Asian Languages & Literatures

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ASIAN LANGUAGES OUTREACH

Chris Johnstone in the College of Education and Human Development, hosted a group of students from Breck School, Minneapolis, who take Chinese language classes. The students visited campus for their annual “culture day” at the University of Minnesota. CEHD collaborates with the university’s Culture Corps and Confucius Institute to create a fun and active day for the students.

This year a “scavenger hunt” was set up for the students to seek out China-related programs at the U to gain information about the many learning opportunities available. Three teams of eight visited various sites around campus to hear briefly about program offerings. Breck students were led by UMN international students from China.
Hello, everyone. I would like to extend my greetings in this, the first department newsletter for the Department of Asian Languages and Literatures at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. I have had the good fortune to chair the department since 2008, taking over from Professor Joseph Allen, who founded the department in 2000.

In the past decade and a half, our department has grown enormously, attracting students from all backgrounds who seek knowledge concerning the challenging field of Asian studies. Our majors (currently 164 majors and 140 minors) are committed not only to the study of a difficult Asian language but to learning about Asian culture, literature and society. But we also provide classes (both culture-oriented courses and language courses) to the entire student community.

As this newsletter will demonstrate, both our faculty and students are enthusiastic scholars of matters Asian, dedicated to increasing communication between West and East during the current age of globalization. Our faculty is an award-winning group of language teachers and professors who have authored definitive language textbooks as well as cutting-edge studies discussing everything from ancient Chinese poetry to South Asian feminism to Japanese animation.

Some of our majors go on to careers in business, where their language knowledge gives them a leg up in internships in China, Korea, or Japan. Others go on to work for NGO or take up positions teaching English abroad; while still others apply their skills in the military. Regardless of what they do, however, they graduate with a deeper awareness of cultural difference and a genuine affection for Asian affairs – whether it be Korean history, Japanese cinema, Chinese religion, or whatever subject has piqued their interest as undergraduates here. Rather than limiting their future, work in ALL has enabled them to combine a demanding level of language study with a deeper understanding of the world in which we live – something that enhances their knowledge in other fields, making them more perceptive actors on the world stage.

We live in troubling times for the humanities, where it is difficult to find support for college-level fields of study that are unrelated to the hard sciences or to matters legal or economic. And yet the purpose of higher education should also enable students to mature into their position as citizens in a complex global society and to be aware of the forces that will contribute to their future. We are proud in ALL for the vital role we play in educating the citizens of the next generation.
Folwell Hall was built in 1906-07, to replace Old Main, which was destroyed by fire in 1904.

Clarence H. Johnston, Sr., who was the University architect of record, also designed Northrop Auditorium, Walter Library, and Williams Arena on the campus. Johnston also designed the Grandstand at the Minnesota State Fair and a number of buildings on the St. Paul campus. The cost of building the five-floor structure at the turn of the century is estimated to have been between $410,000 - $415,000. Financed partly through insurance money and a grant of $350,000 from the state, it was considered the finest building of any state institution in its time. Upon completion it was named after the University's first president, William Watts Folwell.

Johnson designed it in the style of English Renaissance Revival as inspired by the combination of Jacobean and Elizabethan styles of architecture. The exterior decoration consisted of sculpted faces and animals such as cats, cherubs, rabbits, eagles, and even gophers. The original gargoyles at the four corners of the building fell apart within a year of Folwell's completion and were replaced in 2007.

The first floor walls and flooring are of Italian marble. The south entrance columns and walls are of gray granite. Most interior walls are composed of clay tile with a plaster finish. In the original, twenty six ornamental chimneys were used for natural ventilation, while only 2 fireplaces were in the building. Following renovation, the chimneys still remain in rooms 128 & 131 as decorative fire places. The renovated Folwell contains classrooms and study rooms located on the ground and first floors. Folwell Hall was reopened in August 2011 following three years of extensive renovation, which included updating the HVAC system throughout, updating classroom technology in modernized classrooms, creating administrative and office space for four language departments, and creating study space for graduate students. All was accomplished while maintaining the original integrity of the structure in compliance with sustainability guidelines. The original marble floors, beautiful woodwork, and iron grating continue to enhance the visual aspects of the interior.
Joseph R. Allen is Professor of Chinese Literature and Cultural Studies. Allen joined the faculty of University Minnesota as founding Chair of Asian Languages and Literature in 2000, and is currently Director of Undergraduate Studies. His most recent work is *Taipei: City of Displacements* (2012). Earlier work focused on poetic writing ranging from early traditional China up to contemporary times. In addition to teaching courses related to Taiwan, he offers classical and modern literature courses, as well as a new course “From Oracle Bones to Tattoos: Writing in East Asian Cultures.” His current research focuses on Chinese literature (guowen) textbooks from during the 1930s and their role in defining the Chinese nation.

