

# East Asian *Studies*

Volume 14, 2018

## Director's Note

By Hsiu-Chuang Deppman, Director, East Asian Studies

**C**ongratulations to the Class of 2017! This has been a great year for the East Asian Studies Program. Highlights include successful searches for two non-continuing faculty, several well-attended lectures and events, and, most of all, the celebration of Suzanne Gay's distinguished service to Oberlin.

EAS also bid farewell to three wonderful visiting faculty who shared their expertise with us in 2016-17. Young Ji Lee, visiting assistant professor of East Asian art history, taught about the circulation of Asian art and capitalism. Martino Dibeltulo, an OKUM postdoc in EAS and religion, offered popular courses in Chinese Thought and Religion and Tibetan Buddhism. Xiaoying Yu, visiting instructor of Chinese, was an inspirational language teacher for Chinese at all levels. Together, their energy and knowledge made EAS a stronger, more vibrant program. We appreciate their collegiality, cherish their friendship, and wish them success in their future endeavors.

This fall, we welcome two new visiting faculty to campus. Grace Ting, visiting assistant professor of Japanese language and culture, will teach two new EAS courses: *Girls Manga* and *Queer Writing*. Keren He, visiting assistant professor of Chinese language, culture, and society, also adds to our curriculum two new classes: *Love in Traditional China* and *Knight, Outlaw, Assassin*. We are excited to have Grace and Keren join us.

Over the past year, the program sponsored several successful lectures and events. In October 2016, Xin Zhang, our two-year Mellon language postdoc from Ohio Five, invited Professor Galal Walker from Ohio State University to give

a lecture titled "Becoming Someone in Another Culture: How Do We Know What is Expected?" His interdisciplinary research on language learning attracted students and faculty from many disciplines. In February 2017, Ann Sherif, professor of Japanese, organized a very successful luncheon for EAS faculty, majors, and potential majors. This wonderful event provided a unique get-together for people teaching and studying different Asian languages and cultures to have an opportunity to share with each other their academic interests. In April 2017, Sheila Miyoshi Jager, professor of East Asian studies, invited Professor Kyung Moon Hwang from the University of Southern California to give a talk titled "Rationalizing Korea: Religion and Secularization in the Emergence of the Modern State." This event brought together people interested in Korean colonial history, religion, and politics.

After serving the program and the college for more than 31 years, our beloved teacher, mentor, and friend Suzanne Gay officially retired. This was a bittersweet moment for her students and colleagues, who celebrated Suzanne's accomplishment in a wonderful party organized by three EAS members. Ann Sherif, Sachiko Kondo, and Amy Redden worked tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure the success of Suzanne's send-off. We wish Gay Sensei a long and happy retirement.

With the support of dedicated faculty, EAS continues to attract talented students and have robust enrollments. Our graduates are accomplished professionals working in many fields in several continents. We deeply value the connection with our alumni and hope to stay in touch with everyone in our extended EAS family.



Faculty publications

歐柏林大學東亞系東亞通訊

## FACULTY AND STAFF NEWS

**MARC BLECHER** published “Toward the Comparative Analysis of Transitions from State Socialism: Structure, Agency and Contingency,” *Chinese Political Science Review* 1, 2 (July 2016): 1-17. His 2014 article, “Class Formation and the Labour Movement in Revolutionary China,” in *Marxism and Social Movements* (ed. Colin Barker, Laurence Cox, John Krinsky and Alf Nilsen), was republished in Delhi by Aakar Books. At Oberlin, Marc was appointed the James Monroe Professor of Politics and returned as chair of the politics department. He also supervised Grace Evans’ honors thesis on the deleterious effects of 高考 (China’s grueling college entrance exam).

**HSIU-CHUANG DEPPMAN** completed her second year as EAS director. She taught three courses in 2016-17: Intermediate Chinese (CHIN 202), Chinese Literature and Cinema (EAST 206), and Introduction to Modern Chinese Cinemas (EAST 109). She gave three invited lectures on topics ranging from Hou Hsiao-hsien’s 2015 film *The Assassin* to Eileen Chang’s posthumous novel *The Little Reunion* to Zhang Yimou’s film adaptation of Mo Yan’s *Red Sorghum*. She also published a referred essay, “Confucian Heroes in Popular Asian Dramas in the Age of Capitalism,” in *Routledge Handbook of East Asian Popular Culture* (2017). In May she was appointed director of the Oberlin Center for Languages and Cultures.

