

# 2019 September Newsletter



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
Weatherhead East Asian Institute



## CONTENTS

- 2 DIRECTOR PROFILE  
Madeleine Zelin
- 3 FEATURE ARTICLE  
East Asian National  
Resource Center
- 5 STUDENT PROFILE  
Dongxin Zou
- 7 FROM THE ARCHIVES  
Assessing the Abe  
Administration in Japan

In September, the Weatherhead East Asian Institute welcomed new and returning faculty and students and kicked off the fall semester of anniversary events and initiatives.

Opening the fall term, the Institute's Master of Arts in Regional Studies—East Asia (MARSEA) program inducted a strong cohort of students for 2019, in time for the launch of the program's new website: <http://marsea.weai.columbia.edu>. The new site offers the most up-to-date information on MARSEA admissions, degree requirements and resources for current students, prospective students, and alumni.

The fall calendar of 70th anniversary events began on September 13, when Joshua Wong and Kai Ping (Brian) Leung, two vocal activists in Hong Kong's anti-extradition bill protests, visited Columbia to speak at an event with students about the protest movement. WEAI Professor Benjamin Liebman and WEAI Senior Research Scholar Michael Davis moderated the event. In his opening remarks, Professor Liebman spoke of the value of freedom of speech and of Columbia's strength in creating an environment conducive to a productive exchange. The discussion was lively and featured a wide variety of opinions.

The Institute's Modern Tibetan Studies (MTS) program resumed its 20th anniversary series on new directions in international Tibetan studies with a discussion of Tibetan studies in China. On September 24, Gyelmo Drukpa, a senior researcher at the China Tibetology Research Center in Beijing, introduced the history of Tibetan studies in China, which has flourished since the end of the Cultural Revolution. Drukpa also discussed the vibrant and growing landscape of research departments, academic programs, publishing houses and academic journals dedicated to Tibetan studies in China and highlighted important new research findings and directions. In addition to his talk, Drukpa met with MTS graduate students for a workshop on September 23.

Turning from Tibetan studies in China to the development of the field in Europe, MTS held an additional anniversary series event on September 30. Berthe Jansen, junior professor of Tibetan Studies at the Institute for Indian and Central Asian Studies at Leipzig University, spoke about recent developments in Tibetan Studies in Europe and her current research. MTS graduate students and alumni also participated in a workshop with Professor Jansen.

For more details about past events and the latest news about the Institute please visit: <http://weai.columbia.edu/>.

*Joshua Wong (left) and  
Brian Leung (right)  
discuss the anti-  
extradition bill protests at  
a September 13 event at  
the Columbia Law School.*



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## Madeleine Zelin (1992-1993, 1995-2001)



Professor Zelin, center, with WEAL staff and faculty in Room 918 during her directorship.



Madeleine  
Zelin

**M**adeleine Zelin was the ninth director of the East Asian Institute (renamed the Weatherhead East Asian Institute in 2003) and served from 1992-1993 and 1995-2001. She also served as acting director of the Institute in fall 2012 and again in fall 2017.

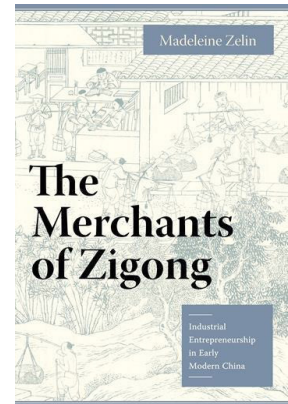
An expert on modern Chinese legal and economic history, Professor Zelin offers courses on Chinese legal and economic history and the history of industrialization, a survey of modern Chinese history, and general graduate and undergraduate seminars and colloquia on modern Chinese history. She joined the Columbia faculty in 1979 after completing her PhD at the University of California, Berkeley. She received her undergraduate degree from Cornell University in 1970.

