

# 2019 July Newsletter



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
Weatherhead East Asian Institute



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July 1979

In July, the Weatherhead East Asian Institute rounded out its Summer Event Series in Beijing with an alumni reception; a Reporting Asia panel; and two additional events featuring WEAI faculty: a lecture by Jinyu Liu, Assistant Professor at the School of Social Work, "Supportive Social Environment for Older Adults in China"; and a panel discussion on Chinese classics with Du Family Professor of Chinese Culture Wei Shang; Lihua Yang, Professor of Philosophy at Peking University; and Chunying Li, Associate Professor at China University of Political Science and Law's International Confucian Academy. The Summer Event Series, cosponsored by Columbia Global Centers Beijing, was a celebratory showcase of cutting-edge, interdisciplinary programming on East Asia that the Institute has led for 70 years.

The alumni reception and the Reporting Asia panel event were both held at the Columbia Global Center in Beijing on July 13, drawing a crowd of more than 130 attendees.

Keith Bradsher, the Pulitzer Prize-winning Shanghai bureau chief for *The New York Times* and the company's senior writer for Asia economics and business, spoke about the potential of responsible reporting to help the world understand China's emergence as a superpower and its "extraordinarily successful economic expansion." WEAI Director and Associate Professor of Chinese History Eugenia Lean moderated the talk, and Xiaobo Lü, Ann Whitney Olin Professor of Political Science at Barnard College, served as discussant.

Bradsher shared his personal experiences as a journalist covering Asia and suggested that it is in China's interest to allow greater freedom of reporting and freedom of expression. Drawing on 28 years of experience covering trade issues, Bradsher also discussed the current US-China trade dispute. Bradsher suggested that it remains to be seen if China can continue its extraordinary growth in a way that does not further alarm or trigger resistance in foreign markets.

Following the Reporting Asia talk, Director Lean and Professor Lü celebrated the Institute's 70th anniversary at a reception for Columbia alumni. Lean noted, "For the past 70 years, we have been pushing the boundaries of East Asian regional studies, branching out from an early focus on China and Japan, to encompass work on Korea, Inner Asia, and most recently Southeast Asia. It is particularly meaningful for us that we are able to have today's event in China and thus, reconnect with so many of our alumni."

On July 14, Professor Liu presented her recent studies that explore the effects of friendship, spousal and intergenerational relationships, household context and community resources on mental health among rural and urban older adults in China. Professor Liu introduced the current aging issue facing China, calling upon family, friends, neighborhood to provide more support rather than to treat older adults as "burdens" of society. Her research in this area provides a persuasive argument for developing social services that help strengthen the supportive social environments for older adults and improve their mental health, including the construction of age-friendly facilities, the involvement of more professionals, and the development of more training programs for caregivers.

On July 16, Professor Shang introduced his new book *Gei Hai Zi De Gu Wen* (Selected Chinese Classics for Children) at the Beijing Center, encouraging Chinese youth and children to explore the beauty and importance of Chinese classical literature. This event was organized jointly by WEAI, Columbia Global Centers Beijing, Moveable Type, and CITIC Press. The book introduction was followed by a panel discussion featuring Professor Shang, Professor Lihua Yang, and Professor Chunying Li. The discussion explored the importance of reading ancient literature in the modern context.

For more details on these events and a complete list of past and upcoming programming sponsored by the Institute, please visit our website: [weai.columbia.edu](http://weai.columbia.edu)



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# Myron L. Cohen (1975-1976, 2006-2014)



Myron L.  
Cohen

**M**yron L. Cohen was the seventh director of the East Asian Institute (renamed the Weatherhead East Asian Institute in 2003) and served for two terms (1975-1976, 2006-2014).

Dr. Cohen is Professor of Anthropology at Columbia University. He has been a member of the faculty since 1966 and received his PhD in anthropology from Columbia in 1967. He received his undergraduate degree from Columbia College in 1958.

Professor Cohen's research centers on Chinese society and the changes it has undergone from the 17th century to the present. He has conducted extensive fieldwork in Taiwan and in villages in northern, eastern, and western mainland China. In a review of his 2005 book, *Kinship, Contract, Community, and State: Anthropological Perspectives on China* by Graham E. Johnson for a July 2007 issue of *The China Journal*, Professor Cohen was described as "one of the most distinguished practitioners of Chinese anthropology." Johnson further described the book as "essential reading for all who are engaged in the process of attempting to understand the complexities of Chinese culture and society."

