

Asian Studies Program



Back Row from left to right: Gar Kellom, Katie Davis, Ashleigh Leitch, Sarah Mahowald, Michael Wallace, Peter Hoxmeier. Front row from left to right: Brittaney Johannes, Jessica Nelson, Nick Kurtz. Photo courtesy Michael Wallace.

Men's Center Sponsors India-Nepal Trip

Michael Wallace

Stepping out of the New Delhi airport, I was immediately bathed in heat and the noise of busy streets, both of which still permeated the nighttime city. It was refreshing to be outside, even in the heat, and away from the inquisitive

officials in the airport. This was the start of my month-long experience in India and Nepal last summer. The trip was led by Gar Kellom, the director of the Men's Center at St. John's, and included 11 other students of various years from both CSB and SJU.

The first week of the trip was spent touring Delhi, Agra and Jaipur, three major cities in India known as the Golden Triangle.

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COLLEGE OF
Saint Benedict



Saint John's
UNIVERSITY

CSB/SJU Welcomes New Faculty



Photo courtesy Sophouen Chhin

Dr. Yuko Shibata is the first Assistant Professor of Japanese in the hundred-fifty-year history of College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University. Upon her arrival this fall 2009, she has been teaching a modern Japanese literature course entitled

“Radical Fantasies: Contemporary Japanese Women Writers,” with a cross-listing with Gender and Women's Studies. She is also teaching the first- and second-year Japanese language courses that aim to simultaneously develop all four linguistic skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. In the spring of 2010, she will offer the third-year Japanese language course.

She received a Ph.D. in East Asian Literature at Cornell University in August 2009. The title of her dissertation is “Transnational Images of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Knowledge Production and the Politics of Representation.” She has earned degrees and worked in three different areas of the world. After graduating from Tsuda College, Tokyo, with a B. A. in International and Cultural Studies, she worked as a journalist for nine years for one of the leading newspaper companies in Japan, *The Asahi Shimbun*. There she covered a wide range of transnational, racial, gender, class, and cultural issues, and published four team-authored books as well as countless articles in *The Asahi Shimbun*, *AERA*, *Shukan Asahi*, and *The Asahi Evening News*.

Following this, she obtained an M. A. in Literary and Cultural Studies at the University of Hong Kong and taught business and advanced Japanese language courses to professional students at the Consulate-General of Japan at Hong Kong, and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council.

She hopes that her academic, cultural, and experiential backgrounds can help to enhance the dynamism, strength, and diversity of the CSB/SJU community.



Photo courtesy Flat Classroom Conference

Dr. Sushmita Hodges is teaching a course on Gandhi, Nationalism and Islamic movements in India this semester at CSB/SJU. A native of India, Dr. Hodges lived in New Delhi until graduate school, when she moved to the United States. She earned a B.A. with honors in history from Lady Shri Ram College in New Delhi and an M.A. in

history from Delhi University as well as an M.A. in history and a Ph.D. in social science from Ball State University. Dr. Hodges has taught at Indiana University South Bend and is currently a world history teacher in the Upper School at St. Paul Academy (SPA) in Saint Paul, Minnesota. She also teaches a summer course on the South Asian immigrant experience in the U.S. at Hamline University.

At the university level Hodges has taught courses in Labor Studies, 20th Century World History and Race, Class, Gender. At SPA she teaches world history with a focus on global—especially non-Western—perspectives. She has developed the school's first course in Multicultural Studies and new senior electives in Honors World History and the History of the Developing World.

All her courses are based on a balanced, integrated and inclusive approach to historical development. She helps each of her students achieve success through patience, perseverance, and personal attention.

Her recent teaching interests include the integration of technology, especially social media tools such as virtual classrooms, wikis and visual collaboration to create cross-cultural learning experiences. Hodges has developed curriculum on learning about the emerging BRIICS (Brazil, Russia, Indonesia, India, China, South Africa) nations through an online classroom that allows students to collaborate on issues of globalization.

Outside of work she enjoys reading, watching international and Bollywood films, cooking, and spending time with family and friends.

Asian Studies on Facebook!



facebook

The Asian Studies Program at CSB/SJU is pleased to announce that the program is now available to students in one more way: through Facebook. While the Facebook group is still small, we are excited to have more students join! Take a look at: <http://tinyurl.com/asianstudies>

“I Love China”

Hannah Nelson

Sitting on my fifth floor balcony at Binzhou University I counted the other students. On their balconies they were washing clothes, eating noodles, talking with friends, studying and listening to music. In China you can see other’s lives. You can step back and see that it’s bigger than you. The world is bigger than you.

