



# Asian Studies Development Program Alumni Newsletter

## Editor's Greeting

It's finally Spring! For those of us who lived through a second brutal winter in a row, it's a welcome relief and a chance to head outdoors to enjoy the sights, sounds and smells of warmer weather. Having lost a dear friend in March, it is especially good for me to witness the regeneration in Spring.

I am grateful to all who submitted articles for this issue. It is a testament to the ASDP community that the short deadline for submissions this time did not compromise the quality of the issue at all and we have a greater than ever profusion of excellent articles. In fact, due to the richness of submissions, I had to leave out two regular features, conference listings and memory lane, from this issue. They will be back next time.

Please keep in mind the 22nd Annual Conference which will be held in Washington DC from March 17-19. It's ASDP's 25th anniversary as a program so there's lots to celebrate. It's also an opportunity to visit the Freer and Sackler galleries with an expert guide. Hope to see many of you there!

*Rachana Sachdev*

## Connecting Democratic Engagement and Global Learning in General Education

~Carina Self, Dona Cady, and Matthew Olson

While community colleges have historically existed at a crossroads between workforce development and opportunities for student transfer to four-year institutions, Middlesex Community College (MCC) is currently at a crossroads of integrating democratic engagement with global learning in our general education curriculum. At MCC, we see these two crossroads as converging at a single intersection, particularly in light of the current national focus on global economic competitiveness. To prepare students for today's workforce, community college educators must promote forms of liberal learning that advance cross-disciplinary knowledge, cultural and global literacy, and awareness of individual and collective responsibility. At MCC, we believe that democratic engagement and global learning are essential for all students to gain perspective on their academic, social, and career choices.

Nowhere are today's educational demands more evident than in Massachusetts, where the growing knowledge economy has created a gap between the skills needed for available jobs and the educational

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## Alumni Chapter of Asian Studies Development Program

### Chapter Leader

**Jessica A. Sheetz-Nguyen**, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of History  
University of Central Oklahoma  
LAR 202D, Box 182  
100 N. University Drive  
Edmond, OK 73034  
Phone: (405) 974-5451  
Email: [jsheetznguyen@uco.edu](mailto:jsheetznguyen@uco.edu)

### Chapter Officers

**Dona Cady**, Middlesex Community College, Vice President  
**Roberta Adams**, Roger Williams University, Secretary  
**Pamela Herron**, University of Texas at El Paso, Treasurer  
**Dennis Arjo**, Johnson County Community College, Member-at-Large  
**Gordon Patterson**, Florida Institute of Technology, Member-at-Large  
**Eric Spears**, Georgia College, Member-at-Large  
**Jeffrey Dippmann**, Central Washington University, ARCAS Representative

Recipient of the Best Alumni Chapter at the EWC/EWCA 2010 International Conference, the ASDP chapter maintains an active presence in the lives of the alumni through its following activities:

1. A peer reviewed Journal, *East West Connections: Review of Asian Studies*.
2. Regular postings on its listserv, ASDP-L .
3. With ARCAS, development and coordination of the annual ASDP National Conference.
4. The Alumni Newsletter, published twice a year.
5. Asia-related news from the New York Times, provided daily by **Kenneth Harris**, Slippery Rock University

The ASDP Alumni Association would like to extend best wishes to the officers serving on the executive board of the Association of Regional Centers for Asian Studies (ARCAS). Their willingness to take up leadership responsibilities to further the cause of Asian Studies is much appreciated by the ASDP Alumni Association. The officers are:

**Jeffrey Dippmann**, Central Washington University, President  
**Nicholas Brasovan**, University of Central Arkansas, Vice-President  
**Katherine Purcell**, Secretary, Trident Technical College  
**George Brown**, Treasurer, Slippery Rock University  
**Robert Eng**, Member at Large, University of Redlands  
**Keith Kraseman**, Member at Large, College of DuPage

Please take a closer look at the official website for the ASDP Alumni Chapter. This site includes updates on the ASDP National Conference, newly elected Chapter officers, Chapter By-Laws and Minutes of meetings: <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/alumni/ewca-alumni-chapters/constituentspecial-interest/ewca-asian-studies-development-program-asdp/>

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backgrounds of potential employees (Bundy, Ansel, and Snyder 2013). Importantly, many unfilled positions require not only advanced technical skills and knowledge, but also intercultural competencies that promote understanding among diverse communities at home and abroad. The Massachusetts Department of Higher Education recognized this reality in its Vision Project by naming citizenship preparation—including acquisition of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be active and informed members of global communities—as an expected outcome for institutions of public higher education (Massachusetts Department of Higher Education 2012).

To address current pressures on and goals for higher education, MCC began its general education reform process in 2011 with this question: How do we, as an institution, mobilize across a number of functional areas to provide general education that develops students' intercultural competence, global understanding, and democratic engagement? In our experience, the answer involves working from the top down, from the bottom up, and side by side with our colleagues. Over the past two and a half years, we have furthered our general education reform efforts through our Bridging Cultures Project (BCP).

### **Bridging Cultures at MCC**

Several years ago, MCC received two Bridging Cultures grants sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), one through AAC&U and The Democracy Commitment, and the other through the Asian Studies Development Project (ASDP) at the East-West Center. Although the two grants have focused on different outcomes, the processes they have inspired—of integrating multicultural and global literacies and civic learning into the general education curriculum—have connected campus conversations about three distinct topics: (1) civic learning, which to that point had been strongly associated with service learning; (2) global education, which had simply involved study abroad programs; and (3) inclusive education of historically marginalized groups, which had been addressed by several individual offices. It can be challenging to bring people together across these areas of commitment, in part because the parties involved may not have developed sufficient trust across units and may fear losing resources targeted to specific programs.

To develop trust and partnership across areas of responsibility, the leaders of the two Bridging Cultures grants have encouraged campus-wide conversations about students' learning experiences and have provided seed money to promote innovative collaborations. Faculty and staff who have been directly involved in the BCP have developed curricular and co-curricular projects around the three themes described above, creating course modules, organizing campus speakers, designing and implementing community engagement projects, engaging in professional development workshops, attending master classes taught by global scholars, and serving as peer leaders or "fellows." With the two grants serving as "tent poles," the MCC Bridging Cultures Project has become a meaning-making mechanism supporting MCC's work to articulate and collaborate around institutional priorities, drive curricular and instructional innovations, and establish a culture of assessment.

### **Converging Pathways**

MCC now offers many opportunities for students and community members to see the overlap of global and democratic engagement that can be achieved through collaboration. One powerful example is our construction of a traditional Cambodian wood-fired kiln, a project that was the major focus of one BCP faculty fellow. Understanding that we serve a community that includes a large Cambodian population, we developed a multifaceted partnership between the college, the Lowell National Park, local public schools, and several funding sources to bring a master ceramist and expert in Cambodian traditional pottery to Lowell to help build the kiln. This art form, which dates back to the Angkor Kingdom (802–1431 AD), can now continue to flourish within our local Cambodian community, where it provides the basis for new ceramics curricula within the MCC arts department and local public schools.

