from China, Japan, Korea, and Tibet; users from those countries come here like it's their local library at home." Increased interest in East Asia and East Asian studies is also responsible for bringing more readers to the library. And with its quiet, elegant reading room and striking stained glass window, even students with no connection to East Asia are drawn to the space. Now, Harlin said, it is not uncommon for every seat to be filled.

Columbia began its collection of East Asian materials in 1902, when the University received the 5,044-volume encyclopedia *Gu jin tu shu ji cheng*, the result of a correspondence between E.H. Conger, the American Minister to Peking, and Li Hung-chang, who was regarded as prime minister to the Empress Dowager. This gift became the foundation of the Chinese collection. In 1927, the East Asian collection was expanded to include Japanese texts through the efforts of Professor Ryusaku Tsunoda, who received approximately 5,000 volumes from the Imperial Household Ministry. The Korean collection followed in 1931, with a donation of nearly 1,000 books from Korean students at the University. In the late 1990s, the library began its acquisitions of Tibetan texts, expanding more recently to include modern Tibetan materials. These collections have grown and, combined with Western-language texts on East Asia, now add up to over 1,000,000 volumes.

Today, the wealth of materials at the C.V. Starr East Asian Library attracts visitors from around the globe. The library's rare collections include Chinese local histories and genealogies, Japanese Edo-period woodblock-printed books, and the Korean Yi Song-yi Collection, as well as non-print collections including ancient Chinese oracle bones, Chinese posters, Edo-period ukiyo-e, and a growing collection of major archives. In some cases these materials may not be available anywhere else. Harlin noted scholars from China routinely visit the collection in order to access materials that would otherwise have been lost in the Cultural Revolution.

Books and artifacts are fragile—if the recent flood had not been handled so skillfully, some volumes may have been lost forever. For this reason, Columbia's libraries have put great care into preserving materials, combining efforts with Princeton, Harvard, and the New York Public

“Users come and go over the years, but they're all truly interested in and appreciative of what we have to offer, and that's a good feeling.”

Library in the Research Collections and Preservations Consortium (ReCAP). Through ReCAP, the library is able to store delicate or less-accessed volumes offsite until specifically requested. Cataloging, archiving, and digitization are ongoing, long-term projects, but major strides have already been made. One example is the complete digitization of the Meiji Microfilm collection. Digitization has helped improve access to resources for those unable to travel to campus, and ensures that the knowledge contained in rare materials will remain safe, even if an unexpected disaster threatens the physical copies. But even as modernization improves online access to materials, scholars continue to frequent the stacks, with many preferring to hold a book in their hands and see an artifact in person.

In the face of the library's constant evolution, it is the dedication and institutional knowledge of Harlin and his colleagues that grounds the C.V. Starr East Asian Library and has kept things running smoothly for so long. Thanks to Harlin's generous assistance, WEAI was able to film a video in the library to commemorate the Institute's 70th anniversary. By the next day, no traces of a camera crew's presence remained.

“The staff at Starr are like family after so many years working together, and we all support each other,” Harlin explained. Like Harlin, many of the library's staff members found a home away from home at Starr, and have stayed in their positions for decades. Together they have celebrated the births of new family members, supported each other through illness, and accomplished enormous feats, like the recovery of the flooded stacks. Over the decades, Harlin has seen multiple generations pass through the stacks.

“Users come and go over the years, but they're all truly interested in and appreciative of what we have to offer, and that's a good feeling,” Harlin said. “I look forward to going to work each day.”



A section of the recently recovered stacks, with East Asian books properly reshelfed.

ALUMNI PROFILE

Trevor Menders EALAC alumnus and former WEAI student worker

Trevor Menders is a 2018 graduate of Columbia's East Asian Languages and Cultures Department and a former student worker at the Weatherhead East Asian Institute. He recently completed a year as a Fulbright Research Fellow in affiliation with Tokyo University of the Arts. Beginning in September he will be a Toshizo Watanabe Fellow at the Yokohama Inter-University Center for Japanese Language Studies.





I happened into the East Asian Languages and Cultures department at Columbia by accident. I came to Columbia to study chemistry. You can study chemistry anywhere, but I chose Columbia because of its dance program—I had grown up training to be a professional dancer and I didn't want to let that go in college, though I never intended to major in dance. I placed into the chemistry department's accelerated general chemistry course, a victory at the time, but about two weeks in I dropped the class and drifted without a departmental affiliation for a semester. I took the semester to dig deep and suss out what I was truly interested in pursuing.