I first came to China in May, and at first my relationship with China was not love at first sight. Upon arrival I felt passion, curiosity, frustration, and interest, but not love. Love developed with a train ride. 24 hours from Guangzhou to Jinan. Three to a bunk, I was traveling with a Chinese family. The cute chubby baby was eating sticky rice and her mother offered me some. The grandfather sat cross legged on the bottom bunk reading the newspaper, and later invited me to play cards with him and the baby’s father. I wanted to practice Chinese, but I was scared, so I stayed relatively silent. But this family welcomed me with their kindness, and I became comfortable. They were patient with me and I felt encouraged to open up and use my Chinese. This day opened my eyes to China. I met the most wonderful people and was able to view life and beauty in those I met as well as the countryside rolling past us.

Everywhere I went in China these past three months I felt welcomed wholeheartedly. When I think of my experience in China, my first thoughts are not of the Great Wall, Forbidden City, or other extraordinary sights. I think of the people. I think of my friend from the university who brought me dumplings back from the Dragon festival, after only knowing me for one day. I remember buying fresh peaches from the woman on the corner who always smiled at me. I am grateful to the women at the Red Flag Hotel who took such good care of me, who after cleaning my room would sit with me and show me pictures of their daughters and sons. I laugh, picturing nights spent at barbecues with my gege and jiejie, who took me into their family. And mostly I think of my students.

I began teaching English in June. I had never taught before, and I was scared. But all of my anxiety left me when I walked into Huamei Academy and was surrounded by the most adorable, smartest kids in the world. And they loved me. I was their “Feng Kuang Laoshi,” Crazy teacher! They loved high fives, candy, and my watermelon ball. I remember how they laughed at my awful Chinese pronunciation, and that we would dance and act silly together. I gave English names to all my students. One class was full of my whole family and friends: Mary, Dennis, Emma, Becky, Sally, Alan, Amanda... . My students liked to talk about America, the Americans they were most interested in, Obama and Kobe Bryant. Every day I was reminded of the power of language exchange. At school and on the street, I’ve never felt so happy as I do when I am able to communicate a thought of a feeling in Chinese, a language I never thought I could learn. I hope my students experience this too.

When I left, it was like a parade. From the Red Flag Hotel to the Binzhou City Center I walked with my friends and Chinese family who all came to see me off. We passed the beautiful young woman selling baozi. She nodded and waved goodbye. The street was lined with older men with tanned skin and black rimmed glasses playing card games and drinking tea. Later that night I knew the same street would be crowded with many people enjoying barbecue and Tsingtao beer. If I wasn’t leaving, I am sure I would have joined them.

I came to China hoping that I would leave with a grand life plan. You know, that I would have found my “calling”, and would have the next twenty years mapped out. But what China taught me is that the best life plan is to be happy every day. I could see the importance of this in everyone that I met. I learned so much about China and myself in the past three months. One of my students gave me a note on the day I left Huamei Academy. It read, “I wish my Crazy teacher to be happy everyday!” This is what I want, too.

Asian Studies Program Spring Newsletter Preview

- An update on the Asian Studies Program’s Title VI grant project, “Building Bridges to the Asian Century: Institutionalizing Our Asian Studies Major”
- The E-Scholars’ annual winter trip to China
- The Japanese student group visiting CSB/SJU in March



SJU Student Relates China Experiences

Mark Sonkin

One of the best decisions I have made in my life is choosing to study abroad in China. I have no doubt that the experiences I had, people I met and things I learned have greatly improved my life!

My name is Mark Sonkin and I am a senior at Saint John's University. I had the pleasure of studying abroad for my entire junior year. During fall 2008 I studied abroad through CSB/SJU in Beibei, China. Then during spring 2009 I studied abroad with the Alliance for Global Education program in Shanghai. Both programs had their distinct benefits.

I loved being a part of the CSB/SJU program in Beibei because we were so embraced by the students at Southwest University, Chinese students as well as other international students studying there. We were able to quickly make great friends that shared our interests in China. Another distinct benefit of the CSB/SJU program in China was the amount of traveling we got to do. We were constantly visiting different Chinese cities and getting to learn all about the long history of the incredible country. There were also many opportunities to volunteer teaching English to Chinese students and it is so valuable to have been able to get that hands-on experience. The time in China flew by and before I knew it the fall semester in China was coming to an end. Fortunately, I had been accepted into another study abroad program and was able to stay in China for an additional semester.