In addition to *Kinship, Contract, Community and State*, Professor Cohen is also the author of *House United, House Divided: The Chinese Family in Taiwan* (1976). He is the editor of *Asia Case Studies in the Social Sciences: A Guide for Teaching* (1992) and has written numerous chapters for edited volumes and journals, including such recent publications as "Ethnicity and the Degree-Holding Elite in Qing-Era Taiwan: The 1803 Restoration of the Prefectural Confucian Temple" in *Family, Ethnicity, and State in Chinese Culture under the Impact of Globalization* (2017), edited by Han Min, Kawai Hironao, and Wong Heung Wah; and "High Ancestors among the Hakka Chinese: Past and Present, Rural, Urban, and Global," for *Global Hakka Studies* (2017).

For his groundbreaking contributions to the study of China with a focus on family and kinship, popular religion, economic culture, and social change, Professor Cohen was awarded the 2016 Chinese Anthropology Lifetime Achievement Award from the Shanghai Society of Anthropology. That same year, Professor Cohen was recognized for his contributions to Hakka academic research, receiving the First Class Professional Medal in Hakka Affairs at the opening ceremony of the Fourth Taiwan International Conference on Hakka Studies.

As Director of WEAI, Professor Cohen led the Institute during a number of major milestones, including the Institute's 60th anniversary, which included a series of summer events in Beijing, Tokyo, and Seoul.

Shortly after joining Columbia as an assistant professor, Professor Cohen worked with students of Asian descent at the University to formulate a new anthropology course on "The Asian Experience in America." Following approval from a 13-member instructional panel, Professor Cohen taught the new anthropology course for the first time in the spring semester of 1971. Today, more than 50 years after joining the University, Professor Cohen continues to teach courses on modern Chinese society and is an active member of WEAI.



Minister of Hakka Affairs Council Lee Yung-te presents Professor Myron L. Cohen (right) with the First Class Hakka Affairs Professional Medal. Professor Cohen was the first foreigner to receive the award from the Hakka Affairs Council.

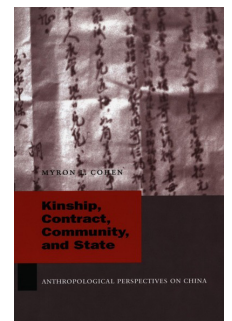


Professor Cohen introduces the "Columbia and Japan" 60th anniversary event in Tokyo as director of the Institute.



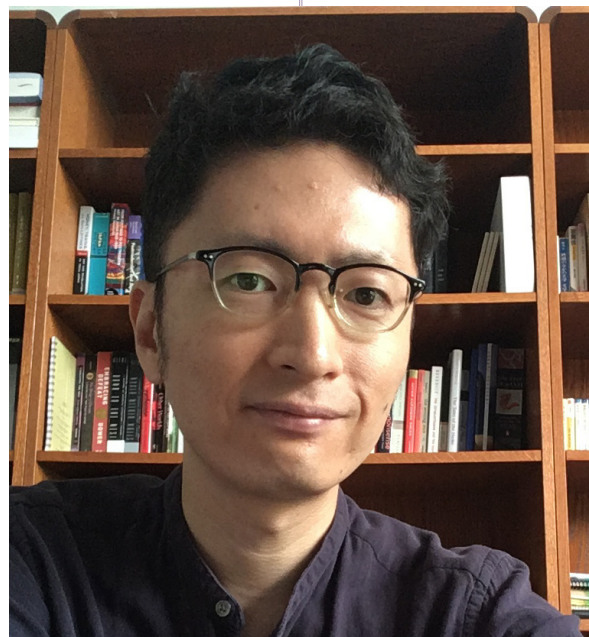
Professor Cohen speaks at a symposium, "Hong Kong's Future in a Changing Asia."

Professor Cohen's 2005 book *Kinship, Contract, Community, and State*





## Q&A with new faculty member Takuya Tsunoda



Interviewed by Ariana King

“I gradually became fascinated with studying the new cinema of the 1960s in Japan, especially with the idea of dipping back into its earlier history in order to foreground this kind of maturation or mutation process.”

**Q:** Can you tell me about your academic background and research? What attracted you to Japanese cinema and media, and more specifically the new cinema of the 1960s?

