



ASIAN STUDIES CENTER

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MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

Director's Note

Director Siddharth Chandra reflects on scholarships, funding and their impact on Asia scholars.

Featured Story

Learn about the S.C. Lee Scholarship and how it has helped students for over 35 years.

Spotlights

Alumni, faculty, and students are highlighted in this issue for their work in and related to Asia.



Special Note

Remembering March 2011: a Tribute to Japan

After the tsunami that devastated Japan in March of 2011, the Asian Studies Center partnered with Professor Ethan Segal, Associate Professor of History and core faculty member of the Asian Studies Center, to organize the “Crisis in Japan” Forum. The panel brought together the expertise of MSU faculty to explain the realities of the tsunami, nuclear reactor problems and stories of personal tragedy that dominated the news.

Although the tsunami has faded from the media spotlight, many people residing in the affected areas continue to face the hardships. Many people lost their homes and livelihoods.

“I was in Japan during the summer and visited one of the towns along the coast,” says Segal. “Although much has been done to help clean up communities, sadly, many people are still suffering and feel very uncertain about the future.”

Concerns about the revival of the fishing industry, reconstruction of the small, coastal cities, and the usability of farmlands around the Fukushima Dai-ichi reactor are not likely to be resolved overnight.

Despite the devastation caused by the tsunami, Japan remains a fascinating place with a vibrant culture. It is one of America’s closest allies, it has one of the world’s largest economies, and it has produced many pop culture phenomena that people enjoy around the world.

“Students looking to explore something very different should consider taking a course on Japan, or even spending time in Japan on a study abroad program,” says professor Segal. “I think they will find it very rewarding not only because of what they learn about another society but also because of what they will learn about themselves.”

To honor Japan and promote understanding of the struggles created by the March 2011 disasters, the Asian Studies Center hosted a forum at the end of February as a follow up to the one held in the previous year. The presentation, again given by Professor Segal and titled “One Year Later: Japan and the Challenges of Post-Tsunami Recovery,” focused on current issues facing Japan as the country works to rebuild from the Tohoku disaster.


In a continued effort to help with the rebuilding of the devastated areas, MSU and the Asian Studies Center continue to provide education on the event and encourage the support of Japan and its people through donation to the many relief funds available.

For more information on how you can help, please contact the Asian Studies Center at (517) 353-1680.



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Director's Note

A Glimpse Into the Future



In a time of shrinking university budgets, the Asian Studies Center at Michigan State University is privileged to be able to award scholarships and other forms of support and recognition to students who undertake to pursue an intensive course of study on Asia and Asian languages. In many instances, the difficulty of these languages can make this pursuit very challenging. The Foreign Service Institute of the U.S. Department of State categorizes the languages it offers according to how difficult it is for a native English speaker to achieve proficiency in each language. Category 3, representing the most demanding languages, is populated exclusively by Asian languages, and MSU offers instruction from the beginning to advanced levels in all four of the major languages in this category, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. I truly admire native English-speaking students who pursue proficiency in these languages, and a transcript bearing evidence of three or four years of instruction in Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, or Korean is, for me, a mark of character and perseverance.

The Asian Studies Center supports students who wish to learn about Asia through a number of mechanisms. As a result of the quality programming we offer, we are the recipient of funding awarded through a competitive application process from the United States Department of Education for the Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (FLASF) program. This high-impact program enables the Center to award thirteen fellowships a year to students who wish to enhance their knowledge about Asia by taking Asian language and other related courses.

FLAS fellowships are awarded on a competitive basis for summer intensive language study in the USA or overseas or for study during the academic year. Awards come with tuition and a stipend, and are designed to enable recipients to immerse themselves in the language and culture of their country of interest. Last year, we awarded fellowships for the study of a diverse array of languages, including Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Tamil, and Turkish.

A second source of support is the generosity of friends of the Asian Studies Center and the MSU community. For example, over the years, the growth of the S. C. Lee endowment, named in honor of Professor Shao Chang Lee, has positioned us to award between six and ten scholarships and essay prizes every year to students who show a commitment to building understanding between the USA and Asia. The annual S.C. Lee Dinner is the culmination of this competition. In addition to recognizing the legacy and honoring the significant contributions of Professor Shao Chang Lee to Asian Studies at MSU, we celebrate the accomplishments of our students and learn about their relationships with Asia.

As the Asian continent grows in importance, increasing numbers of MSU students are enrolling in Asian language and area studies courses. Last year, for example, enrollment in Introductory Chinese hit a record high. Introductory Hindi has expanded from the original single section to two sections. Many departments and colleges at MSU are proactively responding to the increase in interest in Asia by hiring faculty members who specialize in the region, often with support from the Asian Studies Center and International Studies and Programs.