The second program I studied through was in Shanghai, the business capital of China. I was fortunate enough to study at one of the best universities in China, Fudan University. One of my favorite things about the Alliance for Global Education program is their strong concentration on language. I never thought that I could make so much progress with my Mandarin in such a short period of time but the Alliance program more than exceeded my expectations and I couldn't be happier! Another one of the great benefits that the Alliance program offers is housing. I never expected to have such a nice living situation while on a study abroad program. Not only did I have my own room and bathroom but I also had a Chinese roommate who I got to practice my Mandarin Chinese with every day!

I am so glad that I was able to spend so much time studying in China and getting to explore the country,

its people and its culture. My favorite experiences came during the time between my study abroad programs. When my fall program ended in December I had almost two months to travel through China by



Photo courtesy Mark Sonkin

myself before my study abroad with the Alliance program in Shanghai began. During these two months I made numerous Chinese friends as well as other foreigners traveling through China. Since I was traveling alone I was able to learn a great deal about myself and I got to accomplish things that I never thought I could do. I would not give up my experiences in China for anything!

I hope to return someday soon and I recommend anyone to visit this wonderful country if they have the chance!

If anyone has questions about study abroad programs or external scholarships for study abroad programs I am here to help. Please contact me at: m1sonkin@csbsju.edu

New Addition to Asian Studies “Dream Team”

Maria Traxler (CSB '13) is the newest addition to the Asian Studies Program, as the program's student assistant. A 2009 graduate of Cretin-Derham Hall in St. Paul, she studied Japanese in high school and would like to take courses in Chinese as well. She is looking forward to the establishment of a standardized Asian Studies major and plans to study abroad in Japan. For the past two summers she has spent a month at the Concordia Language Villages Japanese-language immersion camp *Mori no Ike*, and she hopes to return as a counselor next year. Her hobbies include writing and tae kwon do.

SJU Senior Interns with the Japan America Society of Minnesota

My Internship with the Japan America Society of Minnesota

Andy Morris

This summer I worked as an intern with the Japan America Society of Minnesota (JASM). As a student of Asian Studies, this internship, although unpaid, provided me with many benefits. Chief among these were the work experience in an organization dedicated to all kinds of exchanges between Japan and Minnesota, and the opportunity to network with people who can help me pursue that kind of work after I graduate.

JASM had four interns this summer, with all of us having a strong connection to Japan. Familiarity with the Japanese language and study abroad experience in Japan, while not necessary for the position, helped us better serve our members (as well as our applications). Each intern was given an area to focus on as well as a title reflecting that focus, while most routine office work would be handled by whomever was available at the time.

My title was Program Planning Coordinator. This meant I kept track of information on upcoming events, helped brainstorm ideas, and maintained contact with people involved with our events. In addition to this I was also responsible for updating the information on JASM's website and acted as Editor for JASM's monthly newsletter, the *Tsushin*. This may sound like a lot of work to step into, but there were many resources available to interns, including a brief overlap between incoming and outgoing interns as well as guides written to help make the transition smooth.

While office work was an important part of the internship, the real core service JASM provides is the events they produce. These events are central to JASM's mission of creating the opportunity for members of the community to get involved in Japan. JASM's events cover a wide range of interests, from cultural to political tastes. In my brief time there I helped plan and staff a Public Policy Presentation, a Corporate Roundtable, a St. Paul Saints game, a party for donors, and the Japanese Lantern Lighting Festival at Como Park in St. Paul.

In addition to valuable work experience, an internship with JASM gave me the opportunity to network with many people heavily involved in the Minnesota Japan-related community. Since JASM serves both private and corporate members, I was able to establish a wide arrange of contacts in academic, corporate, and cultural fields. Many of the people I met were very enthusiastic and appreciative of my work for JASM, and have offered help or advice should I ask for it.

I was very glad to be offered a position at JASM and I was not let down. It was a great fit for both my personal interests and what I am considering post-graduation. For students with an interest in Japan considering work in non-profit or international careers, this internship is a great opportunity. For anyone interested in learning more about JASM or thinking about applying for an internship there, feel free to contact me at armorris@csbsju.edu.