Professor Zelin has published award-winning research on the history of Chinese business practice. Her book *The Merchants of Zigong: Industrial Enterprise in Early Modern China* (2005) was the winner of the 2006 Allan Sharlin Memorial Prize of the Social Science History Association, the 2006 Fairbank Prize of the Association for Asian Studies and the 2007 Humanities Book Prize of the International Convention on Asian Studies. She is also the author of *The Magistrate's Tael* (1984); the translator of Mao Dun's *Rainbow* (1992); and the coeditor of various works including *Merchant Communities in Asia* (2015), with Lin Yu-ju; *Contract and Property Rights in Early Modern China* (2004), with Jonathan K. Ocko and Robert Gardella; and *Empire, Nation, and Beyond: Chinese History in Late Imperial and Modern Times* (2006), with Joseph W. Escherick and Wen-hsin Yeh.

As director of the East Asian Institute, Professor Zelin oversaw the founding of a diverse slate of new programs and brokered important and lasting partnerships with the Weatherhead Foundation, the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation, and others. In the 1998 academic year, the East Asian Institute, in collaboration with the School of International and Public Affairs, launched the Master of Arts in Regional Studies - East Asia (MARSEA) program, which continues to cultivate new experts and scholars of East Asia today. Under Professor Zelin's leadership, the Institute also established the Modern Tibetan Studies program, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2019.

A conference honoring Professor Zelin's significant contributions to the study of China's business culture and legal practice was held at Columbia in September 2014. At the event, titled "Beyond Modernity: Understanding Change in China," scholars from around the world gathered to critically assess the concept of modernity.

In addition to being an active member of the Institute today, Professor Zelin is also a trustee of the Business History Conference and a longstanding member of the editorial board of the BHC's journal, *Enterprise & Society*. As part of her commitment to mentoring younger scholars in the legal and economic history of East Asia Professor Zelin served as codirector of the first AAS New Directions Workshop: Economic History of Asia. She is a founding board member of the International Society for Chinese Law and History. Professor Zelin is also a dedicated amateur flutist.



Professor Zelin visited Thailand during her directorship to seek support for Southeast Asia studies at WEAL.



Professor Zelin with a former professional fellow during her directorship.



WEAI Student Affairs Coordinator Lucy March (left) joins New York City high school students on stage at a Chinese language speech contest at Hunter College's Chinese Flagship Center, organized in collaboration with the East Asian National Resource Center at Columbia.



## The East Asian National Resource Center at Columbia: Seeding the future of East Asian studies

Interviewed by Ariana King

When the East Asian National Resource Center (NRC) was established at Columbia in 1960, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean were not yet widely studied in the United States. Recognizing its importance as a center of excellence engaged in the cultivation of American international experts, the US Department of Education included Columbia among its first Title VI grantees, tasked with educating future generations of East Asia scholars and professionals. Nearly 60 years after earning this recognition, the Institute continues to serve as the home of Columbia's NRC, contributing to the teaching of East Asian languages and promoting understanding of the economies, politics, societies, and cultures of the region. Today the Weatherhead East Asian Institute (WEAI) develops new programs and materials to expand East Asian studies at Columbia and beyond, thanks in part to the Department of Education's decades of unbroken support for the NRC.

WEAI is often described as a hub for East Asian studies at Columbia. Physically located on the 9th floor of the International Affairs Building, the Institute is a place for scholars and students to gather, to host events that promote discourse on the latest issues in East Asian studies. It is also a community of the faculty and affiliates that comprise it, and an administrator

of funding for research and programs that pave new directions in the study of East Asia. If WEAI is a hub, the NRC can perhaps best be described as the web that connects East Asian resources across Columbia—stemming from the academic departments, centers, and institutes like WEAI, and the programs they administer—and brings them to the world beyond.

According to WEAI Executive Director Nicole Vartanian, the NRC “has been a mechanism for Weatherhead to connect with communities off campus in meaningful ways to help further the study of East Asia, and is a really vital part of our mission to ensure that all of the expertise that we have is shared as broadly and as widely as possible with communities outside of our immediate reach.” Of particular importance in this regard has been the outreach program, begun as part of the NRC and now a major national institution, providing resources for K-12 and college teachers, study programs online and abroad for teachers, and a host of open access web resources. The outreach program, Asia for Educators, is administered by Roberta H. Martin and Karen Kane at WEAI.