**JAMES DOBBINS** will teach his courses Chinese Thought and Religion and Japanese Thought and Religion one last time in 2017-18 and then retire the following year. He continues to conduct research and publish on D.T. Suzuki (the 20th-century popularizer of Buddhism in the west) and on Japanese Buddhist art. In June 2016, he attended a conference and presented a paper at the research institute of the famous Dunhuang Buddhist cave temples in Western China. He continues to serve as the coeditor of *The Journal of Japanese Studies*.

**SUZANNE GAY** writes: “I am retiring after 31 years on the Oberlin faculty. I feel fortunate to have taught Oberlin students, with their creativity, work ethic, and ability to engage regardless of the subject. In retirement I plan to pursue some research projects and will live in Oberlin for another year or so.”

**SHEILA MIYOSHI JAGER**’s latest book, *The Other Great Game: The Opening of Korea and the Birth of Modern East Asia*, is under contract with Harvard University Press (to be published in 2022). She is also contributing a chapter titled “Competing Empires in Asia” in a major new four-volume reference work from Cambridge University Press, *The Cambridge History of America and the World*, which will be a comprehensive account of American engagement in the world from 1500 to the present. She was interviewed by Neal Conan, former host of National Public Radio’s *Talk of the Nation*, for an episode on U.S. policy toward North Korea on Conan’s new program, *Truth, Politics & Power*. Finally, she is working on a joint book project with her



Suzanne Gay showing off her retirement memory book with letters and photos from family, friends, coworkers, alumni and students!

husband, Jiyul Kim, on the Korean War, tentatively titled *The Korean War: History of the Long Korean War* for Cambridge University Press’ New Approaches to Asian History series. She continues to enjoy teaching her marvelous students.

**DAVID KELLEY** writes: “This year I began working on material for a future course on China’s environment and also restructured my seminar on gender and marriage in China to include five weeks on various aspects of sexualities in contemporary China. This is an area where research and writing in both China and the Euro-American academy and press has flourished in recent years. On a personal note, we welcomed our third grandchild into the world, a beautiful girl born in May. After several generations of boys in the family, we’re over the moon with joy at finally having a little girl to love. (Boys are fine, too, of course.)”

**SACHIKO KONDO** writes: “In 2016-17, the Japanese program welcomed two new faculty members, Hirose-sensei and Suzuki sensei. We had various events including Gakugeikai. I’m always proud to see Japanese language table always filled and vibrant with students. One of the biggest events was the retirement celebration for our beloved Gay-sensei. I had an honor to work with Gay sensei for the past five years, and I am extremely delighted to have gotten to know such a wonderful colleague like Gay-sensei. We will miss her dearly, but I am determined that Japanese program will continue to develop our curriculum and improve our teaching. Thank you to our wonderful students for your passion for learning, and I am eager myself to learn from many more things in the coming years.”

**YOUNG JI LEE** writes: “I spent a wonderful year at Oberlin College, where I could work with warm-hearted, inspiring colleagues and bright students. I enjoyed having the opportunity to teach North Korean art history this year and found students passionate about learning this marginalized field of art history

and East Asian studies. It was an incredibly rewarding experience. Last February, I presented my paper, “Pivoting to the Foreign Homeland: Returnees from Japan and Postcolonial Anxiety in North Korea” at the CAA (College Art Association) Annual Conference. In June, I will be presenting a paper, “Images of Africa: the Postcolonial Aesthetics of China and North Korea” at the AAS-in-Asia conference in Seoul. I feel extremely grateful for having been part of the Oberlin College’s academic community. Before I leave for Denison University, I would like to thank everyone in East Asian Studies for being incredibly welcoming and supportive.”

This academic year was a very productive one for **LI KAI**. In the summer of 2016, he attended the Second International Forum on Linguistics in Chinese Education: Chinese Character and Chinese in Beijing and also gave a presentation at the forum. In the spring of 2017, he redesigned his fifth-year Chinese class by changing this one-semester class into two module classes. He taught the Development of the Chinese Language and Chinese Language Pedagogy for the first module, and then taught Traditional Chinese Culture for the second one. The purpose of this change was to offer students more possibilities for learning Chinese language and culture.

