

2019 March Newsletter



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
Weatherhead East Asian Institute



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March 2002

Throughout March, the Weatherhead East Asian Institute sponsored a strong lineup of programming on topics ranging from elections in Southeast Asia to Korean popular music.

On March 5, the Institute cosponsored a talk by Jonathan Corpus Ong, Associate Professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Massachusetts Amherst on “Disinformation Crisis and Southeast Asia Elections: Behind the Scenes of Fake News Production and Fact-Check Interventions.” This event was part of the ongoing “Reporting Asia” lecture series.

Together with the Center for Korean Studies, the Institute cosponsored the “100 Years of Korean Popular Music” symposium on March 8. The symposium brought to Columbia University Roald Maliangkay, Associate Professor at Australian National University, and Director of the Korea Institute; Suk-Young Kim, Professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, and Director of the Center for Performance Studies; and Dal Yong Jin, Professor at the School of Communication at Simon Fraser University. At the symposium, these three distinguished scholars examined the development of Korean popular music from the colonial period to the present.

As part of the “Modern Tibetan Studies at 20” series, the Institute hosted Susumu Kawata, Professor at the Osaka Institute of Technology. On March 11, Professor Kawata presented a talk titled “A Note from Japan on Contemporary Tibet: The CCP’s Religious Policies and the Emergence of Religious Space in Eastern Tibet.”

On March 13, the Institute cosponsored an international conference on “Constitutional Reform in Japan: Prospects, Process, and Implications.” This conference convened international scholars to address three aspects of constitutional reform in Japan: the domestic political landscape; comparative legal perspectives drawing on the experiences of other countries; and implications of change from political, strategic, and social viewpoints.

The Institute cosponsored the Fifth Annual Thailand Update 2019 that took place on March 15. The day-long event featured a panel of distinguished scholars and provided an in-depth analysis of Thailand’s elections.

On March 27, the Institute hosted Wei Xiong, Trumbull-Adams Professor of Finance and Professor of Economics in the Department of Economics and Bendheim Center for Finance at Princeton University for the Ninth Annual N.T. Wang Distinguished Lecture. Professor Xiong’s talk focused on the opportunities and challenges associated with China’s real estate boom.

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

*Professor Wei Xiong
speaks at the Ninth
Annual N.T. Wang
Distinguished Lecture on
March 27*



Weatherhead East Asian Institute

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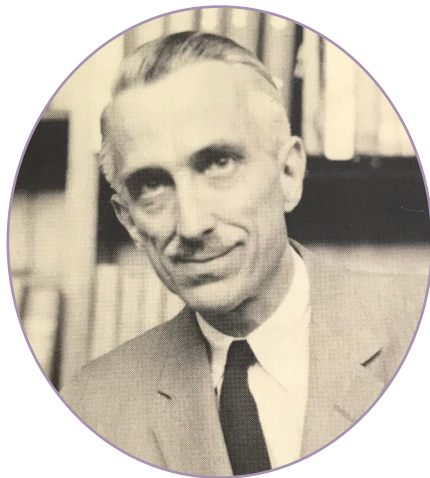
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C. Martin Wilbur, third director of the East Asian Institute (1958-1964)



**C. Martin
Wilbur**
1907-1997

C Martin Wilbur served as the third director of the East Asian Institute (renamed the Weatherhead East Asian Institute in 2003). Born in Ohio, Dr. Wilbur spent most of his early life living in China and Japan. He then returned to Ohio for undergraduate study and attended Oberlin College, graduating in 1931. He went on to earn his doctorate from Columbia in 1941 and joined the faculty in 1947 as Associate Professor of Chinese History. He is regarded as a key scholar in the field of Chinese history and helped develop this area of study at Columbia.

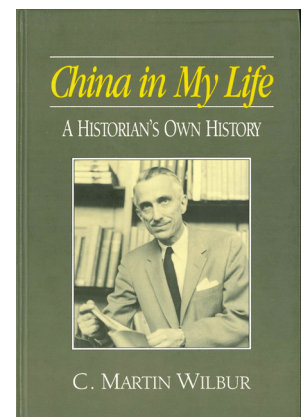
Much of Dr. Wilbur's scholarship focused on the development of the Nationalist Party in China and the relationship between the Nationalists and Chinese Communists in the 1920s and 1930s. He studied the life and work of Sun Yat-sen, provisional first president of the Republic of China, and wrote an influential book entitled *Sun Yat-sen, Frustrated Patriot* (1976). He remained devoted to expanding the study of Chinese history and was one of the key organizers of the "Chinese Oral History Project" at Columbia, which documented Chinese history up to 1949. He is also credited as one of the founders of Columbia's "Seminar on Modern China," which hosts a scholar on China every month to discuss issues related to modern Chinese history, politics and contemporary affairs.