In keeping with the current aims of the NRC to “engage the real world” and to “engage underserved students and teachers,” WEAI has worked to improve public access to its pool of resources. Each year, the Institute hosts numerous free, public events, and endeavors to make

their content available online for those unable to attend. The NRC has also forged collaborative partnerships with other higher-ed institutions, including a collaboration with City University of New York (CUNY) schools—most recently Hunter College’s Chinese Flagship Center, where WEAI this year supported a Chinese speech contest for high school students.

“There are so many ways we provide resources for students, teachers, and faculty across all levels of the educational system,” said WEAI Research Scholar Kim Brandt, who currently leads the NRC. “Whether it’s the syllabi we produce, or serving as a resource for universities, colleges, high schools, and elementary schools in our region. Our collaboration with CUNY especially is an important new development in a much longer ongoing effort to support and to provide resources to underserved teachers and students, and to do so creatively.”

WEAI is currently working with colleagues in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures (EALAC) to develop two new overseas Chinese language and internship programs: one for medical students and the other for engineering and science students. The Institute is also developing a full-year advanced business Chinese course and textbook.

“The NRC enables us to develop and grow incrementally each cycle,” said WEAI Assistant Director Katherine Forshay. “There has been a concerted effort to develop a roster of activities where we felt there was excitement and initiative and an interest in making real progress.”

Madeleine Zelin, Dean Lung Professor of Chinese Studies at Columbia University, led the NRC for 30 years, cementing Columbia’s reputation as a pioneer in contemporary East Asian studies.

“When I started teaching, language programs were still using textbooks created for missionaries,” Zelin noted. Thanks to the NRC grant, “our language program received support to enhance not only the development of new, more innovative contemporary textbooks, but new courses as well,” she said.

The NRC at Columbia has distinguished itself by “supporting the development of teaching materials that continuously upgrade students’ experience and keep in touch with the changing contemporary worlds in which these languages are spoken,” said Zelin. She noted new courses that, for example, prepare students to analyze content on Chinese websites and social media.

NRC funding has also allowed the Institute to “address needs and interests on campus that otherwise, without this funding, there really wouldn’t be support for,” Vartanian explained. In 1999 the Modern Tibetan Studies (MTS) program was established, becoming the first

“The NRC enables us to develop and grow incrementally each cycle.”

university program dedicated to the study of modern Tibet in the US. Beginning in the 1990s, WEAI also began to invest more formally in the study of Southeast Asia. Today WEAI is the administrative base for the New York Southeast Asia Network, a joint effort with New York University and Seton Hall University. The Institute also recently helped to launch the Vietnamese Studies initiative at Columbia, which began on a smaller scale with programs supported by NRC funding and has since become an academic program now fully sponsored by Columbia.

“It’s because of this track record of showing that seeding these projects has yielded really significant new directions” that the Department of Education has consistently renewed its funding support for the NRC at Columbia for nearly 60 years, Vartanian said.

Zelin notes that the quality and creativity of the resources offered by the NRC through the years has also helped the Institute maintain this distinction—from the impressive collections of the C.V. Starr East Asian Library, which receives NRC funds, to the teaching syllabi made available by postdoctoral fellows at the Institute, to, most recently, the Chinese speech contest at the Hunter College Chinese Flagship Center.

In turn, Zelin added, the NRC has allowed WEAI to reach out to students “who are not necessarily area studies aficionados but will be going on to different professions—to provide for them a relevant way to become literate in East Asian languages that they can then use in their future work experience.”