During the 2015-16 school year, **FANG LIU** taught the first-year and third-year Chinese classes. During the past five summers, Fang Liu was director of the CET-Kunming Program, but for the first time since graduating from college, she took the summer of 2016 off to attend her 30th college reunion in a very well-known city, Dali in Yunnan Province, China. She also attended an international forum and did some traveling. And, best of all, she spent time with her family in Kunming, China.

**DAVID KELLEY** writes: “This year I began working on material for a future course on China’s environment and also restructured my seminar on gender and marriage in China to include five weeks on various aspects

**QIUSHA MA**, professor of Chinese, was not able to return to work during the academic year of 2016-17 due to a severe head injury that occurred in Stevenson Dining Hall in 2015. She is still under treatment and hopes to return in the future.”

On February 1, **AMY REDDEN** celebrated her 20th anniversary in East Asian studies.

**ANN SHERIF** enjoyed teaching Literary & Visual Cultures of Protest in Japan and Japanese language last year. She published several articles, including “Book Histories, Material Culture, and East Asian Studies” in the new journal *Verge: Studies in Global Asia*. 3.1 (Spring 2017). As codirector of the Luce Initiative on Asian Studies & the Environment (LIASE)

project, she promoted the visibility of Asia and environment study and research at Oberlin. Sherif is deeply grateful for the opportunity to have worked with Suzanne Gay for over 20 years and will strive to carry on her legacy of compassionate teaching and dedicated scholarship and service.

**MIHO SUZUKI** writes: “It was my first year at Oberlin, and I fell in love with Oberlin! I enjoyed working with all of the EAS faculty and teaching wonderful students. I was impressed by how Oberlin students learn. Both courses I taught in the spring (third and fifth year) were new experience for me. Although teaching new courses with a new textbook and materials was challenging, I enjoyed it very much. I would like to say thank you to everyone for making my first year great and helping me get through it!”

**XIAOYING YU** writes: “For the spring semester, I taught Chinese Language 102 and 202. Oberlin is a great school because it has great professors and comfortable working environments. It has been a wonderful experience to work here. EAS is like a big family, colleagues are very friendly and helpful, and it’s lucky for me to meet lots of excellent students. Everyone has provided his or her best to assist me in my professional development. I really appreciate it! Hope I can come back to visit sometime!”

**XIN ZHANG** writes: “I started my two-year post-doctoral fellowship in the EAS program in fall 2016, the beginning of an exciting and productive year for me. I enjoyed sharing my passion and helping students co-construct foreign language knowledge and communicative capacities through teaching three courses: EAST 221: The Learning of East Asian Languages and Cultures, as well as CHIN 201 and CHIN 302, intermediate and advanced-level Chinese language classes. I presented two papers on native Chinese perceptions of foreign learners and on theorizing truly-advanced foreign language capacities in fall 2016 at the annual ACTFL conference. Awarded the Oberlin College Grant-in-Aid, I traveled to China for data collection during winter 2017 and started writing my book manuscript, titled “A Game of Expectation: Investigating the Role of Chengyu in Modern Mandarin,” which provides new perspectives on Chinese idioms in Chinese (cross-)cultural discourse. Besides participating in other wonderful EAS sponsored events, I invited a renowned speaker to visit the EAST 221 class and to give a public talk on foreign language learning, which is a tradition I intend to continue in year 2017-18. Reflecting on the past year, I am grateful for my students and colleagues who have been intellectually stimulating and incredibly supportive.”

**RUNXIAO ZHU** writes: “The first year at Oberlin was pretty good for me. I enjoyed very much my time with EAS faculty and students. For me, there are still so much to learn to be a better subject librarian. I am looking forward to another great year ahead!”

## NEW GRADS AND STUDENT PRIZE WINNERS

### NEWTON PRIZE

Awarded for original works of student research and writing that “promote understanding between East and West.”

Catherine Lytle and Franklin Sussman

### AN FAMILY FOUNDATION SUMMER STUDY AWARD

Thanks to the An Family Foundation, we were able to send several students to Korea in the summer to study Korean language.