He was the Institute's director from 1958 to 1964 and served as the George Samsom Professor of Chinese History at Columbia University from 1966 to 1976. Some of his published work includes *Slavery in China During the Former Han Dynasty, 206 B.C.-A.D. 25* (1967), *The Nationalist Revolution in China, 1923-1928* (1983), and *China in My Life: A Historian's Own History* (1996).

After Dr. Wilbur retired in 1976, his students presented him with a book of essays entitled, *Perspectives on a Changing China: Essays in Honor of Professor C. Martin Wilbur on the Occasion of His Retirement* (1979). Following his death his students and colleagues established the C. Martin Wilbur fellowship in modern Chinese studies at the Institute, which each year supports PhD candidates as they complete their dissertations and join the cohort of Columbia students who continue to further Dr. Wilbur's mission by expanding our understanding of modern China.



Top: Dr. Wilbur and his wife, Kathryn.
Bottom: Dr. Wilbur's memoir, *China in My Life: A Historian's Own History*



C. Martin Wilbur at the East Asian Institute's 10th anniversary reception

Written by Priya Chokshi with guidance
from Madeleine Zelin and Andrew Nathan

FEATURED INTERVIEW

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Professors Lien-Hang Nguyen (left) and John Phan (right) at WEAI's 70th anniversary reception

New Vietnamese Studies program bridges the US with East and Southeast Asia at Columbia

Interviewed by Ariana King

Vietnam seems to be at an important crossroads."

More than 40 years have elapsed since the end of the Vietnam War, but many in the US still view the country of Vietnam through the lens of war. "Vietnam" has long been synonymous with the conflict itself: an event that spanned two decades and exists today as a chapter in American history.

But there is so much more to Vietnam: an emerging market, a cultivation ground for the arts, a diverse and thriving diasporic community, and a country worth understanding with a unique history of its own. To foster much-needed knowledge about Vietnam and its many facets, Columbia launched a new Vietnamese Studies program this year with the support of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute (WEAI).

"Vietnam seems to be at an important crossroads," said Lien-Hang Nguyen, Dorothy Borg Associate Professor in the History of the United States and East Asia, and a cofounder of the new Vietnamese Studies program at Columbia. The choice of Vietnam as host of the recent diplomatic summit between US President Donald Trump and North Korean Chairman Kim Jong Un is just one example demonstrating the nation's global position, and the need to reframe our understanding of Vietnam beyond the Vietnam War.

Without a deeper understanding of the country and its history, "you would be missing a myriad of very interesting ways to understand and track this development," Nguyen said.

Through its new Vietnamese Studies program, Columbia and WEAI aim to expand the common understanding of Vietnam beyond the "very cursory, shallow understanding of Vietnam's position regionally and globally" that has come from a field dominated by war studies "by going deeper into the past, deeper in ways to understand [Vietnam's] important position as a bridge or gateway" between regions, Nguyen explained.

China, Japan, and Korea have dominated East Asian studies, leaving Vietnam most often to the field of Southeast Asian studies. Columbia's Vietnamese Studies program, however, challenges the notion that Vietnam can be simply categorized as part of one region rather than another, and highlights its unique position as a hinge or bridge between East and Southeast Asia.

According to John Phan, Assistant Professor of Vietnamese Studies in Columbia's East Asian Languages and Cultures Department, "If you try to define East Asia by any means—like a shared script, a shared cultural history, a shared philosophy, a shared educational system—Vietnam unquestionably belongs in East Asia. At the same time, if you look at the history...you look at the relationship between especially Mainland Southeast Asia...and the Vietnamese kingdom and states, it's unquestionable that Vietnam is part of the Southeast Asian arena."



From left to right: A poster for the symposium: "Vietnam and China in the Longue Durée;" participants ask questions at "Vietnam and China in the Longue Durée;" former BBC reporter Bill Hayton and former Financial Times and Reuters correspondent Nguyen Phuong Linh discuss reporting on Vietnam at WEAI.



Phan, who helms the new program with Nguyen, suggested that attempts to pigeonhole Vietnam as part of a certain region or within a certain discipline have made the thorough study of Vietnam both a necessity and an opportunity.

"Vietnam is perfect as a lens for criticizing the kinds of constraining ideas that have hampered research into East Asia and Southeast Asia, as well as the disciplines focused on those regions—historical disciplines, literary disciplines, policy and social scientific disciplines," he said.