#### East Asian National Resource Center

Columbia University began its commitment to educate Americans about East Asia more than 100 years ago. In 1960, the **East Asian National Resource Center** was established with a mission to advance the quality and dissemination of knowledge about East Asia, to train experts on East Asia with the highest levels of language proficiency, to promote interdisciplinary collaborations on and with the region, and to provide local and national educational outreach. Today the Center’s 96 full-time faculty in over 25 schools and departments offer more than 500 disciplinary and language courses a year on the region. Students may pursue undergraduate, masters, and doctoral study in more than 10 disciplinary departments or a joint professional school/East Asian studies degree program. The Center offers classroom instruction through fifty-year Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, advanced modern and classical Tibetan, and intermediate Indonesian and Vietnamese. Through our internship and summer training program students have an opportunity to combine language training and work experience. The Center conducts extensive research and training in the field of language pedagogy, offers a summer M.A. program in Japanese language pedagogy, and is starting an M.A. program in Chinese language pedagogy. The Center’s award-winning outreach program provides in-service training to 12 states, summer study tours, video and print teaching materials, and hosts the Asia for Educators Website. The C.V. Starr East Asian Library ranks as one of the world’s most important dedicated East Asian collections. The Center is home to over a dozen interdisciplinary research centers which act as nodes for interaction among departments/schools and for outreach to New York’s media, law, business, government, diplomatic and arts communities. The Center’s public programs provide a critical site for open debate and information about East Asia and the issues that affect us today.



For more information, visit <http://weai.columbia.edu/east-asia-at-columbia/>



Dongxin Zou completed her doctorate in the East Asian Languages and Cultures Department and the History Department in September 2019. Her area of focus is Chinese history with interests in medicine and science, Cold War politics, and China's relations with the Middle Eastern and North African countries in the post-colonial world. Prior to joining Columbia for her PhD, she received her BA and MA in Arabic Language and Culture from Beijing Foreign Studies University. In October 2019 she will begin a postdoctoral fellowship at the Science, Technology, and Society (STS) Research Cluster in the Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore.

**Dongxin Zou**  
**EALAC/History PhD graduate**  
**and former WEAI student worker**



*Dongxin Zou in  
Tipaza, Algeria*



*Dongxin in Morocco,  
conducting research at the  
Hospital of Settat.*



The primary reason that I chose Columbia for my PhD is that it has one of the strongest East Asian studies programs in North America and pioneers the field of transnational history with its International and Global History (IGH) program. I've been interested in the interconnected history of China and the Arab world since I was an undergraduate majoring in Arabic. I also developed an interest in the history of medicine while taking courses for a master's degree in Middle Eastern history.

I came to the field of Sino-African studies from a non-conventional entry point. I have training in Arabic, so when I started to pursue my project of the global history of China's socialist medicine, I looked first to the Arabic-speaking world that I'm more familiar with. I found Algeria as a good case study to examine the medical aid and humanitarian networks between Chinese provincial health institutions and host communities. Although Algeria is not part of sub-Saharan Africa, which dominates people's imagination of what Africa looks like, China's medical aid to Algeria since 1963 formed the model of the following medical missions across Africa.

With a history project of the recent past, I sought to revise our current understanding of China's interventions in Africa as primarily a post-1990s "neo-colonial" phenomenon pursued for political and economic ends. I also wanted to call attention to the ethical dimension and humanitarian sensibilities in the rise of China's influence in Africa.

While at Columbia, I have been encouraged to carry out non-traditional geographical crossings in my research and freely explore interdisciplinary possibilities. The intellectual vigor and diversity of Columbia history faculty's expertise have continually inspired me to turn my curiosity about our forebears and their experiences into meaningful accounts of the past. I am especially grateful to my advisor, Professor Eugenia Lean, who has continuously pushed me to read my sources against the grain. My research also evolved as my other committee members and colleagues challenged my readings and suggested alternative interpretations.

As a historian working on post-1949 China, I also have learned to participate in creating sources (such as conducting interviews and clinical observations) for historical research. I greatly benefited from the free spirit of intellectual curiosity and dynamic exchanges across disciplinary boundaries and regional confines that Columbia afforded to us with its rich array of resources. I strongly encourage my fellow students to make use of these many resources, such as the digital humanities, and the oral history program.

To other students pursuing interdisciplinary research at Columbia, one piece of advice I have—which I wish I had done better—is to explore more diverse areas. For example, when I wrote about improvised medical technology popular in China's

medical mission practices, I was inspired by a meeting on improvisational practices hosted by a music PhD student. While we have practical concerns to position ourselves as scholars of a particular region and a specific discipline, inspiration often comes from outside our fields.

