

# Asia Connections



The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Fall 2013

## From the Director

Greetings from Chapel Hill! I'm excited to share with you some of the projects the Carolina Asia Center is working on this fall and to outline some plans for the future. I'd also like to extend my sincere thanks to my predecessor Kevin Hewison for the marvelous work he did as Director of the CAC for many years. His successes in building Asian Studies and in supporting UNC's engagement with Asia have brought many opportunities to undergrads, graduate students, faculty, and staff, and will continue to shape our development in the future. I'd also like to thank Stephanie Nelson, who served as Associate Director of the CAC and helped to create great relationships with many different groups on and off campus. Both will be sorely missed.

Since arriving at the CAC in July, I've been meeting with students, faculty, and alumni both on campus and in Asia to learn more about the work we already do related to Asia. I'm so impressed by UNC's commitment to the study of Asian languages and cultures, to partnering with different organizations and groups in Asia, to deepening the knowledge of Asia not just here on campus but in the surrounding community, and to creating opportunities for students and faculty in our professional schools to work in Asia.

In the months ahead the CAC is going to work to become a more accessible resource for the people across the Carolina campus who do work related to Asia. We are improving our website so that it will serve as a better portfolio of the kinds of projects that are happening in China, India, Thailand, and elsewhere, but which are hard to access in one place. We are also extending our involvement in social media, and now have Facebook and Twitter accounts. Lastly, we will be issuing newsletters and blog posts with increased regularity to keep everyone informed of the many ways that UNC students and faculty do work related to Asia.

Morgan Pitelka, *director*

## UNC Library Receives Grant for Taiwan Studies



Left to right: Hsi-chu Bolick, East Asian studies librarian; Dr. Chin-sheng Chang, Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO); University Librarian Sarah Michalak; Marisa Lin, TECRO

The Taiwan Ministry of Education recently awarded UNC Library a generous grant to support e-resource purchases and subscriptions for Taiwan studies within the university. The grant, which totals \$90,000 for 3 years, will give the library the ability to provide students with more accessible information about Taiwan, as well as the flexibility to support new resources beyond Taiwan studies. A key objective of the funding is to stimulate a strong relationship between Taiwan and the UNC Library through the development of teaching and library resources related to Taiwan. Hsi-chu Bolick, the East Asian librarian is currently open to suggestions, and can be contacted at 919.962.1278 or bolick@email.unc.edu.

## The Sahmat Collective: Art and Activism in India Since 1989

Indian political activist, actor, and playwright Safdar Hashmi was violently attacked by political thugs while performing a street play outside of Delhi, India. Hashmi helped fight for freedom of expression among regressive political parties and fundamentalist groups who were increasing the intensity and frequency of attacks on free speech. In 1989, Hashmi's death led to the establishment of a contemporary artistic platform in India, known as "Sahmat." This platform has urgently defended freedom of expression, passionately insisted on tolerance, and celebrated rich diversity within India's disruptive political setting. Sahmat encourages artists to tackle these issues and helps defend them from attack or any efforts that try to silence them. Sahmat continues to build unity among artists and activists to find new ways on expressing their values of freedom in democracy.

The Sahmat Collective: Art and Activism in India Since 1989 has been presented at the Ackland Art Museum Exhibit from September 2013 and will continue its exhibits through Jan. 5, 2014. The exhibit, which is open to the public, provides artwork that shows the national history and individual identity of South Asian culture, and is divided into twelve case studies of Sahmat's key themes and projects. It features multi-faceted events like lecture series, family-friendly craft making days, dance performances, and more. Each event is a reflection of The Sahmat Collectives' consistent stance against the threat of religious fundamentalism and sectarianism – known in South Asia as "communalism."



Ram Rahman, Safdar Hashmi's Funeral Procession, January 3, 1989, Vitthalbhai Patel House, New Delhi, Photograph (exhibition print)

## World View Adds Japan to Study Abroad Program

Since being established in 1998 by the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, World View has taken educators to 16 different countries around the world. This summer, World View is adding another great destination to the list—Japan. The third largest economy in the world and one of America's most important allies in Asia, Japan continues to be a vital coordinate on any student's or teacher's map of the world.

Why is World View different than any other organization that gives you the opportunity to go abroad? It is an international program that helps K-12 schools and community college educators to engage in professional development overseas. Teachers are able to participate in a 10-13 day study visit that provides first-hand, immersive information about culture, history, and educational practices in other parts of the world. Prior to the trip, educators attend a day-and-a-half seminar that focuses on the society and culture of their target region. The experiences taken from the seminar, the trip abroad, and a follow-up workshop helps to improve the teaching offerings of schools across North Carolina.

Though this is not the first time World View has been to Asia, it's the organization's first time going to Japan. It will include visits to schools, colleges, and significant cultural and historical sites in Tokyo, the region around Mt. Fuji, and Hiroshima from June 16th -27th.

World View's assistant Director for Curriculum, Katherine Robinson, describes the trip in three words, "Educational, impactful, and life changing... teachers come away from our trips and they have a whole new way of seeing their own lives, their professional lives and how they're going to relay that to their students. That's something we really strive to do [with study visits]."

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## After Hiroshima

Professor of Visual Art, Theory and Practice, elin o'Hara slavick has released a new book, *After Hiroshima*. Slavick writes "These photographic images of Hiroshima, Japan, are attempts to visually, poetically, and historically address the magnitude of what disappeared as a result of and what remains after the dropping of the A-bomb in 1945."