Many faculty members who have participated in the BCP are developing deeper perspectives around the connections between assignment design and meaningful learning in the areas of democratic engagement and global learning. As we continue our work with the support of a Massachusetts Department of Higher Education grant to assess social responsibility, our experience of standing at the crossroads with the BCP allows us to see at the horizon the convergence of many roads into a single point. In our globalized world, we can no longer afford to see pathways to democratic responsibility, global literacy, and economic viability as separate and divergent. Instead, we must imagine them as converging to provide students with the knowledge they need to be liberally educated and socially responsible world citizens.

**Carina Self** is assistant dean of social sciences and service learning at Middlesex Community College. **Dona Cady** is dean of global education at Middlesex Community College. **Matthew Olson** is dean of humanities and social science at Middlesex Community College.

Dona Cady's e-mail: [cadyd@middlesex.mass.edu](mailto:cadyd@middlesex.mass.edu).

A longer version of this article can be found in the AAC&U Publication, *Diversity and Democracy* 17, 3 (Summer 2014).



Clockwise:

Building the Cambodian Smokeless wood fire kiln.

Kang Proeung, visiting scholar from the Secondary School of Fine Arts, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Building a wood fire community

Envisioning Lowell as a destination for Cambodian ceramics



# Plan Now to Join Us!

## ASIAN STUDIES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM 22ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE



MARCH 17-19  
2016

WASHINGTON DC, FAIRFAX on EMBASSY ROW

Conference Organizers:

Jessica Sheetz-Nguyen - [jsheetznguyen@uco.edu](mailto:jsheetznguyen@uco.edu)  
Dona Cady - [cadyd@middlesex.mass.edu](mailto:cadyd@middlesex.mass.edu)

# Ancient Chinese Science and Technology—A Vehicle for Teaching Introductory Physics

~Matt Marone

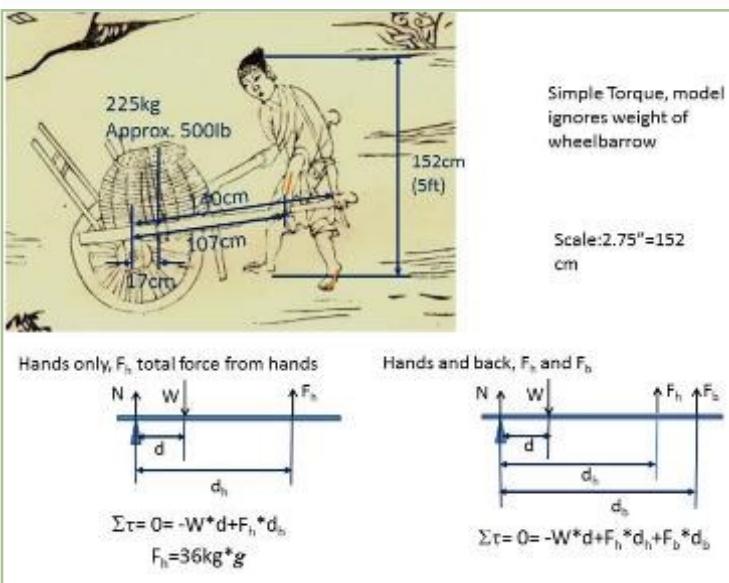
I recently had the opportunity to attend ASDP's Annual Conference. It was truly a joy to meet so many new colleagues and to see the puzzled look on their faces when I told them that I taught Physics and Astronomy. "What are you doing here?" was the most common question I heard. Teaching Physics to non-science majors is not an easy job. Our students are full of fears and misconceptions about science. One of my teaching objectives is to break down the mental barriers they have erected and let them experience science without emphasizing that they are doing science. I know that may sound a bit like a Daoist principle. The course that I teach is primarily for non-science majors, although I have had a few engineering students mixed in. Several years ago, Mercer began an Asian Studies Minor and I was given the task to create a course that would fulfill our General Education requirements within an Asian theme. Although this may seem like a strange mixture, it was very much in keeping with my own background and interests. I have been studying Asia, and particularly China, for many years. When most Chinese students were seeking to come to the US for graduate study, I went to China to do postdoctoral research in physics at the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The basic idea of this class is to introduce Ancient Chinese Science and inventions as a way to spark interest in the underlying science. We try to explore these discoveries and technologies in their historical Chinese context and also through our current scientific understanding. In many cases we examine the traditional, and often metaphysical, explanation and then look for the scientific principles embodied in the technology. An aspect of this class that makes it unique and exciting is that there is a strong "hands on" laboratory component. This is the aspect of the class that our students consistently say sets the class apart from anything that they have ever experienced. The syllabus can be found on the Mercer webpage [http://physics.mercer.edu/curriculum/syllabi/f14/phy108marone\(f14\).pdf](http://physics.mercer.edu/curriculum/syllabi/f14/phy108marone(f14).pdf).

The class starts out with a little historical review and an introduction to Chinese characters. Some students in the class have finished several semesters of Chinese language while others have no experience with the language at all. They are required to learn vocabulary words related to the topics we study and I provide them with a vocabulary list in both pinyin and simplified characters. Tests contain a matching section where they match the vocabulary words with their English meaning. Any student that takes a class in music theory learns that "Presto" is not a type of pasta sauce. Consequently, I do not think that Chinese terminology is too big of a burden for them. We also spend some time discussing the field of Sinology and the work of the famous Sinologist Dr. Joseph Needham (李约瑟). These discussions naturally lead to the inevitable "Needham Question", which I do not answer, but rather invite them to think about throughout the semester.

In terms of the topics we cover, this class is a mixture of two semesters of introductory physics mixed with some astronomy, history and philosophy. The first unit covers topics such as forces, motion, torque and conservation of energy. Our first laboratory experiment is paper making. The objective of this experiment is not only to produce beautiful handmade paper, but we also discuss how experiments are designed. Students measure the thickness of their paper and try to determine if the paper thickness is related to the density of the pulp solution. Statistical interpretation of data and graphing are important aspects of this experiment.