The 21st century is indeed shaping up to be the Asian century, and the Asian Studies Center is committed to encouraging, enabling, and supporting our students in their often challenging journeys to strategically position themselves for this bright and interesting future.



Director Siddharth Chandra



Featured Story

Thirty-Five Years of Helping Students and Going Strong



For the past thirty-five years the S.C. Lee Scholarship has been offering MSU students outstanding opportunities and celebrating their accomplishments in the study of Asia.

The S.C. Lee Scholarship Fund was established in 1977 in memory of Professor Shao Chang Lee. Lee, a native of China, received a BA from Yale University and an MA from Columbia. He joined the MSU faculty in 1942 as professor of foreign studies and director of the Foreign Studies Institute, the forerunner of International Studies and Programs. Professor Lee worked closely with International Studies and Programs from its founding in 1951, until he retired in 1960.

Each year a competition is held to which students are able to submit papers with Asian topics and applications for scholarship awards. For the S.C. Lee Best Paper Competition, a board of Asian Studies core faculty individually judge the papers and winners are selected. Separate applications are accepted for the Scholarship Competition awards, which are given to students who are planning to take Asian languages and area studies courses. These students must also demonstrate a passion and

commitment to the study of Asia. This year, the fund provided five scholarships totaling \$16,000, and seven Best Paper awards totaling \$5,250 to students pursuing a variety of majors. At the start of the spring semester, to coincide with the Chinese New Year Celebration, a dinner is held to recognize the achievements of these outstanding students.

The Winners

With thirty-five years of past winners, the S.C. Lee Scholarship Fund has seen the progress of many successful students; students who still remember what their winning papers were about, and how it felt to win. "My paper was on Song Dong, a Chinese conceptual artist, and his engagement with ideas of transience and control in contemporary Chinese Society," said Anna Stein (BA '10).

While many of those that have won in the past have not called themselves "Asia Scholars," their experience with the Scholarship has still impacted them. "While I'm currently working in the field of investment banking on Wall Street, technically not in an Asia-related capacity I've quickly surmised that my studies relating to the East have proved

to be invaluable in tactfully engaging clients and counterparties in a rapidly globalizing business setting,” said Felix Popescu (BA ‘09).

This has been the experience of many of the students who have applied and been given awards from the fund. Pamela Roy, a doctoral candidate in Higher, Adult & Lifelong Education at Michigan State, can still recall what it meant to her to win the scholarship. “Receiving the award during the first year of my PhD not only boosted my confidence as a scholar but also validated my hard work during the semester. I also felt that I was able to make a scholarly contribution to my own (Asian) community.”

With continued support for the fund from the MSU community, these examples will only be a few of many to come. As the global influence of Asian countries continues to grow, education about the region will become more vital. “The impact Asia will have on our lives should not be underestimated. Asia will soon become the most important region of our world for achieving global well-being, and the implications will indeed affect us all,” said Felix.

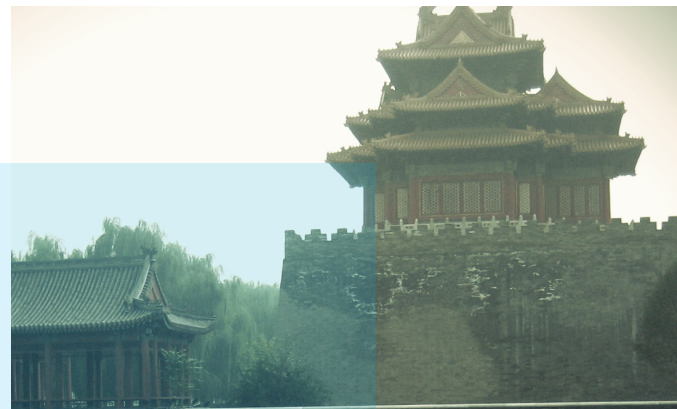
With this in mind, the S.C. Lee Scholarship Fund will continue to promote education and research on Asia, while at the same time, providing the same outstanding opportunities to students, just as it has for the past thirty-five years.

Professor Lee passed away in August 1977 at the age of 86. His legacy, now lives on in the students that benefit from his scholarship fund.

Interested in donating to the S.C. Lee Scholarship fund? Visit: <http://asia.isp.msu.edu/supportus.htm>



Photo of Professor Shao Chang Lee permanently displayed on the wall of the Asian Studies Center.