I cannot believe I have already spent two semesters in the City of Lakes. It was a hot sunny day, the 31st of August, when I was driving across the border of Wisconsin in a car full of stuff. Without unpacking, I went straight to Johnston Hall to do paperwork. I have worked at three different Big Ten universities in the Midwest since I started my Ph.D., and the U of M is the biggest of them all. The Twin Cities, in which the University is nestled, is the 16th largest metropolitan city in America. The size of the campus and the Twin Cities (and even the average height of the people) is big enough to impress me and in the first few weeks, I was scared of driving on the highways. Minnesota and Wisconsin share many things together, and having several students from Wisconsin makes me nostalgic about the days I spent in Madison.

As the days went by, I felt more and more at home, as the campus and facilities were very welcoming and comfortable. Many people had warned me of the cold weather in the Twin Cities, but I am used to the weather as I had lived in Madison for several years and I had grown up with this kind of weather back in Korea. It was not as bad as I had expected. No winter here has been as severe as the first winter I spent in Delhi, India. I was totally unprepared, shivering inside of my hostel room for the whole winter in Delhi. It was much warmer outside during the day, so, people in Delhi were basking in the sun during the day in the middle of winter. The psychological preparation really paid off when it came to my first winter in the Twin Cities. I cannot wait to see how the next winter will be here, and am already planning to explore the Gopher Way, which I missed this year.

Hello, I’m Maki Isaka, a faculty member of ALL. I’m also an affiliate faculty at the Department of Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies. I teach Japanese premodern literature, Japanese theater, as well as gender studies.

My regular courses include survey courses (“Traditional Japanese Literature in Translation” and “Japanese Theater”) and courses related to gender and gender studies. Sometimes, I offer courses on more specific themes: for example, the kabuki theater. Kabuki is an all-male theater born at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and many students seem fascinated by it. Viewed as “Pop theater” originally, it retains its spirit continuously, seeking something new and extraordinary, but kabuki has “secret” admirers or offspring in contemporary pop culture as well, such as anime and manga. As such, kabuki attracts a wide range of people, as much as the ever-popular Takarazuka revue. (Takarazuka is an all-female revue in Japan.) Other theme-specific courses that I occasionally offer include a course on women writers in premodern Japan, Japanese martial arts practitioners, etc.

Unfortunately, I don’t do any martial art or acting myself. What I do enjoy includes attending theater, horseback riding, swimming, and other “light” kinds of sports. I used to do horse sitting and dog sitting quite often, which I also enjoyed very much.

I am writing a book manuscript on how kabuki has functioned as a dynamic site where gender has been performed and theorized, paying special attention to onnagata (actors playing the roles of women in kabuki). In it, I discuss both male and female onnagata (yes, they existed!). My publications include a book discussing martial arts and the noh theater (Secrecy in Japanese Arts) and papers on the shingeki theater, onnagata, women onnagata, etc., in anthologies and such journals as TDR, positions, and U.S.-Japan Women’s Journal.
Christine Marran is an associate professor in Japanese literature and cultural studies at the University of Minnesota. Her first book investigates the powerful icon of the transgressive woman in Japan, its shifting meanings, and its influence on defining women’s sexuality and place in society from its inception in the 1870s. Since the publication of her book on gender, she has turned to the study of Japanese literature and film on the environment. She is currently completing a book on writers and filmmakers whose work represents what she calls the ecocritical turn in Japan’s postwar industrial period. She argues that this turn marks a dramatic shift in writing on nature and the environment by showing that before the ecocritical turn, representations of nature have been primarily an articulation of nature for human culture and the use of nature as symbol, metaphor, or place name rather than a material environment that connects the human to the biotic world. The works of the ecocritical turn, on the other hand, are founded in an ecological perception of nature as material world in which human life and health is deeply connected. Recent events in Japan including the dislocation of thousands after the tsunami and nuclear meltdown on the northeastern seaboard have made her work on ecocritical literature particularly pertinent.

Professor Marran expands on her research interests in teaching by including texts from other literary and film traditions. In addition to courses on Japanese cinema and Japanese women’s literature, she teaches courses on global cinema and ecology, nature in Asian culture and representation, and Asian film and animation. She is also working on a fictionalized portrait of her earliest years in Japan as a fifteen-year old teen living in Sendai.