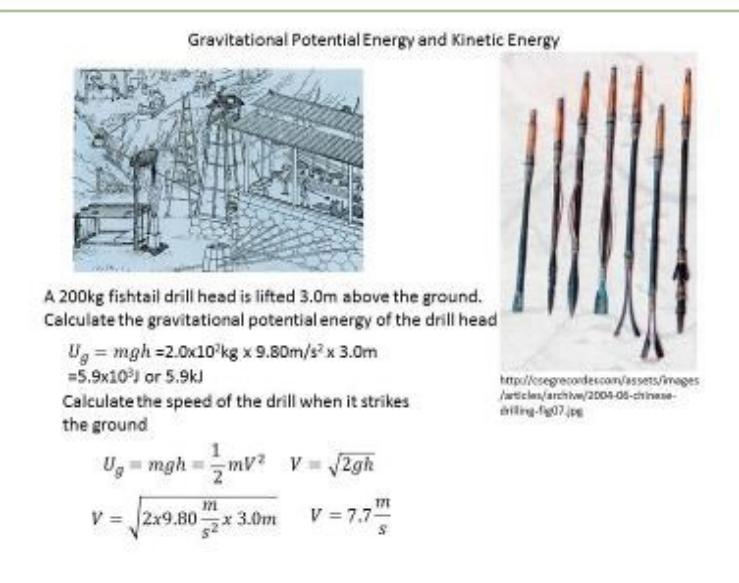
The Chinese invention of the wheelbarrow is described in 天工开物 (*tiān gōng kāi wù*) and serves as an excellent method for teaching about torque and levers as shown below.



Using this illustration, the height of the worker is estimated and then a scale is established. From measurements of the features of the wheelbarrow, a simple torque model can be produced. From this model we can then calculate the force required to lift the handles of the wheel barrow.

Energy conservation is explained in the context of salt production and drilling for natural gas. Some 2,000 years ago Sichuan province was the home of natural gas and salt production. Bamboo pipelines transported natural gas to evaporation stations. Burning gas was used to boil off water from the salt brine leaving behind valuable cakes of pure salt. Brine and natural gas were extracted from deep wells drilled by a percussion method. A very heavy drill bit was hauled up above the ground and repeatedly dropped. The process was slow and it took years to drill wells with depths of over 1,000m. In introductory Physics we often discuss the conversion of gravitational potential energy to kinetic energy. As the drill bit is hoisted up, its gravitational potential energy is increased. Then it falls, converting the potential energy into kinetic energy. We can calculate the speed of the drill bit just before it strikes the ground as evident in the next illustration.

This is exactly the type of problem we do in a conventional physics class but it might be something like a ball dropped off the edge of a cliff. The amazing back story of salt and natural gas production makes the problem seem more interesting and is far more appealing than the dry boring problems found in most introductory Physics textbooks.



Magnetism is the next unit we study. Students perform experiments with lodestones and make their own magnetic compass. The compass is then used as an instrument to measure the magnetic field produced by a current in a wire. We also discuss the magnetic field of the Earth and examine the topic of 风水 (*fēng shuǐ*).

Discussing the magnetosphere of the Earth naturally leads to the unit on Astronomy. Some of the earliest observations of sunspots, the solar wind and the shapes of comet tails come to us from Chinese records. Modern equatorial astronomical instruments have their origins in the great armillary spheres of ancient China. Since I also teach Astronomy, my students learn how to use telescopes. We have several observing sessions at a dark location off campus. Here they learn a little about modern constellations, observational techniques and some the Chinese Lunar Lodges 宿 (*xiù*).

The next two units we study are waves and optics. Our study of waves is based around Chinese musical instruments. I give a general introduction to the various types of musical instruments and then focus on the 古筝 (*gǔzhēng*). In a way I see the 古筝 is a mini-acoustics laboratory that demonstrates a wealth of physics. The modulation of the tone based on varying the tension of the string, the length of the string and the location of where the string is plucked, all demonstrate simple properties of standing waves. A great deal of optics can be found in the 墨子 (*mò zǐ*). Here we find a very detailed discussion of the images formed by concave and convex mirrors. In class we use

large demonstration mirrors and compare our observations to what is described in this ancient text. Mirrors also had a metaphysical component and we discuss their use in rituals and feng shui. Ancient mirrors were generally made of bronze, which leads us to the final unit on materials properties.

Silk is an amazing ancient material in terms of its importance in the history of China and from the point of view of materials science. Several laboratory sessions are spent experimenting with silk from the point of view of an engineer. The figure shown below shows some students spinning silk thread directly from cocoons.

Spinning Silk Thread in Lab Class



In these experiments, we subject silk fibers to tension and measure the resulting change in length. From this data we determine the stress-strain relationship, Young's modulus and breaking strain. This allows us to compare the silk to other materials such as steel.

Copper and Tin are both very soft metals, but when combined they produce a hard metal called bronze. Bronze is so important that there is an entire period of human history that bears its name. Our discussion of the chemistry of bronze includes topics such as the periodic table and crystal structures. Our final laboratory experiments are related to bronze casting. Many of the experiments I have described can be done at almost any college or university, but bronze casting takes a lot of specialized equipment and skill. Mercer is very fortunate to have the facilities to do this type of experiment. Our students are introduced to the "lost wax" technique and produce a simple bronze object as shown below.



Perhaps it's the flames and molten metal that make this one of the most popular experiments we do. Throughout the semester I have my students record their perceptions of the class. Allow me to share a few of those comments.

*As my final update I would like to say that I thoroughly enjoyed this class & the class material. I enjoyed how we took ancient Chinese technologies & used modern understandings to describe these technologies. The class structure was exceptional & the instructor was fair in grading. I would recommend anyone to take this class.*

*This has probably been the most enjoyable science class I have ever had. We have done so many interesting things! I hope Mercer decides to add more courses like this to the curriculum. The mixture of all sorts of different types of learning made it much more interesting than straight line classes. I'm definitely going to miss this class.*

So that is why a physics professor with a love of ancient Chinese science paid a visit to the ASDP conference. For the sake of space I only gave the short version of all that we do in this class. You might be thinking that you would like to do something like this at your institution. I have been talking with several universities about sponsoring workshops where we can share ideas and create new laboratory components for different disciplines. I look forward to meeting more members of this amazingly rich ASDP community.

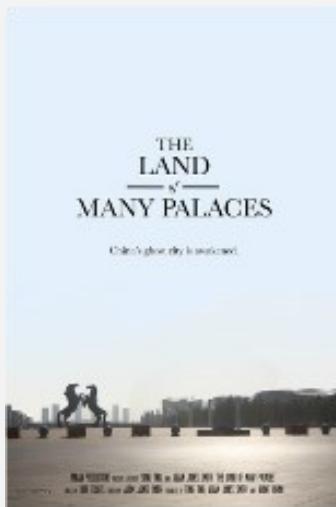
*Matt Marone is Associate Professor of Physics at Mercer University.*

*E-mail:* MARONE\_MJ@mercer.edu

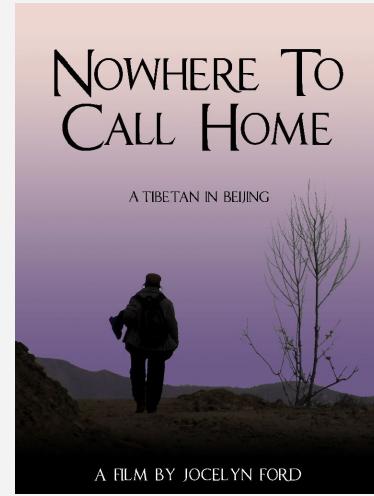
## Two New Documentaries Filmed in China

### Film review ~ Pamela Herron

*Land of Many Palaces* which debuted this spring 2015 and *Nowhere to Call Home* which opened in 2014 have both been shown repeatedly across China and elsewhere. Both films were screened this past Spring 2015 at The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) and New Mexico State University (NMSU) as a joint venture between a cooperative group of departments at UTEP and the Confucius Institute at NMSU. These screenings made available for students, faculty, and the community generated lively discussion and are highly recommended.