Student Spotlight

Chasing Waves and Dreams in Indonesia



Ryan Walker is no stranger to studying languages, or traveling the globe. At 15, he took part in the Project Harmony exchange program to Romania and in 2005 he participated in tsunami relief efforts in Southeast Asia as a media liaison for the U.S. Marine Corps. But it wasn't until he arrived on Michigan State's campus last year to pursue his master's degree in Human Nutrition that he had the opportunity to study Bahasa Indonesia, one of the Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs) sponsored by the Asian Studies Center.

"We live during an exciting time, and part of a well-rounded education is having global experience," says Ryan.

His interest in Indonesia was sparked while on assignment with the Marines. As a surfer he was also taken by the country's beauty and world-renowned waves. So, when the opportunity presented itself, Ryan spent the summer studying Bahasa Indonesia at the Universitas Negeri Malang as part of the U.S. Department of State's Critical Language Scholarship Program.

"I've found that a little bit of language ability goes a long way in developing relationships," he says. "Now, my affection for Indonesia runs much deeper than just catching waves."

While studying in Indonesia, Ryan developed meaningful relationships with his host family and friends from classes. Nearly every weekend he planned trips to places like Gunung Kawi, Yogyakarta, Bali, and Kota Batu.

"Since I've been back in the United States I've been able to email, text message, and speak with my host family and friends everyday," says Ryan. "They are people I consider to be my family now and hope to keep in touch with them for a long, long time."

When passion becomes practical

For Ryan, dreams abroad are not all fun and games. Southeast Asia is an opportune location for the study of food safety, and MSU researchers are already conducting projects in the area. The combination of academic and personal interest, not to mention familiarity with the language, inspires Ryan to return to Southeast Asia. In the future, he hopes to use his international experience to work with multinational organizations to improve food safety standards worldwide.

As for paying for education abroad, Ryan's advice is to seek out grant and scholarship programs.

Although the cost of study abroad may seem daunting, funding is available through university institutions such as the Asian Studies Center which administers a Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship Program. Additionally, funding can be found through programs such as the Critical Language Scholarship Program

To learn more about these opportunities and how you can support the Less Commonly Taught Language programs at MSU please visit www.asia.isp.msu.edu.

Editor's Note:

Ryan will graduate with an MS in Human Nutrition in August 2012 and pursue a PhD in the same field.



Faculty Spotlight



Ethan Segal: Scholar, Author, Professor

Dr. Ethan Segal, associate professor of History and an Asian Studies Center core faculty member, has pursued the study of Japan in many ways throughout his academic and professional career. As an undergrad, he studied at Tokyo's Waseda University and interned in Osaka. After graduation, he spent some time as a junior executive for a Japanese automotive parts manufacturer in Michigan and later returned to Japan to teach English.

"All were valuable experiences and helped prepare me to be an effective classroom instructor at MSU," said Segal.

After earning his master's in Japan regional studies at the University of Washington, Segal went on to complete his PhD at Stanford University, which (at the time) was one of the leading programs for the study of pre-1600 Japan. Since coming to MSU in 2003, Segal has taught a wide range of courses and was recognized with the MSU Teacher Scholar Award. In 2008 he was invited to teach as a visiting professor in Harvard University's Department of East Asian Languages & Civilizations.

"It was an outstanding experience," said Segal. "Harvard has a large, active community of East Asian scholars, and there were always interesting talks and conferences to attend, on topics ranging from the modern Japanese textbook controversy to medieval Japanese Buddhist thought."

Becoming an author

In May of 2011, Harvard Press published Segal's first book, *Coins, Trade, and the State*, which looks at ways medieval Japanese people used money and engaged in trade. Economic growth, including the spread of regional markets, influenced political and social change, enabling people living in the countryside to have a stronger say in negotiating relationships with powerful government officials, Buddhist temples, and samurai warriors, writes Segal.

"One of the many interesting things from this period is that medieval Japanese imported their cash from China," said Segal. "It might seem strange to us today, when many people think of money in very nationalistic terms, that a society would choose to import its currency."

The book also explores changing conceptions of wealth and virtue - two conflated ideas taking place between the 12th and 16th centuries in Japan. In the course of following the money, readers will encounter folk tales and ghost stories about everything from gambling to talking skulls.

Currently Segal is on sabbatical and is conducting new research at the Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies at Harvard University.

“My primary project is exploring how the status of women evolved during the medieval period,” he said. “I’m looking at documents that discuss female warriors, the shoguns’ wives, and the ways that marriage patterns changed, among other things.”

Studying in Japan

While working on his doctorate, Segal spent 16 months as a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Tokyo’s Historiographical Institute, a research center dedicated to publishing historical primary sources. There, with the support of a prestigious Fulbright scholarship, he utilized the institute’s archives, attended graduate seminars, and developed lasting friendships with Japanese and international scholars.

