



**FACULTY, STUDENTS, AND
POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS**



20
YEARS

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
ASIA CENTER

Harvard University Asia Center

Faculty, Students, and Postdoctoral Fellows

At the core of the Harvard University Asia Center are individuals—faculty members, postdoctoral fellows, graduate students, undergraduates, staff, visitors, and supporters—and the relationships that they build, locally and globally, toward advancing the study of Asia. The collaborations of our faculty members with colleagues abroad, the dozens of new connections made each year by our students traveling to Asia, and the enrichment of the Asian studies community at Harvard by our postdoctoral fellows and visitors are all made possible by the Asia Center’s financial support of these scholars and their work.

The Asia Center dedicates roughly one third of its annual budget to directly funding faculty members, postdoctoral fellows, and students. Reflecting the value we attribute to their contributions, this is the single largest funding category at the Asia Center. It is the generous contributions of our supporters that make this level of commitment possible.

The Asia Center is dedicated to funding all strong faculty and student requests, recognizing that every individual or group with a thoughtful and rigorous project contributes to what we are collectively working to achieve—a better understanding and appreciation of Asia.

FACULTY MEMBERS, POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS, AND STUDENTS



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FACULTY SUPPORT



Harvard Professor Stephen Owen (center) and colleagues commemorate his retirement from teaching with an international symposium of Chinese and comparative literature.

Since its founding, the Asia Center has awarded over 250 grants totaling over \$3.3 million to faculty members from across Harvard's schools. While the first grants were small awards of up to \$5,000 exclusively for research, the Asia Center has expanded the program to add grants for seminar series and conferences and has increased the upper limit of awards to \$50,000.

In line with our trans-Asia focus, the Asia Center's faculty grants support projects that include multiple Asian countries and that are, ideally, multi-disciplinary. Mindful of the need to nurture scholars at all stages of their careers, we give special consideration to junior faculty members whose research will not only be of significance to their fields but also directly influence their tenure reviews.

Recent grants have supported, for example, an upcoming seminar series on borders in modern Asia organized by Professors Sugata Bose and Sunil Amrith of the Departments of History and South Asian Studies; a conference on *Debating the State in East and Southeast Asia* organized by Professors Elizabeth Perry and Yuhua Wang of the Department of Government; and research on rights and reconciliation in Myanmar by Professor Tyler Giannini of the Harvard Law School.

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STUDENT SUPPORT



Destinations of 2017-2018 student grant recipients.

The Asia Center has offered student grants since its founding in 1998. The number and scope of awards made have increased significantly over time; in our first grants cycle we awarded 23 student grants totaling \$44,580, while in the most recent cycle we awarded 104 grants totaling over \$356,000. We hope to maintain the momentum of this upward trend as demand continues to grow.

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LANGUAGE GRANTS

Language grants are a special priority for the Center. In particular, it is critical that graduate students studying Asia be proficient in multiple languages; to engage deeply with and understand any one country in such an interconnected region, students often must gain fluency in more than one language. For this reason, the Asia Center is committed to ensuring that all graduate students learning a language essential to their course of study have adequate funding to achieve a high level of proficiency in that language.

“Asia’s exceptionally diverse peoples have been inextricably interconnected with one another for much of history. Current tensions and crises in Asia make particularly clear the necessity of becoming proficient in at least two Asian languages and studying Asia in transnational, transregional, and global perspective.”

KAREN L. THORNER

Victor and William Fung Director, Harvard University Asia Center
Professor of East Asian Languages and Civilizations and of Comparative Literature
Harvard University

RESEARCH GRANTS



Galen Stolee, Ph.D. candidate in Social Anthropology, conducted research in 2017 for his project, “Transnational flows of commerce, ideologies, and bodies within the world of digital nomads working throughout Southeast Asia.”

In addition to language grants, the Center continues to offer generous funding for undergraduate and graduate research focusing on trans-Asia topics. We make our grants available to students across Harvard’s schools at all stages of their academic careers, and we are particularly mindful of the importance of reaching out to and supporting master’s degree candidates in the professional schools, for whom funding opportunities are less plentiful than for Ph.D. students.

STUDENT RESEARCH SUPPORTED BY THE ASIA CENTER

“Parodies of Western Media in Japanese and Taiwanese Homoerotic Manga Narrative Form”

“The Reception, Interpretation and Translation of Modern Latin American Literature by Novelists, Essayists, and Poets of China, Korea, and Japan”

“The Politics of Urban Development in East Asian Countries: A Comparative Perspective from Property Development by Politically Connected Firms in China, South Korea, and Singapore”

“Territories of Belonging: A Peoples History of Borders in Modern Asia”

“Leveraging Climate Finance for Health System Strengthening in Least Developed Countries in the Pacific Vulnerable to Climate Change”

“Translating Industrial Expertise into Modern Architecture in Japan and Korea: A Comparative Study of Sakakura Junzo and Kim Chung-up”



Jiaying Ding, M.A. candidate at Harvard Divinity School, traveled to China in 2017 to research “Caregiving for the Elderly: Moral, Ethical, Personal? Cases from Peking University Sixth Hospital and Senior Activity Centers in Beijing and Guangzhou.”