***Land of Many Palaces***



*Land of Many Palaces*, a documentary film by Adam James Smith and Song Ting, is a provocative yet understated look at the rural to urban shift occurring in China. The filmmakers focus on Ordos, whose name means “land of many palaces.” Ordos is one of the “new cities” designed to house displaced rural villagers. Unlike many of the new cities that are actually extensions of an existing city, Ordos was created before there were any residents. The documentary focuses on farmers who are among the last to be relocated from their villages. The filmmakers also had remarkable access to a young government worker whose job is to train and orient the villagers to their new urban apartments.

Both filmmakers received their education in film in the west. Smith from England is Stanford educated and Song Ting from Chongqing studied at Tisch School of the Arts at New York University. Together they achieve a poignant and thoughtful product that seems surprisingly unobtrusive. At times it seems the subjects being filmed have almost forgotten the camera is in the room. Of particular note is the haunting soundtrack by Rob Scales of the UK which subtly underlines the stunning visuals.

Beautifully shot, the camera sees private moments and pensive looks that need no dialogue. From the hesitancy and bewilderment of learning to use a modern kitchen and bath, to the sad vacant stare of disconnected family members at the ever-present television in the high-rise apartments, the viewer is given an intimate look at these peoples’ transition from the village to the city.

Central to the film is the cooperation of the young woman whose job is to teach the new urban dwellers what it means to be civilized, but we are also faced with the question of what does it actually mean to be civilized?

Ordos is quite remote as are the surrounding villages. Sweeping shots view high-rises yet empty

across a barren wind-swept landscape. So many of the relocated villagers are older and the audience must wonder how they will adjust. This isolated city gives us an opportunity to examine the huge rural to urban migration planned and implemented by the Chinese government.

Song and Smith have a delicate touch and never pass judgement on what they film. The viewers are left to draw their own conclusions, but ultimately there is a sadness and sense of loss. Although these farmers will perhaps have a better quality of life with access to medical care, schools, and urban amenities, we are still left with the feeling that some essential way of life is being lost.

### ***Nowhere to Call Home***

*Nowhere to Call Home* is a film by Jocelyn Ford who served more than 10 years as the Beijing and Tokyo bureau chief for the public radio program *Marketplace*. The documentary follows the story of Zanta, a young Tibetan widow who has traveled to Beijing to try to make a better life for her only son. According to Ford, "This documentary is a dramatic personal story of a mother, in the face of adversity, seeking to do her best for her child. It also tells of the discrimination faced by families in Zanta's community with no able-bodied men-folk, and the trials and occasional acts of preferential treatment extended to Tibetans who seek a better living in Han Chinese cities."

The film recreates the first meeting when Ford happens to buy some jewelry from Zanta who is selling as a street vendor. Little did she know that the contact information shared that day would result in this film. Ford and her crew follow Zanta as she looks for lodging in Beijing, is ousted by security and police for selling goods on the street, and ultimately travels back to her village in a remote area of Sichuan on the Tibetan Plateau.

Ford steps beyond the objective journalistic point of view as she becomes more and more personally involved with Zanta and her family. Zanta, as a husbandless widow is virtually powerless in her home village. Her father-in-law wants the boy to return to the village, while Zanta wants him to go to school in Beijing. But the grandfather literally holds the cards as he will not release the identity cards of Zanta or her son. Those cards are essential to acquiring services, education, and housing.

Zanta wants to give the boy to Ford so that he will have better opportunities. Ford pays for the boy's education in Beijing but he only qualifies to attend the poorer schools designated for migrant children. The son calls her "mama" and Ford becomes more deeply involved in this family's situation. Zanta's mother even laments at one point, "If I had known that Zanta would have such a difficult life, I would have killed her at birth."

This film brings up many difficult issues. Many Westerners have a rather romanticized view of Tibet, but Zanta's story brings into focus gender and cultural issues to which the West rarely has access. It shows language and cultural barriers within the highly diverse geographic area we call China which holds 56 different officially identified minority peoples. The film brings to the table a discussion of gender inequality in Tibetan culture as experienced in Zanta's village where women have little value and no voice. In a family torn between the old ways and traditions of generations contrasted with a desire for a better life, the future of a young boy hangs in the balance.

*Pamela Herron teaches English and Asian Studies at the University of Texas at El Paso and is a Faculty Researcher at the Confucius Institute at the University of New Mexico at Las Cruces.*

*E-mail:* pgstover@utep.edu

## Bollywood Representations of India

### Book Review ~ Elizabeth Hornbeck

**Rachel Dwyer.** *Bollywood's India: Hindi Cinema as a Guide to Contemporary India*. London: Reaktion Books, 2014. 295 pages.

**Priya Joshi.** *Bollywood's India: A Public Fantasy*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015. 191 pages.

The word "Bollywood," as Priya Joshi points out, has been an unstable term since its first appearance in print, in a 1976 crime novel by the English author H.R.F. Keating, as a dismissive term for a cinematic tradition he knew little about. Almost forty years later it is still contested, but two new books on the Hindi-language film industry contribute considerably to its analysis, if not to a more stable definition. Both authors champion "Bollywood" as a description of a rich body of film, but they disagree fundamentally on its parameters. Setting these two books in conversation with each other brings out numerous debates about the history and significance of the industry, its films, and its audiences.

Both authors engage with the wider political and social contexts of Hindi film, and both see Hindi film as playing a key role in shaping and expressing "The Indian Dream" (Dwyer) and "public fantasies of the nation" (Joshi). In *Bollywood's India: Hindi Cinema as a Guide to Contemporary India* (London: Reaktion Books, September 2014), Rachel Dwyer focuses on India's economic liberalization, suggesting that "the changes triggered in 1991 were just as important a watershed in India's history as 1947," and she defines Bollywood as the Hindi films of the post-liberalization period. She argues that films after 1991 represent "a new type of cinema and film practice" in which Hindi film changed in all areas—technology, marketing, viewing practices, audiences, consumption, content, narrative, image and sound. Dwyer describes the 1995 film *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (DDLJ)/The Braveheart Takes the Bride* (dir. Aditya Chopra) as the point of departure for the new order of things, signaling Bollywood as a global phenomenon on an unprecedented scale.