“Fulbright is a wonderful program designed to promote understanding between the U.S. and the rest of the world,” said Segal. “I strongly encourage qualified students interested in studying abroad to consider the Fulbright Program.”

The Fulbright Fellowship supports study in over 140 countries worldwide. MSU offers advising to assist students in developing competitive applications and to connect them with faculty mentors. Participants for Fulbright programs are chosen for their academic merit and leadership potential – with the opportunity to exchange ideas and to contribute to finding solutions to shared issues.

To take a class with Professor Segal, visit History and ISS course listings at <http://history.msu.edu/courses/>

For more information about MSU’s Fulbright program, visit <http://isp.msu.edu/funding/fulbright.htm>



Dr. Ethan Segal in the Gyokusendo Caves south of Naha, Okinawa, Japan. He is the faculty sponsor for MSU’s student exchange program with the University of the Ryukyus.



Alumni Spotlight



A Career in Asia from a Foundation at MSU

Eric Smith (BA '02) formed a love of Japan long before he started his now seven-year career with the Consulate General of Japan in Detroit. Eric, who advises the Consul General on political and economic affairs in Michigan and Ohio, has had a connection to the Asian Studies Center since early in his academic career, being a winner of a S.C. Lee Paper Prize in spring of 2000, an Asian Studies Specialization student and a Japan scholar.

Studying Asia

Where did Eric's love of Japan come from? "I would say it all started in elementary school with origami and then blossomed into interest in Buddhism, Japanese history, and anime by high school" was Eric's answer, one perhaps not too unfamiliar to many of us.

While at MSU, Eric pursued an Asian Studies Specialization, taking an array of classes on Asia with a specific focus on Japan. When asked how he is now utilizing his undergraduate education Eric's answer was a simple and straight

forward one: "My Japanese language skills are helpful when communicating with Japanese business executives and my knowledge of Asian and Japanese culture helps me resolve misunderstandings in an appropriate manner."

Eric stressed the importance of learning about a culture from as close to the source as possible, "I am grateful that MSU provided me those opportunities," said Eric, who spent time in the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme (JET). The JET Programme "made an enormous impact on my Japanese language acquisition, understanding of Japanese culture, and exposure to the Japanese work environment."

While Eric did not enter college knowing that his future career would be devoted to Japan, there were many moments during his time on campus that led him to that conclusion. "My time in the JET Programme solidified my connection to Japan and my desire to promote good relations with Japan and its people."

Shao Chang Lee Award

“Winning the [S.C. Lee] scholarship validated my studies of East Asia and motivated me to more fully focus my studies at James Madison College on Japanese, Chinese, and even Russian foreign affairs,” said Eric. This sentiment is one the Asian Studies Center hears from many of its past S.C. Lee awardees, with a large number of them now actively working in Asia-related fields, or for companies across Asia.

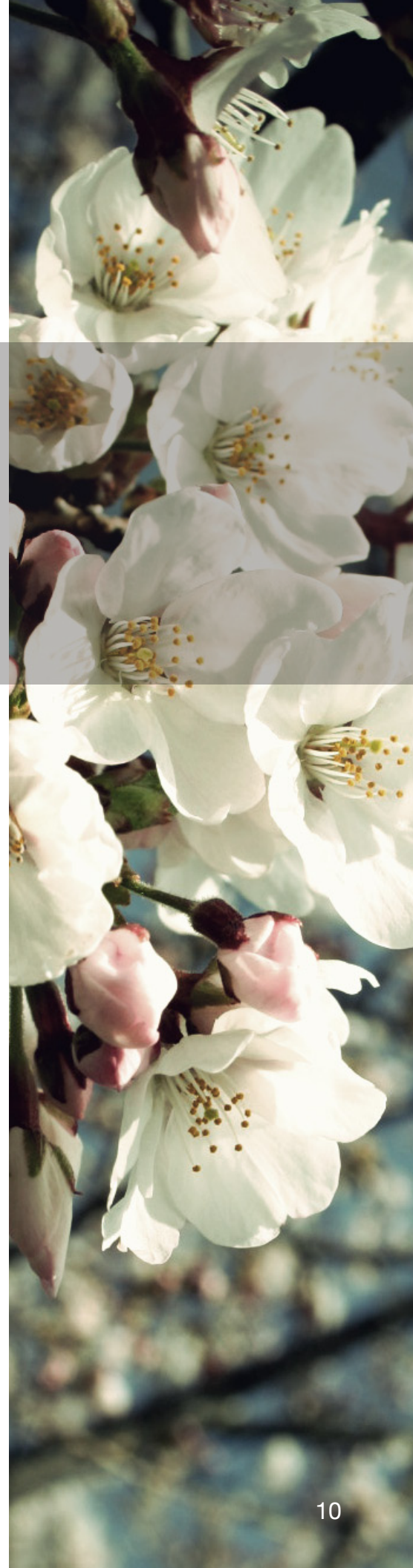
The S.C. Lee Scholarship fund, which has been supporting students who study Asia for thirty-five years, has recognized many worthy scholars like Eric with prizes ranging from \$500-\$5,000. Eric advises future winners of the S.C. Lee Scholarship to study abroad. “Believe me, you will never find a better opportunity to go abroad and enrich your study and language ability than when you are at MSU.” In addition to taking the time to study abroad, Eric also recommends that students seriously consider taking an internship at a company in the country in which they are most interested, and take that time to learn more about their business practices.