Jason McGrath is an associate professor in Modern and Contemporary Chinese Literature and Culture. During my current research sabbatical I have been working on my book project, Inscribing the Real: Realism and Convention in Chinese Fiction Film from the Silent Era to the Digital Age. For nearly two months from mid February to early April, I pursued related activities in Taipei, Beijing, Xi’an, Wuhan, and Hong Kong. In Taiwan, the very helpful people at the Taipei Film Archive gave me access to the rarely viewed 1931 Shanghai film Love and Duty, featuring top silent film stars Ruan Lingyu and Jin Yan. This film was thought lost for several decades until a single surviving print turned up in Uruguay in the 1990s. In Taiwan I also was hosted by the department of Comparative Literature at National Central University, where I gave a talk on the relationship between Hollywood and Shanghai cinema in the 1930s.

In mainland China, I met with several leading Chinese film scholars in Beijing, including Li Daoxin of Beijing University, Chen Shan of the Beijing Film Academy, and Chen Gang of the Chinese Agricultural University. We discussed our various projects in progress, and they led me to the best current book and DVD stores. In Xi’an, I visited the site of the famous terracotta army of Qin Shihuang’s burial ground, which is related to a current journal article I have submitted on representations of the same army in Zhang Yimou’s film Hero. My last stop in mainland China was the ancient and beautiful inland city of Wuhan, where I gave a talk at Huazhong Normal University. It was a useful exercise to have to explain in Chinese the theoretical framework of my book on realism and then field questions from an audience of at least 150 smart and engaged students and faculty. My host in Wuhan was Professor Meng Jun, a Chinese film expert who will be a visiting scholar in ALL at the U of M in 2013-14.

The final part of my research trip was the easiest: attending the 2013 Hong Kong International Film Festival. This is one of the premier film festivals in Asia, and this year it featured the great Hong Kong director Wong Kar Wai’s new film The Grandmaster, which is about the famous martial artist Ip Man. However, for me the real revelations of the festival were the new mainland Chinese films Emperor Visits the Hell (Li Luo), Memories Look at Me (Song Fang), Forgetting to Know You (Quan Ling), and Longing for the Rain (Yang Lina). These brilliant and daring films by young directors showed that Chinese cinema has a bright future, and also that many of the most promising new filmmakers in China today are women. I hope to work with the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Film Festival to bring some of these films to the Twin Cities in early 2014.
Greetings from Berkeley. Teaching at the Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies this semester has been an enriching experience in many ways. Not only did this visit allow me to escape an unusually relentless Minnesota winter, it also provided a wonderful opportunity to have new conversations with colleagues in California. I presented some of my work on Bhagat Singh at the inaugural Saraswati Dalmia Arts and Humanities Public Lecture at the Center for South Asian Studies (UC Berkeley) in April, and received some very interesting and helpful questions. Teaching at Berkeley included a new graduate seminar titled “Interiority, Experience and Gender” focusing on modern Hindi literature, and an undergraduate course titled “Dissent and Resistance in Modern India.” Let me admit, however, that the most significant highlights of my stay in California were two short trips: one to Big Sur, and the other to Yosemite. Astonishingly beautiful spaces.

Now looking forward to returning to Minneapolis, catching up with friends, enjoying the summer, and preparing for the fall semester. Also looking forward to co-teaching again a course I taught last fall with History professor Ajay Skaria: “Hinduism—Traditions and Debates” as well as a revamped Indian Feminisms course. And strangely enough: very much looking forward to joining the Y again! The nerd’s relation to the gym is perhaps especially fraught and intimate?

Simona Sawhney
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
South Asian Literature and Literary Theory

In the last year it has been great to work as Director of Graduate Studies for our Asian Literatures, Cultures, and Media Ph.D. program. In addition to getting to know the projects and talents of our students on an individual basis, I was also pleased that the ALCM seminar consistently brought together graduate students and faculty from across campus. Ann Waltner was kind enough to run the seminar in the fall and I ran it in the spring. It was nice to see graduate students developing their work and receiving support and feedback from their intellectual community, and to get to know more about the current research projects of ALL and other Asian studies faculty.

This year our program welcomed two promising Ph.D. students, Chen Wang, who is working on translation in modern China, and Mina Ahn, who is working on cinema and politics in 1950s and 1960s South Korea and Japan. Congratulations goes to Devon Cahill, who received a Critical Language Scholarship to study Japanese in Kyoto this summer, and to Mike Crandol, who will receive a Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship from the Graduate School next year to complete his project, “Nightmares from the Past: Nakagawa Nobuo and the Dawn of Japanese Horror Cinema.” All of our students were especially active this year presenting their work at various venues across the country and internationally.