Catherine Lytle and Yuxin Wang

### MARGARET RIBOVICH DICENZO PRIZE FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE IN EAS

(AKA: “Ron’s Mom’s Prize”)

Brendan Nuse and Franklin Sussman

### HONORS

**Grace Evans:** “Secondary Education in China: What Does it Mean to be a Student?”

**Brendan Nuse:** “Vegetarianism, Gender, and Environmental Consciousness in Kunming, China”

### CONGRATS 2017 GRADS!

*Minming Chien*

*Joshua Cho*

*Beatrice Chum*

*Grace Evans*

*Lyric Grimes*

*Kayla Johnston-Mitchell*

*Louis Krauss*

*Meredith Leung*

*Samantha Moores*

*Brendan Nuse*

*Luke Paschal*

*Caitlin Quiat*

*Samuel Quillin*

*Erika Rasmussen*

*Nicholas Scott*

*Claire Shank*

*Franklin Sussman*

*Lillian Van Cleave*

*Tiffany Yeung*

*Haru Zenda*

After graduation, **Lyric Grimes** will teach in Beijing for a year, after which she will pursue a master’s in library science.

**Samantha Moores** plans to spend the next year or two in St. Louis doing research or working as a medical scribe. She will be applying to medical school next year.

After a summer studying Chinese on the Princeton in Beijing program, **Brendan Nuse** will be spending the next two years teaching at Shanxi Agricultural University on a Shansi Fellowship.

**Caitlin Quiat** will teach in Japan with the JET Program.

**Franklin Sussman** is excited to return to Japan teaching English as a Shansi Fellow for the next two years.



Top left: 2017 senior party. Above: Japanese student representatives Franklin Sussman and Kayla Johnston-Mitchell and Chinese student representatives Brendan Nuse and Lyric Grimes with Professor Gay at the East Asian Studies senior party. Left: An Asia House origami party organized by Asia House liaison Catherine Lytle (second on the right). In addition to the origami workshop, she planned other successful events, including a noodle party with dishes from China, Japan, and Korea, and a talent show.



Alumni at the EAS Open House.

By summer 2017, **RICARDO BARRIOS '12** will have completed his MA in international politics at Peking University. His thesis explores the role of the Chinese state in promoting Sino-Cuban trade. With his degree completed, Ricardo will move to D.C. to work in the Inter-American Dialogue's China & Latin America Program.

**TAMI BLUMENFIELD '00** spent four months in Yunnan in 2016 with her son Ethan, who was 9 years old at the time, doing research with Yunnan University as part of a Fulbright grant. She received her first Fulbright research grant during her senior year at Oberlin with the support of the East Asian studies faculty, so it was like coming full circle! While staying at Yunnan University in April, Tami met some Oberlin students who were not able to speak English and nonetheless convinced them to let her use their washing machine. Alas, it was broken, so back to hand-washing it was. Laundry issues aside, she and Ethan had a wonderful experience in Yunnan. With two collaborators from northwest Yunnan, she developed an exhibit featuring over 15 years of photographs from her research and from her collaborators' work, called "Diverse Perspectives on Social Change and Resilience: Portraying Na Communities in Flux. 多维视角中的摩梭文化." The bilingual exhibit was on display at the Yunnan University Wumao Anthropology Museum in Kunming, Yunnan, China, from July through September 2016, with a traveling version of the exhibit displayed in Luoshui Village and the city of Lijiang in August 2016.

**BECKY CASSLER '09** writes: "I married Erik Kojola '09 (not EAS) in December 2014 at the courthouse in Rockville, Maryland, and celebrated with a full-blown wedding with friends and family in July 2015 in Portland, Oregon. We live in Minneapolis, where I graduated from the University of Minnesota Law School in May 2016. I am currently clerking for a federal judge in Minneapolis, after which I hope to work in the areas of immigration and civil rights and, eventually, to move closer to family in the Pacific Northwest."

**TIMO CHEN '93** lives in Los Angeles, where he works on music for film and TV. His music can be heard in the films *Already Tomorrow in Hong Kong* and *Advantageous*, both available on Netflix. He also works on music for *Superstore* on NBC. Feel free to reach out and look him up when in Los Angeles; he might even take you to a fantastic meal of Peking Duck or hot pot.

In September 2016, **SYLVIA GENTILE '76**, a demonstration teacher at the UCLA Lab School at the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, was invited to give 30 fifth-grade students at Yang Pu Primary School in Shanghai of the lab school's inquiry pedagogy. She taught a demonstration lesson on Cause and Effect for these wonderful students, with 100 teachers, administrators, and superintendents looking on. This lesson was part of a week-long exchange of information and best practices with the Shanghai Inquiry Institute at Shanghai public schools. The trip will hopefully be the beginning of an on-going study of inquiry pedagogy in Chinese and American public schools.