I came to two conclusions. The first was that I wanted to keep the arts involved in my professional and academic life, and the second was that I wanted to study something which my California public high school education had not covered. I began to suspect I might enjoy studying East Asia: images of ukiyo-e woodblock prints from Japan had survived in the back of my head since I first saw them around age eight at the San Diego Museum of Art, and reading *Life and Death in Shanghai* by Chang Nien on my own in 9th or 10th grade had previously opened my eyes to the fact that "Asia" existed as an area with a rich history far removed from anything I would ever encounter in school. I decided to take the plunge in the second semester of my sophomore year, enrolling in both Japanese language and the department's introductory Japanese civilization course. And, with that, I was hooked. The more I learned, the more I wanted to know.

I don't think there's any one thing I can isolate specifically as having piqued my interest or caused me to focus on the fields I did (Japan and art history). I wanted to take everything the department had to offer. I took courses across disciplines: from art history to anthropology to literature to religion—focused on Japan, China, Korea, and beyond. In a sense, this is what piqued my interest: one of the benefits of being surrounded by faculty with a variety of specialties is that it allows students to learn with breadth as well as depth. Because I was able to take courses cutting across time periods, regions, and topics, I made new connections for myself basically every day: about the evolution of Buddhism as it migrated across the Asian continent, how porcelain production techniques were transmitted across the Japan Sea—and so forth. This ever-expanding network of knowledge kept me one hundred percent engaged for my entire time in the department.

While working with WEAI in 2015, I got to help produce a series of video interviews with visiting scholars, restructure the Expanding East Asian Studies (ExEAS) website (<http://www.exeas.org/about.html>), and more. I met tons of inspiring people while working at WEAI and am forever grateful for the opportunity that Ross Yelsey (former WEAI publications and public relations coordinator) offered me. Many of the scholars who work in association with WEAI focus on modern East,

Southeast, and Central Asian history, but my own coursework in undergrad kept me firmly rooted in the 10th through the 13th centuries with only occasional forays into the 17th and 18th—certainly nothing as recent as the 20th century. Working at WEAI, though, exposed me to modern history and changed my thinking about the dichotomy of modern vs. premodern. I wanted to bridge it, collapse the barriers that we've built up between the "old" and "new" versions of sociopolitical formation in the region. The result was that I became increasingly interested in how historic objects have traversed this divide—in how to tell the stories of old objects in new times and their paths through history, rather than the stories of when they were originally created. The inspiration I took from people working on things so different from my own interests left an indelible impression on how I think about art and history and deeply influences how I structure my projects.

I just finished a year as a Fulbright Research Fellow in affiliation with Tokyo University of the Arts. The year was interesting. I had spent about eight months total living in Japan before taking the fellowship through a combination of study abroad and short-term independent research grants. I published my first academic article "Nascent Tradition: Tomimoto Kenkichi and the Turn to Contemporary Ceramics in Vessel Explored / Vessel Transformed: Tomimoto Kenkichi and his Enduring Legacy," gave my first invited talk at a Fulbright conference in Taipei, met many brilliant scholars, curated and designed my first solo exhibition and accompanying catalog (featuring the works of fellow Columbia graduate and current Tokyo University of the Arts MFA student Cho Hyunjoo! We also collaborated with Columbia Global Thought MA alum Chris Lin) and received translation commissions from organizations like the Kyoto National Museum, the Japan Tourism Association, and even the Agency for Cultural Affairs. More importantly, of course, I learned more about my research topic—the effects of American scientist and collector Edward S. Morse on systems of knowledge and historiography of "traditional" ceramics in late 20th and early 21st century Japan—than I ever could have hoped for.

My Fulbright term ended in July and I'll be starting as a Toshizo Watanabe Fellow at the Yokohama Inter-University Center (IUC) for Japanese Language Studies in September. IUC will allow me to work on the problem areas I identified in my language ability over the past year. I'm also glad to put a little distance between myself and the Tokyo city center; Yokohama is much more relaxed. After that, I have no idea where I'll end up! I think I'd like to come back to the US for now, whether that means working or entering a graduate program. I'm sending out a variety of applications and I'm excited to see what comes back. I'm shifting my research emphasis to the intersection of performing arts and visual arts in East Asian history with a focus on Japanese liturgical dance and issues of audience across media. I think it'll open up some exciting horizons.

Mt. Fuji behind clouds over Lake Ashi in Hakone