**A:** My initial interest in cinema was not academic. Growing up in Japan's Kansai region and in Tokyo, taking trains—occasionally with friends but mostly alone—and going to movie theaters were always my favorite excursions. My fascination with films then moved toward filmmaking, and I made a few shorts on 8mm and DV as a college student in Tokyo. But my interest soon shifted from making films to thinking about why films always played on my heartstrings. My academic interest in cinema started to take shape in this way.

My current research topic, especially the new cinema of the 1960s, emerged out of a series of serendipitous discoveries and experiences rather than strategic choices, and began with the French New Wave movement. The New Wave films have often been characterized by the youth culture and rebellion, but adolescence is also a period of maturation. I gradually became fascinated with studying the new cinema of the 1960s in Japan, especially with the idea of dipping back into its earlier history in order to foreground this kind of maturation or mutation process.

**Q:** You are currently working on a book about Iwanami Productions. What is Iwanami Productions and why are you researching this topic?

**A:** This is a wonderful question, and it will take a book to fully explore! To highlight just a few crucial points, studies of Japanese cinema have long suffered from the serious dearth of industrial histories. The copious scholarship on Japanese films of the 1960s—known as the “season of politics”—tends to revolve around the rigid formulae of oppositional politics, which adopt a monolithic view of power and authority and uniformly “demonized” controlling agencies such as state power and sponsoring corporations as well as the studio-oriented industrial system. Iwanami Productions evolved from a major provider of sponsored educational, science, public-service, and advertisement films into a key player in the new cinemas of the 1960s. The studio, which initially collaborated with government organizations and private corporations eager to promote business and political initiatives to the populace, ended up nurturing a large group of “oppositional” filmmakers as well as their works within its institutional frame. English language scholarship on film from Japan thus far has been largely ignorant or deliberately silent about how this industrial and state-affiliated studio, in a crucial period of geopolitical change, was capable of creating such a locus. My book makes a case for looking beyond the activist logic of political radicalism by highlighting the historical and theoretical intersection between media-based governmental and civic activities, cross-medial articulation of postwar academicism in Japan, and the emergence of the new cinemas in the late 1950s and the 1960s.

Some answers have been shortened. For the full interview text, visit [weai.columbia.edu/new-faculty-feature-takuya-tsunoda/](http://weai.columbia.edu/new-faculty-feature-takuya-tsunoda/)



*The Iwanami Productions building in Tokyo during the 1960s-70s.*

**Q:** What led you to Columbia initially and the Weatherhead East Asian Institute? When did you join WEAI and what is your impression of the Institute so far? Has joining the Institute had any impact on your work?

**A:** I joined WEAI in January 2019 and soon had a chance to organize an event on the Japanese New Wave with Hirasawa Go, a researcher and curator visiting from Japan, and Peter Eckersall, a New York-based specialist of Japanese theater and performance studies. It was cofunded by the Donald Keene Center and was also held in conjunction with a film series at the Japan Society in New York. What struck me immediately was the scale of the Institute, which houses a robust and diverse group of faculty and research scholars as members, truly bringing experts in greater New York together. I had opportunities to attend a number of events hosted by WEAI throughout the year, and what I appreciated in particular was that many of them were small or moderately sized with the intention to facilitate vigorous exchanges among participants. It was through WEAI-related meetings and conferences that I met many peer scholars both inside and outside Columbia for the first time. I also got to learn about my colleagues' book projects and current research through the workshops hosted by WEAI. Given that each research field is nowadays becoming more and more specialized, it is not easy to get acquainted with scholars outside of one's discipline. The Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures (EALAC) and WEAI break this boundary to do interdisciplinary, polylingual, transnational, and transregional work. WEAI has also enabled me to do extensive research abroad. I just came back from a brief research trip to Japan; Ying Qian, our colleague specializing in Chinese cinema and media, was also present. Together we successfully located various rare film and television materials that resonate with our ongoing research as well as teaching agendas. Some of these findings are expected to develop into collaborative projects in the coming years.