I also learned from my experiences in organizing workshops. During 2018, I co-organized a monthly workshop series for "Comparative histories of medicine and health in the global South." My proposal for the workshop received the Seed Grant from the Center for Science and Society and faculty support from the Global History of Science cluster. By actively reaching out to potentially interested people, my co-organizers and I were able to form a core group of postdocs and PhD students from Columbia, NYU, and Yale who are passionate about the ideas and questions informing history of medicine, healing, and health. We read new research publications and books, commented on each other's works-in-progress, and invited renowned historians of medicine to give public talks.

In April 2019, the Weatherhead East Asian Institute (WEAI), the Center for Science and Society, and the EALAC department sponsored the workshop that my colleague John Chen and I organized: "Science and Society in Global Asia." In all these events, I experienced the joy of shaping a group project that could benefit all participants and create meaningful intellectual exchanges.

The WEAI has continuously played an indispensable role in my studies at Columbia. It partly funded my research every summer from 2013 to 2017, so that I was able to travel to China and North Africa to collect sources and conduct interviews at different stages of my pre-dissertation research. It generously sponsored my last year at Columbia so that I could focus on completing my dissertation. The WEAI has also become an intellectual "home" to me. In Room 918, I attended hundreds of talks and conferences from people with diverse opinions; I networked with scholars from across Asia; I took my orals exam and prospectus defense; and I celebrated the closing of fruitful academic years with my friends.

Additionally, as a student worker at the WEAI, I participated in its digitization project, for which I went through the institute's old papers, practicing my skills as an archivist. I also came to know the basics of the Institute's operations and learned to appreciate the many efforts of its staff. The generous financial support from the WEAI, its dynamic intellectual community, and the work experience I had in the WEAI have been crucial in nurturing my scholarly work and making my final research project possible.

From October 2019, I'll be a postdoctoral fellow at the Science, Technology, and Society (STS) Research Cluster in the Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore. I'm excited to join the vibrant scholarly community in this intellectual hub of Southeast Asia.

ON THIS MONTH IN  
2006:

## “ASSESSING THE NEW ABE ADMINISTRATION IN JAPAN”

*Professor Gerald L. Curtis speaks at the September 26, 2006, event “Assessing the New Abe Administration.”*



*September 26, 2006*

On September 26, 2006, WEAI Professor Gerald L. Curtis discussed the election of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, then in his first term, at an event hosted in partnership with the Center on Japanese Economy and Business titled “Assessing the New Abe Administration in Japan.” An excerpt from a report of the event, and an excerpt from Professor Curtis’ remarks follow:

“Everyone agrees that Prime Minister Abe has some large shoes to fill. Does he have the same charisma that Koizumi displayed to continue with reforms, political, economic, or otherwise? Does his choice of cabinet members show what kind of leader he will be? With both the domestic and international media touting him as a nationalist, how will he fare in foreign diplomacy? The answers are still quite vague and more will be known next year. That said, Gerald L. Curtis, Burgess Professor of Political Science, Columbia University, shared his insight on Prime Minister Abe and his administration to a packed audience on September 26. Professor Curtis was joined by the moderator, Hugh Patrick, Director of the Center on Japanese Economy and Business and R.D. Calkins Professor of International Business Emeritus, Columbia Business School.”

“Another issue that [Abe] has put forward, already creating some controversy within his own Cabinet, is to change the official interpretation of Article 9 so Japan has the right to participate in so-called collective defense. Collective defense means that Japan could form an alliance or make a commitment to help another country in its defense. This goes beyond the current interpretation of Article 9, which states that Japanese defense is limited to the defense of its own homeland. The US-Japan security treaty, in theory, only obligates the United States to defend Japan; there is no reciprocal obligation in theory... Abe wants to change Article 9 of the Constitution to remove those constraints and, even before constitutional revision, change the official interpretation of Article 9 to allow collective defense. But there is considerable resistance to doing that from within the LDP itself, from its coalition partner the Komeito, and from the public at large.”

To read the full report, visit the Columbia academic commons site at: <https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/D8D50VTK>