Since 1991, Hindi films have increasingly addressed India's middle class, which expanded

in number and wealth after 1991 to around 20 to 25 percent of India's population, compared with 5 percent at the time of Independence. (Or, as Joshi puts it, "more people joined the middle classes in the decade following economic liberalization in 1991 than they did in the four decades following Independence in 1947.") And, while Hindi films had long been popular internationally outside western Europe and North America, they had little recognition in the West until the 1990s. Their new status resulted not only from changes within the cinema industry, but in large part from "a reorientation of government policy towards its relations with the global Indian diaspora," and the government's much belated recognition in 1998 of cinema as an official industry.

Dwyer surveys nearly every Hindi-language film made between 1991 and 2012 in order to elaborate detailed analyses of the ways in which contemporary Hindi cinema represents the nation and its history, romance and the family, gender, religion, caste, class, and region. She also informs these discussions by referring to Hindi films of the previous four decades. In her last chapter she compares the 1990 *Agneepath/The Path of Fire* (dir. Mukul Anand) and the 2012 remake of the same title (dir. Karan Malhotra) to illustrate "how the Indian imagination of the world depicted in films of the last two decades has changed radically," as well as how the 2012 *Agneepath* remakes the original into a "Bollywood" film. Overall Dwyer provides the best discussion I have read in a film studies text of the 1991 economic liberalization and its effects on Indian film and the Hindi film industry.

Priya Joshi, on the other hand, in *Bollywood's India: A Public Fantasy* (New York: Columbia University Press, March 2015), focuses on "the long 1970s," which began with the election of Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister in 1966 and ended in 1984 with her assassination; the state of Emergency of 1975-1977 defines this "long decade" as one of crisis. Surprisingly, film thrived in this turbulent period, responding in coded ways to the nation's desperate economic climate, social unrest, the loss of civil liberties, and a blatantly corrupt and unscrupulous political system. Accordingly Joshi defines

Bollywood as “the tendency toward social responsiveness embedded in public culture” that characterizes films from this period. And her book is the best study I have read of the Emergency and its effects on Hindi cinema.

Joshi acknowledges that for the layperson, “Bollywood” increasingly refers to any Indian-themed film regardless of its site of production, distribution, or content to include films as diverse as *Slumdog Millionaire* (directed by American Danny Boyle, 2008), *Monsoon Wedding* (dir. Mira Nair, 2006, produced in the U.S.), and *Bride and Prejudice* (dir. Gurinder Chadha, 2004, produced in the UK). But Joshi aims to salvage the word “Bollywood” to signify the tendency that crystallized in the 1970s, when popular Hindi cinema was concerned with the nation’s internal problems: labor unrest, poverty, urban decay, economic stagnation, and political corruption. Films of the 1970s, like those of the previous two decades, reflected the Nehruvian vision of a nation unified in its diversity, in which “the concepts of nation, class, and social solidarity were still widely shared, and the compact between them was still evident.” Joshi argues that Bollywood films of the 1970s were so powerful that they have irretrievably transformed the way we look at Hindi films—not only the later ones, but even those that came before the 1970s. Hindi films from the 1950s (the “Golden Fifties”) expressed the country’s elation following Independence, but viewers of 1970s Bollywood can also detect, embedded in the same films, evidence of “the anxieties bordering that elation.”

One of the strongest features of Joshi’s book is her intense engagement with contemporary scholarship on Indian film; another is her insight into how Hindi films in that “long decade” construct meaning. Through close readings of some of the most popular films of the 1970s, she elucidates contradictions between manifest content and latent meaning. For example, *Sholay/Embers* (dir. Ramesh Sippy, 1975) focuses on two “good bad guys,” Jai and Veeru, who accept the task of subduing baddie Gabbar Singh on behalf of the Thakur (feudal landlord). But its latent plot, according to Joshi, is a “profoundly counter-hegemonic narrative” that positions Gabbar as the film’s “hero,” challenging the authority of the feudal order and its complicity with the state. A second example is *Bobby* (dir. Raj Kapoor, 1973), ostensibly a

romance celebrating “the audacity of young love and its power over the forces of custom, family, and class.” On closer analysis, though, its latent meaning warns the young woman of danger and potential violence in her love marriage; the lovers perform an “item number” that Joshi calls “the preamble to a dowry death.”

Joshi argues that the popular Hindi film industry in the 1990s retreated from the spirit of Bollywood to produce what she dubs “Bollylite,” which “heavily pillages formal characteristics from Bollywood cinema while shearing much of that cinema’s social substance and political edge.” She argues that Bollywood is “a cinema of substance,” while “Bollylite” is a cinema of image. The image it advances is a far cry from the multicultural Nehruvian vision of earlier films. Rather than representing all levels of Indian society, “Bollylite” films, like *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham/Sometimes Joy, Sometimes Sorrow* (dir. Karan Johar, 2001), tend to showcase wealth in an effort to capture the attention of the aspiring classes. Gentrification on screen is mirrored in the gentrification of film venues in India, specifically the mall multiplexes that provide a middle class viewing space that excludes “the masses.” Such films may appeal to audiences in western Europe and the U.S., but the values and visions apparent in earlier films had greater appeal for non-western audiences outside of India.

Yet Joshi is not pessimistic about the future of Bollywood. Both she and Dwyer discuss *Lage raho Munna Bhai* (LRMB)/*Carry On Munna Bhai* (dir. Rajkumar Hirani, 2006) and its reconfiguration of Ghandian ideals; *3 Idiots* (dir. Hirani, 2009) with its Gandhian utopian vision; and numerous other very recent films that engage in political critique. From its beginnings almost 40 years ago as a dismissive and even pejorative term, the name “Bollywood” has emerged as a source of pride for both Dwyer and Joshi; agreement on the parameters of Bollywood is not needed, and perhaps not even possible.

*Elizabeth Hornbeck is Assistant Teaching Professor in the Department of Art History and Archaeology and the Program in Film Studies at the University of Missouri.*

*E-mail:* hornbecke@missouri.edu

## BUILDING DEMOCRACY IN JAPAN by Mary Alice Haddad

### Book Review ~ W. Lawrence Neuman

BUILDING DEMOCRACY IN JAPAN by Mary Alice Haddad, Cambridge University Press (2012), 250 pages.

Observers typically characterize Japanese political life as having an impoverished civil society, male-dominated and exclusionary norms of participation, and quasi-authoritarian institutions. In *Building Democracy in Japan*, Mary Haddad offers a nuanced, alternative picture. This book represents the culmination of her twenty years of research on voluntarism and civil society. She argues in the mid-1990s Japanese politics reached a “tipping point” and has been moving towards greater democracy with more openness to diverse voices. Moreover, Japanese citizens accomplished this feat by building upon their local-level community organizations and traditional values. She concludes that the Japanese people have created a vibrant democracy of their own, one that is not an inferior version of Western-style democratic politics, but that has its roots in Japan’s specific history, values and institutions.