As for my own research, I am continuing with my book project, “Imperial Genus: Formation and Limits of the Human in Modern Korea and Japan,” and starting a book chapter on science fiction and realism in South and North Korean film.

Travis Workman
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AND DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES
Korean Literature, Film, and Intellectual History
The Arabic program has been housed in the department of Asian Languages and Culture for the past four years. Students may start their Arabic language studies either in fall or summer semesters. Three levels of Arabic are offered; beginning, intermediate, and advanced. Each level takes two semesters to complete. Classes are offered in sequence, for example, Arabic 1101 is offered in the fall and Arabic 1102 in the spring and so on. In addition, topic courses are offered in the May session and sometime in the summer session. Topics such as “Media Arabic” or “Introduction to Arab Culture” are among courses that were offered in past sessions. Students may use Arabic to fulfill their CLA language requirement. Completion of the intermediate level should be sufficient for the college requirement. Students may also take and pass the Language Proficiency Exam (LPE), which is supervised by the CLA language center in order to fulfill the language requirement.

The college has recently approved our request for Arabic minor. Effective fall semester 2013 students may declare a minor in Arabic. Requirement for the Arabic minor is listed on the Department web site (www.all.umn.edu). We are in the process of identifying courses related to the Arab world offered at other departments in order to cross list them with ALL. A list of courses will be published on the Arabic page soon. Questions related to Arabic should be addressed to Hisham Khalek, the director of the program.

The Chinese program has a long history at the University of Minnesota. It was started in 1949 by Professor Richard Mather. The Department of Asian Languages and Literatures (ALL) was later formed in 2000 under the direction of Joseph Allen. The Chinese language program aims to provide training in the Chinese language and cultivate students’ understanding and critical appreciation of Chinese culture and literature. The staff is constantly promoting good teaching standards to provide excellent learning experiences in the effort to guarantee the quality and the effectiveness of the program.

Twenty sections are taught in the fall (about 360 students) and 17 sections in the spring (about 300 students). We offer a structured sequence of courses from elementary to advanced. A system of cooperative teaching is employed in which each section is taught by all teachers of that level in a given week. In this way, the students benefit from a variety of styles and voices in the classroom, while the teacher sees all students of that level.

Our instructors actively work toward group goals in teaching, working hard to fulfill individual roles within the group, consistently and actively contributing knowledge, opinions, and instructive strategies to the development of the Chinese language program. The teaching staff is characterized by its diversity with regard to gender, educational background and geographical regions. To standardize curriculum and methodology, we place great emphasis on communication between teachers. At a weekly meeting for group class preparation instructors design every class together. After careful group preparation, every class session has a special teaching folder, which includes key content, instructional strategies, and supporting materials.
HMONG AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA: Bee Vang

Though the Hmong have been in the United States for over 35 years, very little is known about them and their history. Less still is known about their language. The written form has only been created in the early 1950’s in Laos. Though the Hmong language is a less commonly taught language in the United States, the University of MN is proud to be home to one of the most innovative programs. The Hmong program at the University of MN – Twin Cities is the first program to offer Hmong language courses for non-heritage learners. This new track is one of three different tracks offered by the Hmong Program. The three different tracks cover student demographics ranging from Intro students to Accelerated students. This is to ensure that all students interested in taking Hmong will be able to take the class best suited for their skill levels, hence giving them the best curriculum to learn how to speak, read and write Hmong. In all three tracks, the classes are aligned so that students learn the same quality materials along with fun historical and cultural lessons.

Currently, students with majors and minors in the Asian Languages and Literature department can choose Hmong as their language of focus. This is yet another great milestone in the Hmong program, and only one of many to come. The Hmong language is an international language with pockets of Hmong speakers all around the world, such as: France, Argentina, Germany, Laos, Thailand, China, United States, and more.

HINDI-URDU LANGUAGE PROGRAM: Sungok Hong

Last Wednesday, right after I finished the Beginning Hindi-Urdu final oral exam in which each student had a one-on-one interview with me in the target language, I replayed the semester over in my mind and couldn’t believe how fast the time had gone by.