Vietnam Delegation Visits CSB/SJU

On October 19th and 20th, the College of St. Benedict was pleased to host a delegation from Vietnam. During the visit, the Vietnam delegation and staff at CSB/SJU were able to exchange ideas about higher education at a panel on October 19, as well as throughout the visit. The panel focused on the differences between American and Vietnamese universities, and included seven current or former professors from Vietnam. Delegates also sat in on classes and spoke with students and faculty in order to develop a better idea of higher education in the United States.

The delegation had two goals, according to Ted O'Connell, who helped arrange the visit. In the short term, the delegates plan to build an English immersion school in Vietnam to teach English, which is the language most in demand in Vietnam. One of the delegates, Mr. Tran Thanh Lieng, wrote in an interview that "there is a very large demand for well-educated English speaking workers in Vietnam", and that such a demand cannot be filled by simply sending students to study abroad in English-speaking countries. He also writes that in order for Vietnam to fully enter the modern world—and specifically to become a



Photos courtesy Ted O'Connell

full member of the World Trade Organization—there must be an improvement of education across the board, echoing the delegation's second, more long-term goal: to open a completely American-style university in Vietnam. It is hoped that this university will focus on English and technology, both of which are expected to help Vietnam become competitive in the world market.

The visit was also intended to give CSB/SJU faculty and administration a chance to look at Vietnamese models of higher education, and to see what could be learned from them. O'Connell is hopeful that students and faculty have learned from the visit, and that their interest in Vietnam has been piqued. "It's the next economic revolution in Asia," he said. "If you want to see where the next big growth in development will be this is the economy that is next up—the on-deck batter."



Asia Club Kicks Off New Academic Year

With the new school year, Asia Club has new officers and exciting new ideas. Lisa Tsang (CSB '10) chairs the club, with Natalie Hamilton (CSB '10) and Yeng Yang (SJU '12) acting as CSB and SJU co-chairs respectively. The other club officers are Amanda Phan (CSB '10), Secretary; Cheng Xiong (SJU '11), Public Relations; Linda Phan (CSB '10), Historian; and Chee Xiong (CSB '12), Treasurer.

Asia Club also has some interesting events lined up this year. On Halloween, the Asia Club's haunted house proved to be a popular destination once again, with the line stretching out the doors the entire time the house was open. Later this fall, there will be an Asian Crafts Night, co-sponsored with the Arts Club, to include origami, henna tattoos and more. In February, the Asia Club will host an Asian New Year celebration at Gorecki Center, which will have traditional forms of Asian dance, song, and other performances. The club is also hoping to hold a few more events in the spring semester, including an International Poetry Night, a sports tournament, and possibly even a lock-in.

Men's Center Sponsors India-Nepal Trip (cont.)

(cont. from page 1)

The first city we toured was Delhi, a sprawling city which holds the capital of India, New Delhi. We immediately met India's chaotic streets and ceaseless noise caused by an overabundance of people. There seemed to be no traffic laws, or if there were, no one followed them. Evidently, the lines of the street determining lanes were solely for decoration, and the rare traffic light was spotted only a handful of times.

Our tour guides led our bus through the myriad of streets to various places of cultural and national importance, all the while giving us incredibly detailed explanations of the history around us. The first place we visited was a memorial to Mahatma Gandhi, the most important modern historical figure of India. There we followed Gandhi's last footsteps to the place where he was assassinated. While in Delhi, the group also visited an elaborate Sikh temple, where we learned about Sikh traditions and met some of the most hospitable people during our tour of India.

Leaving Delhi, the group rode our tour bus through the hot, flat desert to Agra, where the Taj Mahal was built. The Taj Mahal is a mausoleum built by a Mughal emperor for his wife. It is by far the most elegant building I have ever seen. It stands alongside several mosques in perfect symmetry. The beauty of the Taj Mahal cannot be completely captured by pictures or art: one must see it personally. While we were touring the Taj Mahal, our tour guide told us the rich story of who the mausoleum was built for, which added to the already amazing experience.

The last place in India we visited was Jaipur, also known as the Pink City because of the pinkish color of

many of the buildings. Here we had the opportunity to ride elephants, learn about Hinduism while visiting a Hindu temple, and visit the Neerja Modi School, one of the leading schools in India. The Neerja Modi School and the Men's Center cooperate on teaching internships for CSB/SJU students. This is only one option for interning through this trip; other options include working for the Kathmandu Guest House in Nepal, or teaching at a school in southern India. All students on my trip had an internship or a research project in India or Nepal. Three students who recently graduated bought one-way tickets and stayed at the Neerja Modi School, two have returned since and one will come back in December.