Like many students before him, and many that will come after, Eric’s time at MSU and with the Asian Studies Center helped to shape the path of his career. His years on campus provided a unique opportunity to discover and enhance his passion for Japan.

For more information on the Consulate General of Japan in Detroit visit: <http://www.detroit.us.emb-japan.go.jp/>



Eric Smith



Community Spotlight

Indonesia, where's that? Is that in Bali?

MSU junior Danica Suradja often receives questions like the ones above when she tells people that she is from Indonesia. As president of PERMIAS, Michigan State University's Indonesian Student Association, Danica's focus lies not only in uniting Indonesian students to get to know each other, share information, and have fun, but also in spreading awareness of Indonesia and its culture at MSU and in the greater Lansing area. PERMIAS – which stands for Perhimpunan Mahasiswa Indonesia di Amerika Serikat and literally translates to Indonesian Student Association in the United States – is made up of approximately 50 students who plan Indonesian and Southeast Asian-influenced events each semester both on and off campus.

In December 2011, PERMIAS hosted its Fourth Annual Indonesian Cultural Night, this year entitled "Timun Mas, The Great Escape." The event was held on campus in Erickson Kiva, during which students and visiting Indonesian dance teams put on both traditional and modern performances, and for the first time ever, a drama. The drama was based on the popular folklore, *Timun Mas*, but the group changed the ending to give it a modern twist. Students and local Indonesian families attended the event. Because there are no Indonesian restaurants in the Lansing area, PERMIAS had Indonesian Cultural Night catered by the Kalamazoo-based Indonesian-Malaysian restaurant Rasa Ria.



New Events and Good Food

On March 24, at the People's Church of East Lansing, PERMIAS held a new event: SEA Food Festival. Along with other Southeast Asian student groups, PERMIAS showcased various foods of Southeast Asia, including widely popular Indonesian dishes like rendang (beef with coconut milk) and nasi goreng (fried rice). In 2011, an online poll of 35,000 people held by CNN International chose rendang as the number one dish of their "World's 50 Most Delicious Foods" list, and nasi goreng as number two.

The SEA Food Festival allowed local residents of Southeast Asian background to indulge in meals that reminded them of home and are not always easy to find in the Lansing area, as well as spend time getting to know other Southeast Asians. The event also served as an opportunity for those unfamiliar with Southeast Asian culture to learn more about the region.

On The Horizon

Danica Suradja and her fellow PERMIAS members were able to practice their persuasive skills when they set out to convince the ASIRPA (Asian Society for International Relations and Public Affairs) to hold their annual conference at Michigan State. PERMIAS' well prepared conference proposal was successful in its bid, beating out the University of Michigan. ASIRPA's conference will be held in September 2012.

"PERMIAS is registered as an MSU organization, but really it serves the Greater Lansing area," Danica explained. Through events such as Indonesian Cultural Night and the SEA Food Festival, PERMIAS is creating a strong presence that extends beyond MSU's campus and into surrounding communities. PERMIAS events are open to anyone who is interested.

For more information on upcoming events and activities, visit PERMIAS' website at permiasmsu.blogspot.com or the PERMIAS Greater Lansing (Indonesian Student Association) Facebook page.



Dancers from this years 4th Annual MSU Indonesian Cultural Night



Members of PERMIAS pose after their general body meeting.

Asian Studies Staff



Top (from left to right): Siddharth Chandra, Bhanushri Sisodia, Cathy Fields, Weijun Zhao and Sivaram Murthy

Bottom (from left to right): Leslie Jablonski, Katelyn Gray and Jun Wan

Not pictured: Karen Klein and Vu Nguyen

* Photo taken during Japan Month 2012.

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