**AKI GORMEZANO '13** writes: "After a stint out in the wild (on JET and working for Japan Airlines), I'm back in the classroom in a psychology PhD program at the University of Michigan. I started last summer and as of April 17, I've survived...four years to go. If any alums or current students want to connect about cultural/social psychology, East Asia, or anything else, here I am!" E: agormezano@gmail.com.

**MAX HELZBERG '08** writes: "Greetings from Sydney! After spending most of 2016 in London, I jumped at the opportunity to help grow my company's private sector presence in Australia. Thankfully, shortly after landing in the country I was able to reconnect with a few Obies out here. I remain concerned about losing my Japanese skills, I use them every chance I get—most recently with a dive instructor in Cairns. I'll likely be returning to Europe for work later in the year, which I'm excited about."

### THANK YOU, DONORS!

#### EAS gratefully acknowledges these donors:

Bradford, Greta '09  
Brennan, Martha '93  
Richard Fried 83 & Stella Kim '83  
Good, Samuel '09  
Hammond, Ellen '77  
Heafitz, David '98  
Lepis, Brendan '93  
Zhang, Xin (EAS faculty)

## ALUMNI NEWS, CONT.

**REBECCA PAGE '10** finished up a four-year stint at the Vermont-based international nonprofit Institute for Sustainable Communities in May 2016. She spent the summer of 2016 hiking the Colorado Trail, a 500-mile trail that traverses the southern Rockies, originating from outside of Denver and ending in Durango in southwest Colorado. She saw 14 moose and many alpine marmots and pika. After finishing up the hike, she moved to Boulder to begin a master's program in environmental policy at the University of Colorado, Boulder, where she studies climate adaptation and drought resilience in western Colorado. In Boulder, she lives with fellow EAS alum Talia Brooks-Salzman '10; they go on weekly hikes and have a lush, nourishing backyard garden.

After completing a Fulbright research grant in Japan, **TAIYO SCANLON-KIMURA '15** returned to Oberlin as the student engagement fellow in the Career Center. He is a regular at Japanese language table and works with the Japanese Students Association. While Taiyo plans to spend another year in Oberlin, his next steps will likely take him to San Francisco, Washington, D.C., or Tokyo to re-engage his personal and professional interest in Japan affairs. He would love to hear from other alumni about their postgraduate pathways and can be reached at [taiyo.scanlon-kimura@fulbrightmail.org](mailto:taiyo.scanlon-kimura@fulbrightmail.org).

**BECCA SCHLICHTIG '06** writes: "Last May I attended the 10-year reunion for the Oberlin Class of 2006 and had a blast getting to catch up with classmates and EAS faculty and staff. I still visit Japan about once a year. One highlight from my October trip was going to a reptile cafe in Osaka! Professionally, I earned my master's of social welfare in 2012

and continue to work as an administrator at a LGBT organization. Congrats to Gay-sensei on her retirement!"

**DANIEL TAM-CLAIBORNE '09** left his job at the Yale Young Global Scholars Program in February 2017 and moved with his partner to Seattle. He now works as a research analyst at WilliamsWorks, a consulting agency that provides a variety of strategic services to corporate, nonprofit, and philanthropic clients to amplify their impact. He serves on the board of trustees of Oberlin Shansi and is also involved with the Oberlin Club of Seattle. He continues to write for the website [travelbreedscontent.com](http://travelbreedscontent.com) and plans to pursue an MFA in fiction in 2018.

**MEG TAYLOR '77** moved back to Pittsburgh after 31 years in Canada. She continues to serve as academic coordinator for the postgrad publishing program at Ryerson University in Toronto. She works as an editor for publishers, curators, and scholars in the United States, Canada, and Asia, specializing in books and catalogues on art and architecture, Asian literature in translation, and general nonfiction. As managing editor of *Monkey Business*, she works closely with eminent translators Ted Goossen ("another Oberlin graduate!") and Motoyuki Shibata to produce an annual anthology of new writing from Japan; they now have seven issues. See <http://monkeybusinessmag.tumblr.com>.

**DYLAN LUERS TODA '09** writes: "I am working as a freelance academic translator in Osaka. Recently my translations have been published in *Japanese Religions*, *The Eastern Buddhist*, and *Journal of Religion in Japan*. I can be reached at [dylan.luers.toda@gmail.com](mailto:dylan.luers.toda@gmail.com)."



Happy retirement, Gay Sensei!