"Having Vietnam recontextualized into this broader network does a lot of good things for East Asian Studies, for the study of China, Japan, Korea throughout...that also has this feedback into Vietnamese studies," Phan explained.

But despite the value of studying Vietnam, existing Vietnamese studies programs across the US have been struggling to receive the institutional support they need to be sustainable, an unfortunate and ironic outcome considering "Vietnam's growing importance in global life," he noted.

"Vietnam's academy has boomed. [The country] has emerged onto the global stage economically, particularly, but also politically as an increasingly important hinge between the ASEAN nations and China," Phan said. "Also, artistically, the film industry has been booming. The fashion industry...and the culinary...All of that is happening right now and it is unprecedented since the war." Columbia's program, he said, "is particularly important for filling this moment."

"Without the wider community that exists here at Weatherhead, I don't think Vietnamese Studies—the program we've established—would be half as good," said Nguyen, citing the foundation of research built up by Institute faculty members. "We really pull from their expertise both in terms of connections to Vietnam but also how they have built and

Having Vietnam recontextualized into this broader network does a lot of good things for East Asian Studies..."

sustained Japanese Studies, Chinese Studies, Korean Studies, Tibetan Studies."

Phan added that WEAI's interdisciplinary and cross-regional approach "enriches" and "cross-fertilizes" the work of its members. "It's in some ways ideal as a platform for a new program like Vietnamese Studies."

Building on this momentum, Nguyen and Phan, with the backing of WEAI and cosponsors, have worked to organize a number of successful events for the program. A symposium last month, entitled "Vietnam and China in the Longue Durée," drew an audience of some 130 registrants. Four panels of eminent scholars from Australia, Vietnam, China, Canada, and the US addressed the dynamic relationship between China and Vietnam from the imperial period to the contemporary during the two-day event. The symposium was preceded by a talk on journalism and media in Vietnam—the first event in WEAI's 70th anniversary "Reporting Asia" series. This month, the Institute supported a screening of the acclaimed film "Journey from the Fall" and a brown bag talk with its Vietnamese-American director, Ham Tran.

From a projected conference on pre-modern Vietnamese history to screenings and talks on Vietnam's modern arts and society, exciting things appear to be in store for Columbia's new Vietnamese Studies program.

Phillip Lin is a second-year student in the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) Master of International Affairs program, and the current president of the Asia Pacific Affairs Council (APAC), one of several student organizations in SIPA which focuses on East Asia and acts as the student group arm of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute.

Phillip Lin

SIPA student and president of the Asia Pacific Affairs Council



Before I came to Columbia, I was studying Asian Business at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. I chose Columbia and SIPA because I have been really interested in international affairs since high school. I would always read the international news section in the newspaper and I enjoyed learning about how the world works. In Hong Kong, there wasn't an international affairs major, which was a pity for me and was why I decided on pursuing another degree before I returned to work. New York's proximity to everything that's going on was appealing to me, and SIPA's internationally renowned MIA program came to my attention.

I became involved with APAC because my specialization here at SIPA is East Asia, and I met Brian Chang (the previous APAC President) at the East Asia specialization networking event. He introduced me to APAC and told me that he was recruiting members for a new board. I wanted to be involved with a student organization during my time here, so I went through the interview and was hired as the treasurer of APAC. It turned out to be a great decision as I became more and more involved in the process of making great events happen.

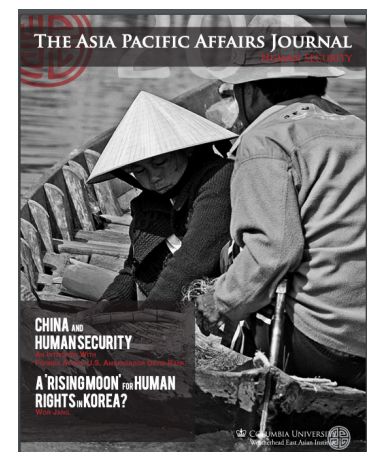
Since this is my first time being in a leadership position on a team, I've learned a lot about leadership and how effective communications are important for us to be efficient. While there's still so much to learn, I think this experience is a great start for me to become more comfortable with leading a group of people in my future career. And because of the strong Asian focus, I'm more certain about my interest in Asia and building my career there.



APAC has always had a very close relationship with the Weatherhead East Asian Institute. WEAI is very supportive of our events and what we do and we're provided with a lot of resources and given many potential opportunities. I think WEAI is like a mentor to APAC. When we meet difficulties or if we need any support, we'll always receive help from them. APAC wouldn't be at where it is today without WEAI's support along the way.