Haddad foregrounds a view in which (p. xi), “making democracy real is more than a matter of merely adopting a constitution and instituting free elections” and builds on two theories of the state-society relationship. First, she embraces Joel Midgal’s theory of “state-in-society.” Unlike other theories of the modern nation state, the “state-in-society” perspective does not privilege Western definitions, values or institutions. Thus, it is open to recognizing Confucian principles and Japanese cultural traditions, and it replaces the focus on formal political institutions, such as the national bureaucracy, official policies, political parties and elections, with an emphasis on how state practices, values and institutions relate to the everyday practices of ordinary people on the local level. Haddad also endorses Peter Evan’s theory of “embedded autonomy.” An alternative to the Western zero-sum binary of state versus society in which individuals seek freedom from or limits on state power, the idea of “embedded autonomy” recognizes an interpenetration of state and society in which cooperative power-sharing can occur.

Haddad integrates history, ethnographic interviews, and quantitative survey data to tell the story of Japan’s expanding democratization. By examining local-level organizations with a membership based on residence, she joins other political scientists (i.e., Erin Chung, Robin LaBlanc, Sherry Martin, and Deborah Milly) who recently highlighted Japanese women and local organizations as being important actors in contemporary politics. Haddad describes community-based organizations -- neighborhood associations, gender or age-based organizations, or service-oriented groups -- that evolved from instruments of totalitarian control during the pre-1945 era into decentralized, vital democratic institutions by the 1990s. Through a generational change, their membership base diversified and broadened, and their internal operations became egalitarian. Once the “bottom rung of the imperial chain of command” they have become a foundation of Japanese democracy asserting independent, decentralized demands. Postwar civic society organizations and non-profits also expanded and evolved. They are not transplants from outside Japan and perform differently from their counterparts in Western countries. In her examination of the YMCA and Association of New Elder Citizens, Haddad finds that they are hybrid organizations that successfully blend traditional Japanese values with liberal democratic principles. After the

1995 Great Hansin Earthquake and subsequent legal changes, Japanese non-profits have proliferated and taken on new roles, in the process pluralizing Japanese politics. Since the 1990s, they shifted from helping the excluded to gain greater access to mainstream society, an assimilationist project, to a diversity project of advocating for the distinct and separate needs of various voices within Japanese society. Haddad sees this as consistent with Ralph Ketcham's "fourth modernity" of identity-based politics.

Haddad argues that pressures for pro-democracy power sharing – to make politics more transparent, accountable, and responsive – grew out of and strengthened core Japanese values and institutions. They are not a foreign import or externally imposed on Japan during the U.S. Occupation or from developments in international politics. Instead of arising from autonomous individuals who seek greater freedom of choice in opposition to the state, Japanese-style democracy has grown from an indigenous ethos of helping others in the community. Haddad argues that the Japanese people's motivation for civic duty and sense of community responsibility has its origins in contextualized individuals who are embedded in a web of interpersonal relations and oriented toward self-cultivation and ritual practice.

Paradoxically, Westerners claim Japan has an anemic democracy, yet in national surveys the Japanese, much more than Americans and other Westerners, say that they can influence government decisions. By outlining how the Japanese people have built their own, distinct form of modern democracy Haddad observes that "measures of democracy need to be pluralized to recognize its multiple forms" (p. 184). Beyond providing us with a new perspective of Japanese political life, she advances a larger argument against adopting a uniform, homogenized template of what democratic politics must look like in all nations.

*W. Lawrence Neuman is Professor of Sociology, at University of Wisconsin - Whitewater .  
E-mail: neumanl@uww.edu.*

## Asian Studies Initiatives at the University of Central Arkansas Institution Spotlight ~Nicholas Brasovan

Over the past several years, the University of Central Arkansas has actively sought to develop its programs and resources for Asian Studies. In September of 2012, UCA appointed Nicholas S. Brasovan as a new director to their Regional Center for Asian Studies. In October of that same year, the University hosted an Asian Studies Development Program regional workshop on campus. The theme of the workshop was Colonial Legacies in Asia, and featured a lineup of expert scholars as workshop leaders: Dr. James Hevia of the University of Chicago; Patricia Henry of Northern Illinois University; Donald Clark of Trinity College.

In fall of 2012, UCA faculty also formed an ongoing, interdisciplinary, Asia-focused, reading group sponsored by the UCA Regional Center for Asian Studies and the Confucius Institute at UCA. Though the group began as a faculty reading group, it quickly branched out to students and the greater community. It has thus served as a resource for any and all persons in our community who are looking to discuss and study topics in Asian studies.

Thanks to the efforts of the faculty involved in the reading group, UCA faculty were invited to participate in an international conference on "Cognitive Dimensions of Chinese Culture" at East China Normal University. Four UCA faculty participated in this conference: Guo-ou Zhuang (World Languages, Literatures and Cultures); Nicholas Brasovan (Philosophy and Religion); Clayton Crockett (Philosophy and Religion), and Jim Shelton (Philosophy and Religion). Dr. Crockett

delivered a talk on “New Materialism”; Dr. Brasovan discussed the “Cognitive Dimensions of the Philosophy of Wang Fuzhi”; Dr. Shelton presented on the resonance between “The Philosophy of Li Zehou and Morris Schlick.” The program was instrumental to developing curricula and research in the field of Asian Studies at UCA.

In addition, faculty involved in the Confucius Salon reading group collaborated in March of 2013 to deliver a public panel of presentations, titled, “Western Gazes upon China.” This open-to-the-public lecture showcased four scholars’ readings of different Western philosopher’s interpretations of Chinese philosophy at different eras of modern history. Clayton Crockett presented on Liebniz’s reception of neo-Confucianism; Jim Deitrick presented on Hegel’s representation of Confucianism; Guo-ou Zhuang discussed Bertrand Russell’s “China Problem,” and Nick Brasovan delivered a lecture on Whitehead’s incorporation of Buddhism into his work *Religion in the Making*.

UCA faculty members continue to enhance their curricula and research by participating in the Asian Studies Development Program’s “Infusing Institute” at the East West Center in Honolulu. Over the past several years, UCA has consistently supported faculty attending the ASDP. The ASDP Infusing Institutes have served as catalysts for a number of faculty’s initiatives to enhance their curricula by bringing in deeper and broader studies of Asian philosophy, religion, culture into their respective classrooms. As one UCA faculty member recounts, “The ASDP has enabled me to expand my teaching and research in new directions, facilitating the integration of Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian perspectives into multiple course curricula as well as my scholarship on the nature of self and self-knowledge. It has made a long-term positive impact on my academic career, to the benefit of my students and university.” Many of the UCA participants in the Infusing Institutes have in turn followed up their initial engagements with ASDP by presenting their research at the ASDP 2014 and 2015 national conferences.

UCA faculty members have also sought to enhance their Asian Studies curricula and research by attending institutes and workshops of the Japan Studies Association. In 2013-2014, UCA sponsored two faculty members’ participation in the JSA Summer Institute in Honolulu, and three faculty members’ participation in JSA regional workshops in Kansas (Fall 2013) and Tennessee (Spring 2014).