**Q:** What is it like teaching and conducting research about Japanese cinema in New York?

**A:** Our C.V. Starr East Asian Library holds one of the largest collections for the study of East Asia in North America, and the Makino Collection of Japanese film and media draws scholars from all over the world. It is interesting that Mr. Makino's house in Japan, prior to the Collection's move to Columbia in 2006, had been visited by many young researchers, many of whom have since become highly accomplished film scholars. Your question makes me realize how unique our situations are here: where we have access to some of the rarest materials on Japanese film in the midst of the most cosmopolitan city in the US. A number of specialists and their budding projects intercross here: a hub of research. And these activities are by no means restricted to scholarly ones. Japanese film retrospectives, exhibitions, and festivals, for instance, are interrelated cultural nodes. Our students go and watch Japanese films screened in town and come to my office to talk about them!

**Q:** Who are your students? What sort of studies and research are they interested in?

**A:** I have several graduate students who are working directly with me. Their current research outlooks encompass what I see as the maturation of the fields we are in, and the approaches they devise are distinctly theirs. One looks at Manchuria and its media-infused colonial modernity, while paying meticulous attention to the questions of gender, affect, and ethnicity. Another has embarked on Afro-Japanese literary and visual media studies from a uniquely transmedial and transnational perspective. I also have an MA student who has initiated research on early television in an attempt of mapping out its historically specific cultural logic and technological dynamics. I have been fortunate to have seminar members from other departments and programs, including Art History and School of the Arts. Undergraduates, whose majors range across astrophysics, mathematics, and human rights, comprise my courses. I am grateful for their deeply insightful, original, and enthusiastic contributions to my classes.

**Q:** In February you were part of the "Legacies of Leftism in Film and Media Theory: East Asia and Beyond" conference, which was cosponsored by WEAI. Can you tell me about this event?

**A:** A scholarly initiative called the Permanent Seminar on the Histories of Film Theories has been sponsoring conferences since 2009 (with the premiere as part of Dall'inizio, alla fine/ In the Beginning and at the Very End at the XVI Udine International Film Studies Conference in Udine, Italy). Jane Gaines, our colleague at Columbia School of the Arts, has been one of the core members of this initiative. One major and initial goal of the conferences was to collectively produce translations of early theories of cinema but it has since expanded to a consideration of historical and contemporary parallels. In 2012, a conference "History of Film Theories in East Asia" was held at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, for the purpose of continuing the work of translation while exploring also the study of transfers of knowledge along and across East-West lines. Out of this, there has been growing interest in how Asian philosophical traditions met European traditions—whether French Althusserian Marxism in China or Frankfurt School Marxism in Japan and Korea—as well as in how the foundations of the media theory have been and are being transformed. Following a series of international conferences in Beijing, Shanghai, and Frankfurt, Germany, we organized our "Legacies of Leftism in Film and Media Theory: East Asia and Beyond" by taking up the more targeted questions of the philosophical and political underpinnings of film and critical theory (historically) as well as contemporary media theory. I would also like to stress that the organization of this conference was highly collaborative. Great teamwork among Columbia faculty members and graduate students was the ingredient essential for the success of the conference, which I believe showcased our commitment to the studies of East Asian cinema and media culture at Columbia.

*Professor Tsunoda, second from left, at the "Legacies of Leftism in Film and Media Theory: East Asia and Beyond" conference cosponsored by WEAI.*



*A poster for the Legacies of Leftism conference, which was held from February 28-March 2, 2019.*



## Andrew Wortham

PhD student and recipient of  
WEAI fellowships

Andrew Wortham is a graduate student of Anthropology at Columbia Teachers College, where his work is focused on emerging LGBT communities in China. He has received support from WEAI in various forms since 2016, including Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship Fund (SYLFF) awards and Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships, for Chinese language study to support his research on the creation of rural youth culture in a small village in Yunnan, China, where he had previously worked as a teacher.





Andrew next to his photo on a directory of teachers in Yunnan, China.

As an undergraduate at the University of Texas, Austin, I did my capstone research project with an anthropology professor studying education in the Indian province of Sikkim. During this field research I became convinced of the value anthropology has in grounding research on education in ethnographic methods. After graduation I joined the organization Teach for China, with the hope of pairing of anthropological understandings with actual teaching practices. From this experience I wanted to continue to develop my research skills and interest in how people from different cultures learn. Teachers College's Anthropology and Education program is one of the few programs in the world that seeks to fuse the teachings of applied anthropology with the study of learning.

My academic interests center on contemporary China and my current thesis project focuses on ideopolitical education in Chinese universities. Apart from that, the wide variety of courses Columbia offers has enabled me to look at different facets of modern and contemporary China from all kinds of disciplinary perspectives: history, political science, anthropology, cultural studies, and so forth.