This past year, we offered the Beginning Hindi-Urdu and Intermediate Hindi-Urdu classes, and I am really happy that we reached our goals and very satisfied with the students’ performance on the oral exams. I was especially impressed with the students in the Beginning Hindi-Urdu class, who obtained proficiency in the target language, and whom I could assure that they would survive in India/Pakistan if they were there right now. As for the Intermediate Hindi-Urdu class, the students had the chance to learn the Urdu script in addition to the Hindi script. Once they learned all the letters, after much struggling, and started to read a short story, I was thrilled. These are the moments we live for as teachers. I assume that they must have felt the same fulfillment. The Intermediate Hindi-Urdu class was a bit more challenging, as there were large gaps among students and I tried hard to bridge those gaps. I often told the students in class that they needed to have a good base on which to build their proficiency. It is exactly like building a house. Hindi-Urdu is quite different from English structurally and typologically, but Hindi-Urdu is a very logical language and many of my students picked up the language with ease.

In the fall of 2012, we celebrated Diwali in class. With some monetary help from the Department, we were able to treat the students to samosas and tea. It was a wonderful, first-hand experience for the students. We certainly introduce cultural elements in class, but the class time is never enough to cover everything we would like, and having this kind of real-life experience will surely remain in their memory longer. I hope this kind of help from the Department continues to be available in the future.

We conduct Hindi and Urdu Proficiency Tests every semester for students who want to test out of their foreign language requirement at the Twin Cities campus and the U of M’s other satellite campuses.

We do our best to provide excellent education and resources to our students and the community as a whole, and we are exploring ways to link our campus and the community so that both can benefit from this program of higher education.
The Japanese Language Program at the University of Minnesota offers five Japanese language courses; Beginning Japanese, Intermediate Japanese, Third Year Japanese, Advanced Japanese Conversation and Composition, and Readings in Japanese Texts. Despite the reputation that learning the Japanese language is challenging, we are very pleased to have many students who are enjoying studying Japanese here at the University of Minnesota. Every Fall Semester we have almost 400 students enrolled for the Japanese language courses. The students are not only from the field of the Asian Languages and Literatures, but from various fields; art, chemistry, computer science, economics, English, law, mathematics, politics, psychology, etc. The program has also sponsored events, such as “Arigato (thank you)”, a fundraising event after the catastrophic earthquake and tsunami hit northern Japan. Outside the program, students can enjoy Japan-related events sponsored by student organizations of the University, such as Japan Student Association, Asobou Japanese Immersion Club, and J-Café.

We currently have six full-time instructors, and will add one more full-time instructor beginning with the 2013-2014 academic year.

The past year has seen significant changes to the Korean language program. After 8 years of dedicated service and untold contribution to the growth of our program, we said good-bye to Dr. Sangseok Yoon. Dr. Yoon completed his Ph.D. in Korean linguistics from the University of Hawaii in 2011 and then accepted the position of Director of the Korean program at the University of Iowa in 2012. We wish him the best of luck in this endeavor.

With the departure of Dr. Yoon, ALL hired Mr. Bryce Johnson to address the growing non-heritage student population in our program. Mr. Johnson comes to us with a 10+ year Korean language background and Master’s degree in foreign language education. His passion for all Korean peninsula-related studies has infused our program with new energy and excitement. We look forward to great things from him.

Sugyoung Kim, who joined us in 2010, initiated a student-centered, free-talking weekly event called “Korean Café” last fall. Before the beginning of the school year, she also surprised us all by tying the knot with her boyfriend.

Hangtae Cho (Director of Korean Language) has had several irons in the fire as of late. He has been working on the development of the Web-Based Korean LPE with the support from a Tools for Discovery grant. As an expert in Language Assessment and Curriculum Development, he has also headed several external projects for the development of North Korean dialect-based curriculum. Hangtae has also been busy serving concurrently on the Board of Directors for two major academic associations for the Korean Language, IAKLE (International Association of Korean Language Education) and AATK (Association of American Teachers of Korean).
Greetings! My name is Angie Rivera-Sturtevant and I am the departmental adviser for Asian Languages & Literatures (ALL). I have been an adviser in the department for about two years. I have a split advising position, so in addition to my time in ALL, I also serve as a college adviser in the languages & mathematics student community in the College of Liberal Arts.

When I was in college, I became involved on campus through student employment, clubs and organizations, and working in orientation programs. I was energized serving in these roles & helping students. It was at that time I decided I wanted to work in student affairs and make a career out of helping students! After college, I earned a master’s degree in Counseling and Student Personnel. I’ve worked at the University since and I truly enjoy working with our students. In advising, I enjoy getting to know students and am always amazed by their talents and experiences, whether it is about their volunteer/work outside of class, in class projects/papers, and abroad experiences!

About advising: Our students come from across the University. We currently have 164 majors and 140 minors. When advising students, I help them declare their program and plan courses. Students can major in ALL and choose one of our five language programs: Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Hindi-Urdu, & Hmong, or minor in ALL and choose one of our six language programs: Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Hindi-Urdu, Hmong, or Arabic. I also help students explore learning abroad opportunities and assist them with incorporating their abroad experience within their major or minor. I serve as a resource in helping students determine their career path.