After touring the school and dropping off a member of our group (two others returned to the school for their internships), we headed for Nepal. Nepal borders both India and China, and lies between the foothills of the Himalayans and the Tibetan Plateau. The first city we visited was Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal. Dozens of restaurants were within a ten minute walk of our hotel, the Kathmandu Guest House, and shops with Nepali clothes, teas, and other goods were abundant. The Guest House was also a great place to meet people from all over the world who were also traveling around Asia. The majority of the group had internships organized by the Guest House itself, ranging from helping a local Nepali museum display its art, to creating a scarf business within the Guest House itself. When I wasn't exploring Kathmandu, I was meeting new people at the Guest House.

My favorite part of this trip was its flexibility. Gar creates a general outline of the trip, allowing the group

to fill in the details. After spending a few days exploring the temples and life of Kathmandu, the group decided to travel to a city in the mountains called Pokhara, and to whitewater raft on the way. The whitewater rafting was exhilarating, and the lush green hills of Nepal were the perfect background for the trip. We stayed one night in Pokhara, a gorgeous city nestled along the side of a winding lake in the Himalayas. The next day, we went on a one day trek into the mountains, through vibrant jungle hillsides and quaint rice farms, until we reached a village and stayed the night. The next day we traveled down a different path back into Pokhara, where we stayed for another night.

After returning to Kathmandu, half my group went to Dharamsala, India to see the Tibetan Government in exile, and half started internships in Kathmandu. I stayed in Kathmandu and had the unique opportunity to visit a Tibetan Buddhist monastery for four days. At the monastery, I taught English, learned about Tibetan Buddhism and the Tibetan culture, and continued an ongoing research project interviewing Tibetan Buddhist monks. My visit to the monastery was a deeply spiritual and enlightening experience. I left the monastery with a broader view of monastic culture. Before I knew it, I was in the Kathmandu airport heading back to the states.

The Men's Center's summer India and Nepal trip was an incredible experience. I learned a lot about the cultures and religions of India, Nepal and Tibet. The many internship options also added to the experience. I only wish I could have stayed longer!

Asian Studies Program

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and story ideas, please
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CSB/SJU Students Receive Study Abroad Scholarships

In the fall of every year, CSB/SJU students study abroad in Asia through CSB/SJU's highly acclaimed semester-long study abroad programs. There are a number of scholarships available to students who study abroad in China and Japan.

The Father Neal Lawrence, OSB scholarship, administered by CSB/SJU, is given in honor of Father Neal Lawrence, OSB, who lived and worked in Japan for over 45 years, and received the highest Japanese cultural award, "The Order of the Rising Sun," for his reconstructive work in Okinawa after the second world war.

The Gilman Scholarship Program is a competitive scholarship sponsored by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. It is awarded in honor of Benjamin A. Gilman, a Congressional representative who chaired the House Committee on Foreign Affairs from 1995 to 2001 and received India's second-highest civilian honor, the Padma Vibhushan.

JASSO, or the Japan Student Services Organization, is a Japanese government organization that sponsors scholarships and loans in order to encourage international students to study abroad in Japan.

A total of 15 students at CSB/SJU have received one or more of these scholarships for the 2009-10 school year.

Father Neal Lawrence, OSB

Virginia Ollie (CSB '10), Jordan Grabow (SJU '11), Eric Grussing (SJU '11), Emily Nieves (CSB '11), Mark O'Brien (SJU '11)

Gilman Scholarship

Japan: Virginia Ollie (CSB '10) and Shee Xiong (CSB '11)

China: Michael Lee (SJU '11), Feng Vue (SJU '11), and Nick Palmquist (SJU '10)

JASSO Scholarship

Pheng Her (SJU '10), Virginia Ollie (CSB '10), Kao Nou Thao (CSB '11), Mai Yia Thao (CSB '11), Zoua Yang (CSB '11), Tim Deda (SJU '11), William Tice (SJU '11), Eric Grussing (SJU '11), Mark O'Brien (SJU '11), Emily Nieves (CSB '11), and Shee Xiong (CSB '11)

The Asian Studies Program extends its congratulations to all scholarship recipients.

SJU Alumnus to Teach Math in Japan

Every year, CSB/SJU graduates head to Asia to teach English as a Second Language. Anthony Jones (SJU '08) was among those hired to teach at Shogaku High School in Okinawa this year. However, Anthony, a Math and Secondary Education major, is teaching math at Okisho. This is the first CSB/SJU placement there in a non-English-teaching position. Congratulations, Anthony!