Thanks to the Association of Regional Centers for Asian Studies procurement of a generous grant from the Henry Luce Foundation, UCA was also able to send two faculty members on research expeditions to Southeast Asia in 2012 and 2013. Most recently, the UCA Regional Center for Asian Studies in collaboration with the UCA Asian Studies Minor, and Confucius Institute at UCA invited and sponsored Dr. Ignacio Lopez-Calvo to campus to deliver two talks to faculty, students and the greater community. In both talks, Dr. Lopez Calvo showcased his research into Asian immigrants’ contribution to Latin American literary and cultural production.



Faculty, students and community members gather at UCA for a “Confucius Salon,” a biweekly, Asia-focused, reading and discussion group.

*Nicholas Brasovan is Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Religion and Director of the Humanities and World Cultures Institute at the University of Central Arkansas. E-mail: nbrasovan@uca.edu*

## Alumni Updates & Newsbits

Simon Kow, University of King's College, Halifax NS, Canada, 2014 Infusing Institute participant, would like to announce a recent publication: "Enlightenment Universalism? Bayle and Montesquieu on China." *The European Legacy* 19:3 (June 2014): 347-358. Simon is currently working on the fifth chapter of a book on 'China and Enlightenment Political Thought' for Routledge press. The book includes substantial chapters on the Jesuits in China, Pierre Bayle (1646-1706), G.W. Leibniz (1647-1716), and Charles de Montesquieu (1689-1755), focusing on the relevance of their reflections on China to their political ideas.

Eric Hyer, Associate Professor of Political Science and Coordinator for Asian Studies at Brigham Young University, has recently published a new book: *The Pragmatic Dragon: China's Grand Strategy and Boundary Settlements* (University of British Columbia Press, 2015).

China shares borders and asserts vast maritime claims with over a dozen countries, and it has had boundary disputes with nearly all of them -- often rejecting the location of boundary lines or arguing they weren't legally established by treaties or historical documents. Yet in the 1960s, when tensions were escalating with the Soviet Union, India, and the United States, China moved to conclude boundary agreements with these neighbors peacefully. *The Pragmatic Dragon* analyzes these disputes and the strategic rationale behind China's behavior. In this wide-ranging study of China's boundary disputes and settlements, Eric Hyer uncovers a legacy not in keeping with the fearful image of China on the world stage. Rather, he finds the country's territorial negotiations have been pragmatic and strategic, with China demonstrating willingness to compromise and even forgo historical claims in order to establish legitimate boundaries. This behavior in earlier periods is pertinent to the ongoing territorial disputes in the East and South China Seas.

### **Intersession in India: Building Class Rooms, Inaugurating Water Filtration Plant and Distributing Dairy Goats (December 26, 2014 to January 20, 2015).**

Dr. Ashok Kumar Malhotra, SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor and President of the Ninash Foundation and Ms. Linda Marie Drake, Executive Director, Center for Social Responsibility and Community and Treasurer of the Ninash Foundation, just returned after a fabulous 26 days long trip to India where they visited the Ninash Foundation's six schools (built by the SUNY Oneonta Learn and Serve Study Abroad Program) providing education to more than 1200 female and minority children. During the first week, Dr. Kevin Brien, Professor of Philosophy from Washington University (Maryland, USA), who is a donor to the Ninash Foundation's literacy project, accompanied them to the schools in Mahapura and Dundlod. Ashok and Linda were impressed with all the six schools that were providing outstanding education in the state of the art buildings, computer centers, libraries, after-school activity rooms, playgrounds, smart classrooms and mid-day lunch programs. They were also deeply touched by the enthusiasm of the children and teachers toward learning and teaching. Along with providing outstanding education to the underprivileged children, they held conferences with the principals and the local governing body (*Panchayat*) by offering help and inspiration to improve the lives of the people of the villages through building roads, electrically operated water well to supply rain/harvested water as well as offering to help provide modern style toilets to the families below the poverty line.

ASDP alumni Xixuan Collins and Melissa Hebert-Johnson coordinated ARCAS member Black Hawk College's Asian Studies Week from April 6-9. Asian Studies Week provided interactive and informational activities for BHC students and employees. The events included: "Islam 101" with Imam Saad Baig of the Islamic Center of the Quad Cities; T'ai chi ch'uan demonstration with John Hawry; Chinese Names Pronunciation Workshop sponsored by the Confucius Institute of Iowa City; showing of the film "Beijing Bicycle"; and a display on Buddhism and meditation courtesy of the Lamrim Kadampa Buddhist Center of Davenport, IA.

## The Dude That Can Be Told

### ~ Jim Deitrick

As I teach about the religious and philosophical traditions of Asia, and my students at the Southern, regional state university at which I teach read the classic texts of, say, Daoism, my first goal is to help them understand these texts relative to their historical contexts and in relation to the purposes for which they were first written and compiled. Ideally and when time allows, I also want students to learn about how these texts have been understood and used over time in, at least, some of the various societies and cultures of Asia and beyond. But, most importantly, I want students to engage critically with the ideas and practices they encounter in these texts, and to consider their relevance for us, here and now, living in the world today. Are these texts, I ask, merely relics of the past or "foreign" cultures, clues to understanding "others" in different times and places but of no real significance for us? Or do they, perhaps, also have something to say to us, to teach us even, here and now, and if so, what might that be?

This critical approach requires students to imagine how the ideas and practices they encounter in ancient religious and philosophical texts might be applied even in their own lives, what it would mean, for instance, to follow the way prescribed by Laozi or Zhuangzi in today's world. How would doing so affect, for example, the way we think about ourselves and the world around us? How would it affect the way we behave? Would it be compatible with our present ways of life, or would we need to make significant changes? How would our relatives, friends, co-workers, and neighbors react? What would its broader social impact be? And, most importantly, in the end, would it all be worth it? Would it improve our lives and, if so, how?

My experience teaches me that these are difficult questions for students to entertain, let alone answer, and they need help especially in getting started. While they tend to understand ideas like "actionless action," for instance, in the abstract with relative ease—well enough, that is, to answer questions about the idea competently on an exam—students tend to have a much harder time envisioning concretely what a life of

actionless action might actually look like, especially in the contemporary world and in their own lives. It thus helps to present students with contemporary models and exemplars, drawn from real life, literature, and/or film, if not to provide definitive answers, at least to expose them to a range of possible responses and thereby stimulate their thinking on the subject.