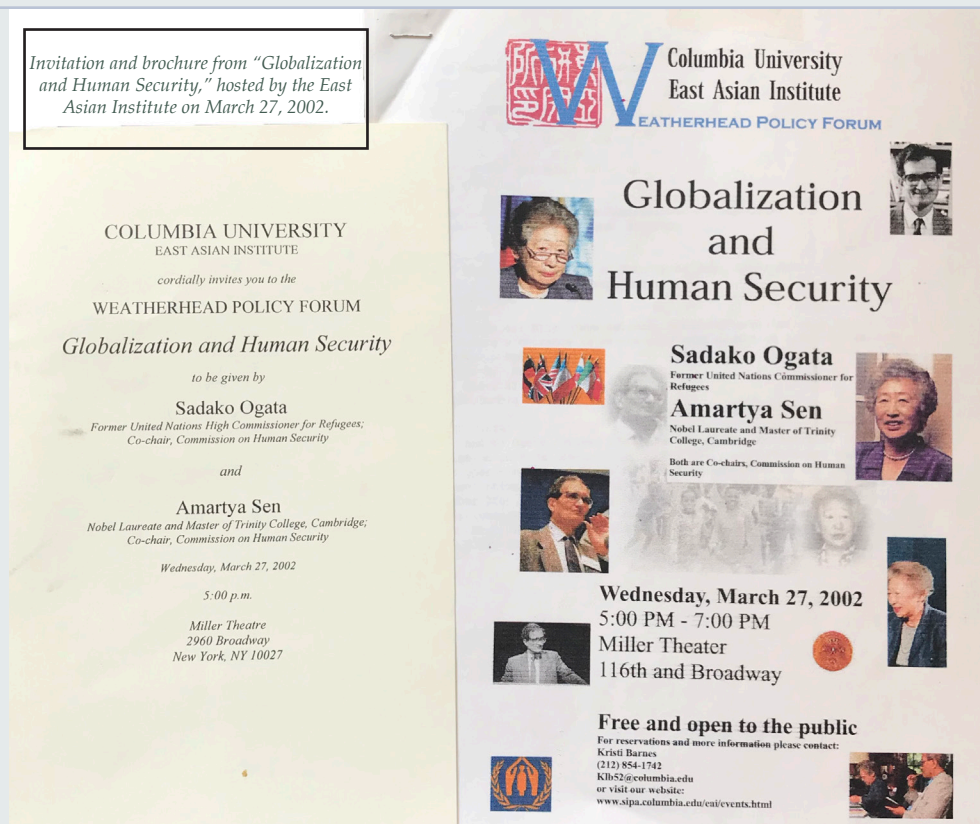
When I'm not working or studying, I enjoy traveling and exploring different places. I also love food so I'll always be looking at different restaurants and making plans to visit them. And if you look at my Instagram, you'll know I love to take pictures as well!

We have a few upcoming APAC events that I'm looking forward to this semester. Last year, Brian introduced an Asian American Restaurant Entrepreneurs and Tasting Event and it was a huge success. We plan to bring that event back and invite several Asian restaurant owners to bring their food and also talk about their experiences as restaurateurs. We're all excited about this and we're sure everyone will love this event. What can I say, food brings people together!



ON THIS MONTH IN 2002:

WEATHERHEAD POLICY FORUM: GLOBALIZATION AND HUMAN SECURITY



March 27, 2002 Event

Summary from the School of International and Public Affairs archive follows:

"Forum Examines How to Balance Human Security, Prosperity in Age of Globalization"

The forces of globalization are bringing down social and economic barriers around the world, leading to greater economic prosperity for some, financial hardship for others, and an increased threat to human security around the world. The co-chairs of the Commission on Human Security, Amartya Sen and Sadako Ogata, discuss ways to ensure human rights and economic prosperity in the age of globalization at a forum sponsored by SIPA's East Asia Institute.

Amartya Sen, Nobel Laureate and Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and co-chair of the Commission on Human Security, discusses human security and globalization, saying that human security goes beyond poverty and inequality, and fits into the broad vehicle of human rights. While globalization is one of the greatest sources of wealth, as economies rise together during prosperous times, there is no global equity to provide security when economies begin to fall.

Sadako Ogata, former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and co-chair of the Commission on Human Security, says that inequality among groups over time leads to violence and humanitarian and political crisis. The Commission is considering a two-pronged approach to threats to human security: protection—early warning, judicial and institutional set-ups and providing for basic human needs—and empowerment."

Archived footage of the event can be found at: <http://ci.columbia.edu/ci/frame.html>