STUDENT PROFILE: Kayiita Johnson

What drew you to the ALL department? I had a lot of friends in high school who would speak in Chinese in front of me but would never tell me what they were saying, so I wanted to learn Mandarin so I could be in the loop! China is also a world super power and I thought it wise to learn the language to be able to better connect to Chinese businesses and ensure a greater understanding between the two nations.

What do you want to do when you graduate or as a career? My plans for myself career-wise are segmented into three sections: community, wealth, and corporate. In the community I will be involved in education and will potentially become involved in politics centering around bettering the community, with a focus on education. As for wealth, I hope to become comfortable financially through a combination of real estate, business and other financial assets. Lastly, for my corporate plans I hope to become a senior leader in a technology corporation, partly serving as a liaison between the United States and China. For May session I will be headed to China on the seminar, “Cutting Edge Circuits and Systems in China”. I will be able to meet with researchers and corporations in China, while experiencing Chinese culture firsthand, rather than from a textbook!

What one thing have you not done that you really want to do, and what’s holding you back? I really want to get as close to fluency in Chinese as I can! I haven’t been able to take a semester abroad and I am hoping that through my full-time job at Texas Instruments I will be able to get that exposure and really solidify my knowledge of Mandarin Chinese. Currently I am just trying to finish off my major and minor so I haven’t really had time to continuously learn Chinese.

How do you evaluate success? My definition of success has changed considerably as I have gone through my years here at the University, and it is a reflection of my personal growth. I define success as “helping others achieve the things they want to accomplish while accomplishing my own goals”. I evaluate success through organizational leadership and a continuous focus on the community.

If you could offer a new student one piece of advice, what would it be? I would encourage them to be observant. Through observing, you unconsciously reflect and learn more about people – about life. You will be able to learn more about what it is that you truly want to do, and you will be open to learning from different people and their experiences. Observing visually or by actively listening is key for beginning to understand the world you live in.

What’s something you know you do differently than most people? As an electrical engineering major and ALL minor, I oddly have a fascination with social psychology. I love learning more about how people interact with each other and what makes people do what they do. Leadership is intertwined with this, because as a leader it is really important to have emotional intelligence, something I have learned during my time here at the University.
The Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign College Students is a contest promoted by the Chinese National Hanban organization designed to introduce the Chinese language to the non-Chinese world. Regional contest winners from around the world are invited to China to compete on an international basis by displaying their mastery of the Chinese language. Hanban is affiliated with the Chinese Ministry of Education which offers educational opportunities in the Chinese language and cultural resources. In 2004, China established the non-profit public Confucius Institute aimed at promoting Chinese language and culture in foreign countries.

The annual Chinese Bridge contest originated in 2002, and has drawn contestants from over 50 countries around the world since its inception. The “Chinese Bridge” proficiency competition consists of three events: Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign College Students, Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign High School Students and Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign Students in China.

The contest in the United States is divided among regions, the winners of which are invited to the international contest in China. Under the direction of Dr. Ling Wang, the University of Minnesota Department of Asian Languages and Literatures Program in Chinese Language, has sent competitors to China for three years as winners to represent the regional Midwest Chinese Bridge Speech Contest. Depending on the level of proficiency, students compete at one of five levels in addition to the Heritage category. Heritage means either the student’s father or mother or both is a Chinese native speaker, or the student was born in China but has been brought up in the States. Each competitor must present a prepared short speech as well as perform a talent such as singing, dancing, a short play, or other talent that reflects Chinese culture.

The Department of Asian Languages and Literatures was very pleased to host the competition this year on the University of Minnesota Minneapolis campus. Students representing seventeen colleges and universities from seven Midwestern states met on Saturday, April 27, 2013 in the Science Teaching and Student Services building from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Fifty-three participants competed in the five language levels plus the heritage category. The students represented the top levels of coursework at their institutions from beginning to advanced.
Dr. Ling Wang, the Director of the Chinese language program at the University of Minnesota, explained that the approach to the Upper Midwest contest since it began is that all the participants were winners because each was selected to compete as representatives of the top of their specific class. The intent was to honor each student who participated. Therefore, there were twelve first place prizes; fourteen second place prizes and twenty-seven third place prizes. All students went home winners with a trophy or medallion in an effort to encourage and reward participation.