In researching contemporary models of Daoist living, I recently discovered Oliver Benjamin, a.k.a. the Dudely Lama, and The Church of the Latter-Day Dude, or Dudeism. For Benjamin, the founder of Dudeism, such an exemplar of modern-day Daoist living—indeed the exemplar par excellence—is none other than Jeffrey Lebowski, "the Dude," the protagonist of the Coen Brothers' 1998 box office flop and later cult classic, *The Big Lebowski*. Indeed, in 2005, Benjamin founded The Church of the Latter-Day Dude, "a modern incarnation of Daoism," based entirely on this conviction. By his account, Benjamin had traveled around Asia for years studying its religious traditions and, while attracted to the teachings of Buddhism and Daoism he encountered, he nevertheless questioned their relevance for the contemporary world, or, at least, struggled, like my students, to understand what it might mean to apply them in his own life. It was only after viewing *The Big Lebowski* for the second time with a friend in a bar in Thailand that he had what he describes as a religious experience in which he came to see the Dude as a veritable "Latter-Day Laozi," a living (or, at least, celluloid) Daoist sage who reveals "the [otherwise] ineffable aspects of Daoism" in his character and thus models Daoist living for the contemporary world. Thus, Dudeism was born, a religion which has since ordained (albeit online) over 250,000 Dudeist Priests worldwide.

*The Big Lebowski* is an admittedly difficult film to describe, as it refuses to follow the conventions of any single genre and its plot self-consciously rambles along, like the Dude, often without any sense of direction. As Edward P. Comentale and Aaron Jaffe put it in their introduction to *The Year's Work in Lebowski Studies* (Indiana University Press, 2009), "the

film itself is willfully tangential and gleefully schizophrenic in its use of cinematic allusion,” and thus “adds up to a kind of Surrealism of everyday life.” At the heart of the film is its 40-something-year-old, Black Russian-drinking, pot-smoking, goldbricking, ex-hippie protagonist and his bumbling efforts to gain restitution for a soiled rug, ruined by thugs who mistake him for a wealthy man of the same name. At least, this is what the film appears to be about. For Oliver Benjamin and his Dudeist compeers, it is really about much more and is ultimately comparable in its profundity and mysteriousness to the *Dao De Jing* and other sacred texts of the world.

What, then, is this contemporary Daoist lifestyle modeled by the Dude and advocated by Benjamin and the Church of the Latter-Day Dude? One really should watch the film to see. While impossible to say in the abstract, the film, at least as interpreted by Benjamin, suggests that a modern Daoist life is, first and foremost, a laid-back life of “taking ‘er easy” and “abiding.” It is life lived without the desire for wealth and status, a life, rather, content with loafing about, bowling with friends, keeping one’s mind limber, not judging others, and having genuine concern for the people around us. And, perhaps most importantly, it is a life of strikes and gutters where sometimes we eat the bear, and sometimes the bear eats us.

By studying Dudeism and its Daoist interpretation of the fictitious Dude, students are presented with both living and fictitious models of what practitioners of Dudeism, at least, think Daoist living might ideally look like today. While the Dudeists may not necessarily even deserve to get the last word in class

discussions—who’s to say, after all, whether they authentically represent Daoism for the contemporary world—as suggested above, at least they give students something to think about and provide them with a readily accessible foil against which they may test their own ideas about how to apply the teachings of Laozi and Zhuangzi in the contemporary world.

### **Resources:**

Dudeism.com

Oliver Benjamin, *The Tao of the Dude: Awesome Insights of Deep Dudes from Lao Tzu to Lebowski*. Abide University Press, 2015.

Oliver Benjamin and Dwayne Eutsey, *The Abide Guide: Living Like Lebowski*. Ulysses Press, 2011.

Jeff Bridges and Bernie Glassman, *The Dude and the Zen Master*. New York: Blue Rider Press, 2013.

The Church of the Latter-Day Dude, *The Dude De Ching: A Dudeist Interpretation of the Tao Te Ching*. Los Angeles: The Church of the Latter-Day Dude, 2010.

*Jim Deitrick is Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religion at the University of Central Arkansas.*

*E-mail:* [deitrick@uca.edu](mailto:deitrick@uca.edu)

### **ASDP Alumni Newsletter Editor:**

Rachana Sachdev, PhD

Associate Professor of English

Susquehanna University

514 University Avenue

Selinsgrove, PA 17870

[rsachdev@susqu.edu](mailto:rsachdev@susqu.edu)

Phone: 570-372-4200

Fax: 570-372-2774

## Participants in the 2002 Infusing Asian Studies Summer Institute



**Front Row (Left to Right):**

Wendy Nohara, Stanford Kopit, Mae Wlazlinski, Patti Ferguson, Judith Brodhead, Ellen Johnson, Pat Masters, Marina Tolmacheva, Andrea Lopez, Bonnie Melchior, Yifen Beus, Sandy Lopez

**Second Row (Left to Right):**

Grant Otoshi, Barbara Seater, Jan Sallinger-McBride, Cheryl Ann Nelson, Bobby Cummings, Betty Buck, Ellen Klein, Michael Fontenot, Rebecca Cramer, Linda Lindsey, Virginia Suddath

**Third Row (Left to Right):**

Sandy Osaki, Daniel Sparling, Deborah Goldsmith, Peter Bell, Jacqueline Moore, Jane Stone, Alison McNeal, Leonard Andaya, Barbara Andaya, Michael Foreman

**Back Row (Left to Right):**

Andrzej Bloch, Gary Wekkin, John Van Sant, Ernest Heard, Mike Fairley, Michael Baran, John Nichols, Hassan Nejad, Harry Birkmann, Michael Feener

# Asian Studies Development Program



## East West Center

Asian Studies Development  
Program  
1601 East-West Road  
Honolulu, HI 96848  
Tel: 808-944-7337  
FAX: 808-944-7070  
Email: [MineiA@EastWestCenter.org](mailto:MineiA@EastWestCenter.org)  
Website: [www.eastwestcenter.org/  
asdp/](http://www.eastwestcenter.org/asdp/)

With deepest gratitude, we acknowledge the guidance and countless contributions of the ASDP home team:

**Peter Hershock**, ASDP Director, EWC

**Andy Sutton**, ASDP Co-Director, UH

**Betty Buck**, ASDP Senior Advisor, EWC

**Roger Ames**, ASDP Senior Advisor, UH

**Audrey Minei**, ASDP Secretary

**Grant Otoshi**, Senior Program Officer

## Next Newsletter

The next issue of the ASDP Alumni Newsletter will be published in October 2015. Our plan is to include:

- list of scholarly publications by ASDP alums
- articles about major ASDP new initiatives
- information related to individuals who have participated in ASDP programs
- news about events and activities occurring at colleges and universities which have participated in ASDP
- profiles of ASDP Alumni and ASDP Programs at local institutions
- interviews with members of the ASDP family
- a calendar of upcoming Asia-related Workshops, Seminars, and Institutes
- updates on East-West Center Alumni Association news and events
- a book review
- a film review
- articles on pedagogy
- news from Asia

Please send us information and articles relevant to the interests of the alumni.

Mahalo. You will see us again in October.

**Submission Deadline: October 1, 2015**

Asian Studies Development Program Alumni Newsletter  
Volume 10, Number 2