Elizabeth Angowski, Ph.D. candidate, Harvard Divinity School, conducted research in 2017 on “Traveling Storytellers and Their Scripts: Research on the Literary Heritage of the Performing Arts in Bhutan.”



Photograph taken by Boya Guo, M.A. candidate at Harvard Graduate School of Design, during his trip to China and Japan in 2018 to conduct research on “Developing a Basis for a Speculation on Comparing Traditions of Copying and Their Modern Spatial Isomorphism in China and Japan.”

CONFERENCE PRESENTATION GRANTS

The Asia Center offers grants to students presenting papers at academic conferences in the United States and abroad. This experience is invaluable both in terms of receiving feedback from an audience outside of Harvard, and in terms of gaining experience in public speaking, which is important whether one is pursuing an academic or professional career.

GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATE PROGRAM



Asia Center Graduate Student Associates participated in a panel discussion on “Study and Research in Asia: The Student Perspective” during the Asia Center’s 20th Anniversary Celebration.

In a similar vein, but in a more structured form, the Asia Center’s Graduate Student Associate (GSA) Program provides a forum for students from a range of disciplines and schools who are conducting intra- and inter-Asian research. Students not only receive feedback on their work but also gain experience presenting their research clearly and concisely to an audience that may not be familiar with their particular field. This experience exposes GSAs to perspectives they may not have previously considered, while at the same time helping them develop skill sets necessary for success in a diverse array of careers. The program includes professional development sessions.

“...the program has become my principal connection to scholarship at Harvard in Asian Area Studies. Although I have worked on Korea, India, and the Philippines since the beginning of my graduate career ... before I joined the GSA program I had little contact with students in other disciplines at Harvard. Joining a diverse, integrative, and multi-disciplinary intellectual community dedicated to the study of the region has exposed me to different approaches to research and helped me think more critically about how my work contributes to the field of Asian Area Studies.”

JUSTIN D. STERN

**Ph.D. candidate, Department of Architecture,
Landscape Architecture & Urban Planning**

STUDENT GROUP TRIPS



Harvard students participated in the HVIET Summer Program in Vietnam.

A relatively new category of funding for the Asia Center is student group trips. In recent years we have funded the Harvard Philippine Forum Service Trip, which takes undergraduates to the Philippines over the winter break to work with homeless youth in partnership with local non-profits; the HVIET Summer Program in Vietnam, in which undergraduates create a liberal arts curriculum for Vietnamese high-school students thinking of attending college in the United States; and a research trip to Japan and India by students in the Graduate School of Education's Doctor of Education Leadership Program.

“This experience is like none other: unique in its purpose, undeniably important in the educational gaps that it fills, and overall invaluable in the opportunities it presents to work with hope-giving partner organizations and populations, one that I think many more Harvard students would benefit from in the future.”

MINNI JANG '18

on Harvard Philippine Forum Service trip

STUDENT ORGANIZATION SUPPORT

Student activities related to the study of Asia are not limited to term-time coursework or winter and summer research and study trips. The number of student organizations focused on the study of Asia and their level of activity is significant—currently there are over 50 officially recognized student organizations focused on Asia and Asian-American studies across Harvard's schools. Their activities include planning and hosting academic conferences, cultural events, and film screenings.

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS

To promote intra- and inter-Asian research, the Asia Center has inaugurated two postdoctoral fellowships: the **Asia Center Postdoctoral Fellowship** and the **Victor and William Fung Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship**. These fellowships are offered to recent Ph.D. graduates in the humanities, social sciences, and related fields who engage seriously with at least two Asian countries, although single-country consideration is granted when a fellow's primary area of research is Southeast Asia.

This year faculty members at the Asia Center chose two outstanding recent Ph.D.s from a pool of over 150 strong applicants for the Asia Center's first cohort of postdocs: Professor Elsa Clavé from Goethe University, who will be conducting research on the political culture of Southeast Asian sultanates; and Dr. Xiaofei Gao from the University of California, Santa Cruz, who will be researching twentieth-century Maritime Manchuria.

AFFILIATES

The steady flow of visiting affiliates coming to Harvard to work on Asia, not only at the Asia Center but throughout the University, makes an incalculable contribution to the dynamic dialogue that is essential to the broadening of our knowledge. We are excited to contribute to, and learn from, this community. But there is more that we could be doing to attract the brightest young scholars and practitioners to Harvard.

GOALS

We are eager to continue this important work in partnership with our supporters, pursuing the following goals:

- Expanding our funding beyond individuals who already self-identify as Asia scholars, reaching out to those working in other fields and regions to increase their interest in Asia and offer more opportunities for them to gain knowledge about Asia.
- Ensuring that the vision and creativity of our scholars is allowed to flourish rather than being governed by financial constraints.
- Nurturing and expanding the energetic and far-reaching work of our students as well as the student organizations on campus.
- Continuing to attract scholars doing groundbreaking work on trans-Asia topics and making the Asia Center the world's leader in this area of study.



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