This project has resulted in a number of opportunities for this dynamic artist, activist, and scholar to travel and present her work to a broad audience. She has solo exhibitions this year at the Stephen Cohen Gallery in Los Angeles, CA ("Until What Has Disappeared Appears") and at the Daylight Project Space in Hillsborough, NC ("After Hiroshima"). She gave a lecture at Carnegie Mellon University as part of the Weeks of Peace Program. And perhaps most significantly, considering her project, she has given a lecture on her work at Hiroshima University in Japan.

Slavick's book includes an essay by one of her former teachers, James Elkins, E.C. Chadbourne Chair of art history, theory, and criticism at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Elkins writes, "Making images of ladders, bottles, combs, and leaves is a way of saying: I cannot represent what happened to people in Hiroshima, because I cannot re-present it as art. It's not that the people who suffered could not, cannot, or should not, be represented: it is that they cannot be re-presented in a fine art context. All that is left for art is to look aside, at other things, at surrogates, at things so ordinary and empty that they evoke, unexpectedly but intensely, the world of pain. I am not sure if this is ethically sufficient, but I think in this case it feels ethically necessary."

The book, with both English and Japanese text, presents slavick's photographs of objects and their aftermaths, with the consistent theme of "exposure"—to radiation, to sunlight, to the elements—serving as the connective tissue of the project. Slavick began with the actual material legacy of the bombing in the form of objects held in the collection of the Hiroshima Peace Museum. She placed these objects on sunprint paper, which allows for the simple creation of a negative image using only sunlight to capture reverse shadows. After allowing the image of the objects to be captured on the paper, she rinsed each one in water. In the words of Los Angeles Times reporter Liesl Bradner in a story from August 3rd, "The result is a white object surrounded by a cool bluish background emanating a celestial, shadowy effect." Slavick also took black wax crayon rubbings from surfaces in sites such as the former Imperial Bank, and later turned these impressions into silver gelatin contact prints.



### World View Adds Japan to Study Abroad Program continued

World View offers three main components in its training programs. The first is global knowledge through developmental programs and study visits. Second are best practices. This component teaches educators the best ways to incorporate what they've learned from the program into their curricular offerings. The third and final component is resources. World View seeks to provide resources for educators such as connections to university support and organizations working with certain populations or global issues that may help educators in their classrooms. "We've been to Asia before but this is our first time going to Japan so we're really excited. I think it's important for educators to study Japan and learn more about it because of its place in our economy and because of its amazing culture," Robinson said.

For more information, see: <https://worldview.unc.edu/programs/international-study-visits/2014-japan-study-visit/>

### New Program Funds Faculty Development

This spring, the CAC offered the first round of the Jimmy and Judy Cox Asia Initiative Awards. This program provides funds for the support of East, South and South-East Asian Studies, particularly faculty research travel. The program is the result of a generous gift by Jason Cox, class of 1997.

### CAC Welcomes New Associate Director

Thupten Norbu joins the CAC this month as our new Associate Director. Thupten speaks five Asian languages and has lived and traveled in South and Southeast Asia. He also worked for five years for the Asia Foundation, a non-profit, non-governmental organization with branches located across Asia. He has a Master's degree in International Development and brings new depth and breadth to the administration of the CAC.

### Carolina Asia Center

#### Asia Connections

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### On leaving UNC, Goodbye From Former Director Kevin Hewison

For eight years it has been my great privilege to be the director of the Carolina Asia Center. For more than eight years as a professor in the Department of Asian Studies, I have worked with great colleagues and taught the best students I've seen anywhere. UNC is one of the world's great public universities and I have felt very much at home here. Carolina has been good to me too, and I feel fortunate to have been a Tar Heel for this time.

Despite all of this, in early January, I decided that it was time to return to Australia after receiving an offer from my alma mater, Murdoch University in Perth. I completed my doctorate there in 1984 and returned in the early 1990s as a young professor. The offer to return one more time as Professor of Politics and International Studies and Director of the well-regarded Asia Research Centre was as attractive as it was unexpected. That Perth is also where I grew up and where my family, children and grandchildren live made the decision to move to the other side of the world somewhat easier.

My time at the Carolina has been rewarding. Through the dedicated work of many colleagues and with the support of the College and some generous foundations and alumni, the CAC and Asian studies have developed and grown in ways that seemed hardly possible in earlier days. Today, Asia is truly on the Carolina map.

I must thank everyone who has worked with and supported the CAC. Amongst the many colleagues and friends who could be acknowledged for their contributions and dedication, Miles Fletcher, John Pickles, Jan Bardsley and Arne Kalleberg were constant sources of advice and support. For the past five years, Associate Director Stephanie Nelson been a wonderful colleague and marvellous representative for the Center.

Morgan Pitelka now takes over as CAC director and his enthusiasm and ideas will move the Center forward in new and creative ways. With Morgan and Stephanie, the CAC is in good hands and I depart in the knowledge that the Center will continue to grow and prosper.

Now back in Perth, I have to say that I am missing Carolina, friends and colleagues a great deal!

Kevin Hewison, *former director*

### Make a gift to the Carolina Asia Center

Support the CAC, which benefits student and faculty initiatives, international events, and programs to advance UNC's top international goals and priorities concerning Asia.

To make a gift online, please visit <http://giving.unc.edu/gift> and select the College of Arts and Sciences from the drop down menu, choose "other" under Specific Funds, and type "Carolina Asia Center-0104" in "Other Instructions" to be sure your gift is directed to our endowment fund. For any assistance with making your gift to the CAC, please contact the Office of University Development at 919.962.4388 or [Beth\\_Braxton@unc.edu](mailto:Beth_Braxton@unc.edu).



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