One of the most important lessons I have learned from working with my advisor, Professor Herve Varenne, has been to see education and learning as a human activity that happens outside of formal schooling. As I returned to Yunnan (where I lived and worked when I was a Teach for China fellow), I began to look at spaces of learning that were not tied to formal schooling. LGBT discussion groups, held regularly inside tea houses or HIV clinics, were one particularly interesting example. In these spaces, people were posing questions about how to navigate social life and then exchanging stories and information to try and help each other solve particular problems. My research takes these moments seriously as important sites for studying how an identity is learned, and hopes to contribute both to the literature on gender and sexuality, as well as theories of education and learning.

I first traveled to China in 2008 to visit my brother and his family in Guangzhou. While I was excited by the growth and dynamism of the city, I continued to be interested in studying the countryside. I visited China periodically after that, but moved to Yunnan Province in 2013 and stayed in the rural village of Tengchong until 2015. While most of my effort was directed towards teaching at the time, I couldn't help but notice that, despite a lack of visibility, there were many "queer" people in the community. They may have been in a traditional heterosexual relationship, but would also have an alternative online presence, very close friends of the same gender, or non-normative gender expressions.

Studying the literature on sexuality in China I found that there is a great emphasis placed on the role of urbanization and transnationalism. When the more rural parts of the country are discussed it normally defaults to deficit language or fails to see the sexuality that exists beyond Western identity categories. The more I go back to China, the more interested I am in learning about the ambiguities that many people live within, and how formal processes of learning seek to produce clarity to these ambiguities.

WEAI has provided me with invaluable resources during my time here at Columbia and it is safe to say that I would not be able to conduct my research this year without the Institute's continued generosity. Throughout my studies, I was fortunate enough to receive awards which have provided me with high quality language training both here at Columbia and in Taiwan's ICLP program. Furthermore, WEAI has provided me with resources to return to China during the summer to conduct pilot research that has helped me to present papers at conferences and further develop my research project. This year WEAI has generously agreed to fund my research in Chengdu and Kunming, which will be the basis for my doctoral dissertation. In addition to providing resources, WEAI has hosted many events with top China scholars that have informed my thinking and research. One that particularly comes to mind is the 2018 lecture "Cultivating a Therapeutic Self in China" from Li Zhang, Professor of Anthropology at the University of California-Davis, about mental health institutions in Kunming. I had been reading Zhang's work for many years, so I was excited to hear her approach to this new topic, which greatly helped me frame my own questions on how the self becomes formulated in a Chinese context.

I am also grateful to the mentorship and assistance of my advisors Nicholas Bartlett and Myron Cohen. At key moments, people like Professor Cohen have helped me to find the money to study Chinese in Taiwan. During the difficult period of writing my research proposal, Nicholas Bartlett gave me constructive feedback that helped me to better design my project and engage more with the literature. I am incredibly fortunate to have had their guidance during my time here at Columbia.



Andrew with young students in China.



## THIS MONTH IN 1979:

### TOYOTA MOTOR COMPANY GRANT ESTABLISHES JAPANESE RESEARCH PROGRAM



WEAI faculty and affiliates with Shōichirō Toyoda of the Toyota Motor Company (seated, center); Gerald L. Curtis, Director of the East Asian Institute (seated, left); and Harvey Picker (seated, right), Dean of the School of International and Public Affairs.

July 11, 1979

An excerpt from the *Columbia Spectator* article follows:

“The East Asian Institute has been awarded a two-part grant totaling \$400,000 from the Toyota Motor Company for research in Japanese studies and to fund other Japanese related activities. The money will be used to establish a research program in the East Asian Institute and a part-time visiting professorship at the School of International Affairs.”

For the *Columbia Spectator* article, visit:

<http://spectatorarchive.library.columbia.edu/?a=d&d=cs19790711-01.2.8&srpos=1&e=-----en-20--1--txt-txIN-toyota+east+asian+institute----->

In the Toyota Research Program's inaugural year, the Institute hosted several major seminars and research projects focusing on Japanese society and political economy and on United States-Japan relations. Among the speakers attending the East Asian Institute Toyota Seminar were Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Richard Holbrooke; James Abegglen, president of the Boston Consulting Group, Japan; Charles A. Zraket, executive vice president of the MITRE Corporation; and former Japanese Ambassador to the US Nobuhiko Ushiba.