The competitions were held in separate rooms according to level. It was encouraging to see family and friends attending and supporting the students. Local middle and high school students were invited to observe the event with the hope they will one day be participating. The afternoon was filled with the speeches and talents of so many outstanding students. Teachers from local elementary and secondary schools served as judges. The Twin Cities area is fortunate to have many schools with Chinese immersion classes or Chinese language as part of the curriculum, allowing for several teachers being available to judge the various levels of competition. The objective was to make the judging as impartial as possible, so none of the contestants were identified by the school from which they came.

Anthony Dodge from the University of Minnesota was awarded first place as the winner of level 4-5. He will be competing in the Chinese Bridge competition in Beijing. Maya Festinger of the University of Chicago, was the first place winner in Level 1. She will travel to Beijing to observe the competition. Hanban pays the expenses for the competitors from around the world and offers them, all expenses paid, the opportunity to travel around China. The contest will be broadcast throughout China by SinoVision television, a Chinese television company based in New York. The Minneapolis contest was covered by a reporter from SinoVision and broadcast on their news program. The local Chinese newspaper, U.S.A. China Tribune of St. Paul, provided coverage by publishing front page photos of the competition.

The day was topped off by a banquet honoring the competitors. Meredith M McQuaid, Associate Vice President and Dean of International Programs along and Joan Brzezinski, Executive Director of the China Center & Confucius Institute, participated in the opening ceremony as well as the presentation of awards at the banquet. Paul Rouzer, Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Asian Languages and Literatures, welcomed the participants to the event and Joseph Allen, Professor in ALL and next year's department chair and founder of the department, opened the awards ceremony. A greeting as well as presentation of awards was given by Shuhong Xu, Counsel for Education, Consulate General of P.R. China in Chicago. Ling Wang introduced the judges and the Advisory Committee consisting of Professor Licheng Gu of Northwestern University, Professor Wei Hong of Purdue University, and Youqin Wang of the University of Chicago.

Outstanding vocal and instrumental entertainment was provided by local Chinese artists following the awards ceremony. Ying Zhang performed on traditional Chinese instruments, the gourd flute and the Lu Sheng. The Twin Cities community is fortunate to have such wonderful Chinese educators and artists to enrich our community.

In addition to the Department of Asian Languages and Literatures, the Minneapolis competition received support from the China Institute and the Confucius Institute, both housed on the University of Minnesota campus, as well as the Institute for Global Studies and the College of Liberal Arts, University of Minnesota.

To paraphrase Ling Wang, the award received by the teachers is to see the wonderful performances of the students.
Welcome to our first newsletter! I have been with the Department of Asian Languages and Literatures since October 2012, a time of intensely familiarizing myself with the people and the activities. It is a pleasure working with a faculty and teaching staff who are exceptional in their scholarly endeavors and dedication to the students. The students are outstanding, which they must be in order to commit themselves to studying the literatures, cultures and languages of the ancient and very complex societies dealt with in the department.

The Department of Asian Languages and Literatures is in its early stages of development, having been in existence for slightly more than a dozen years and as to be expected, has been experiencing growing pains as it has grown extremely rapidly.

The department needs to have and retain top faculty and teaching staff. ALL needs to help students financially so they are able to devote time to studying and not to worrying about finances to get through school. ALL needs to provide the resources that create the foundations for a strong department, including technology, opportunities for travel to conferences and workshops to enhance the educational experience. We need to create opportunities for our scholars to present to the wider community. We need supplies.

ALL has been funded from state resources, a source that is becoming more and more difficult to depend on. We need to reach out to new resources for support in order to be a strong, viable, department. The faculty and staff of ALL are producing outstanding students who will be the leaders of the world in many areas including business, politics, health, humanities, and technology. I visited with a student at the Chinese speech contest whose dream is to develop a resilient strain of rice for Asian countries, a young woman whose career path was influenced by the renowned U of MN researcher, Norman Borlaug. She is studying Chinese to facilitate her career path in Asia.

I am writing as a request to please help finance our “production process” with gifts to the department. We currently have funds in the U of MN Foundation supporting graduate and undergraduate students as well as specific department needs. Please refer to the list of designated support opportunities. Your gifts are greatly appreciated by many!

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**YES! I WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ASIAN LANGUAGES & LITERATURES**

For the Asian Languages & Literature Annual Fund to support department needs, please make check out to University of Minnesota Foundation and note Fund #2579 on check.

For the Asian Languages & Literatures Scholarship fund which supports full time students in the department who have academic promise and need, please make check out to University of Minnesota Foundation and note Fund #2580 on check.

For the Korean Fund, used to support the Korean program, please make check out to University of Minnesota Foundation and note Fund #7419 on check.

If you would like to develop a fund to support specific activities of the Department, please contact Mary Hicks at the CLA Development Office hicks002@umn.edu or 612-625-5031

□ $50  □ $100  □ $250  □ $500  □ $1,000  OTHER (SPECIFY AMOUNT) ________

□ Check enclosed    □ Please charge to my VISA / Mastercard / American Express / Discover (circle one)

Card # ________________________________ Exp. Date ____________________

Signature ____________________________________________________________

Name ________________________________________________________________

Address ____________________________________________________________________________________

City __________________________  state  ___________  Zip  ________  Country _______________________

Please make check payable to UMF-ALL and indicate which fund you want to support, then mail to:
University of Minnesota Foundation, Lockbox “B,” P.O. Box 70870, CM 3854, Saint Paul, MN 55170-3854.

Thank you for your support!
The College of Liberal Arts is delighted to announce the 2013-14 CLA Selmer Birkelo Scholarship recipients. To be considered for a Birkelo Scholarship, students must be majoring in fields relating to history, modern languages, classics, or the social and behavioral sciences, and must be nominated to the Office of the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs by their major department.

For the 2013-14 academic year, Birkelo Scholarship recipients will receive up to $4,000, depending on demonstrated financial need.

KATRINA KLETT - Asian Languages and Literatures

Phi Beta Kappa

Kathy McKee, Chapter Secretary, Phi Beta Kappa Alpha of Minnesota announced that the students listed below have been elected to membership in Phi Beta Kappa by the Alpha Chapter of the University of Minnesota.

The Department of Asian Languages and Literatures is proud of these students’ academic accomplishments and recognizes them for their achievements.

2013 Electees
Carmen Nicole Abate
Abigail Rae Cridelich
Olivia Louise Faith-Kobs
Jonathan David Highmark
Kathryn A. Menk
Kakit Ng
Julia Grace Wilson

2013 Truman Scholar

Katrina Klett, has been selected as a 2013 Truman Scholar. Katrina is from Jamestown ND and is a Chinese major enrolled in CLA and the University Honors Program. She promotes biodiversity protection and economic development in the US and abroad through beekeeping, an area of expertise she developed from early childhood growing up in a beekeeping family and an expertise that she has deepened in college through undergraduate research with her mentor, Professor Marla Spivak, and through beekeeping projects in China, Vietnam, and Sierra Leone. The U has a news release, prepared with input from CLA, UHP, University Relations, and --of course--Katrina, to be found at UM News, http://www1.umn.edu/news/news-releases/2013/UR_CONTENT_438936.html. The list of award recipients may be found at http://www.truman.gov/meet-our-scholars

Also recently selected as a 2013 Udall Scholar, Klett is the fifth Truman Scholar since 2001 to come from the U’s College of Liberal Arts (CLA). The Morris and Stewart Udall Scholarships support undergraduates who will pursue careers related to the environment or Native American affairs.

Katrina’s recommenders for the Truman and Udall include Professor Spivak, Dr. Ling Wang of the Asian Languages and Literatures Department, Professor Li Jianke, director of the Institute for Apicultural Research in Beijing, and Alia Malik of Shangri-La Farms in Yunnan, China.
LECTURE EVENT: Christine Marran

Wednesday - June 19, 2013

The Woman’s Club of Minneapolis (south side of Loring Park)
410 Oak Grove Street
Minneapolis, MN  55403
(Phone 612-813-5300)

Parking is available adjacent to the Club or in the lot ½ block east
5:30 Social cash bar
6:00 Dinner
7:30 Lecture Presentation

$50.00 per person includes dinner and $25 deductible contribution.
You will receive a donor receipt from the University of Minnesota Foundation.

For the opening lecture of the Department of Asian Languages and Literatures series, Associate Professor Christine L. Marran will present a history of literary engagement with the natural world in Japan. She will describe how contemporary writers have responded to changes in the archipelago’s environmental health caused by rapid industrialization and nuclear contamination in the postwar period. Her examples will suggest that recent literature on the environment demand new protocols for reading and viewing that encourage an understanding of biotic relations, which include but inevitably trump ethnic and national ones.

TO RESERVE YOUR PLACE, PLEASE RETURN THE RESERVATION BELOW WITH YOUR CHECK.
For more information, call 612-624-4180

Name ________________________________________________________________

Phone number __________________________________________________________

Address ________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

Number of persons attending ________       Total amount enclosed $ _____________

Send the check made payable to: UMF-ALL Annual Fund #2579
Department of Asian Languages and Literatures
9 Pleasant St., S.E., Room 220
Minneapolis, MN  55455