Ronald G. Dimberg’s Long Career

Peter Moody is a second-year student in the East Asian Studies MA Program and is focusing on Modern Korean History. He recently finished his thesis on neotraditionalism and mass mobilization campaigns in North Korea.

This year, the East Asia Center is sorry to lose one of its most revered lecturers and most instrumental faculty members. Korean History Professor Ronald Dimberg will be retiring this spring semester after forty-four years of service to UVa and the Charlottesville community. Professor Dimberg acted as the first director for the East Asia Center and has also served as Director of International Studies, Assistant Dean of the College for International Studies, Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of History, and most recently as Interim Assistant Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

Professor Dimberg first came to the University of Virginia in 1968. At the time, there was no East Asia Center, only an undergraduate Asian Studies major administrated by an Asian Studies Committee that included both East Asia and South Asia. There were only five faculty members teaching courses on East Asia (all related to China), and no one was teaching East Asian languages. The next year, however, Professor Dimberg started teaching a course on Japanese intellectual history, and one of Professor Dimberg’s colleagues Professor Gilbert Roy started teaching the first permanent Chinese language course. At the time, East Asian languages were taught in the Division of Oriental Languages that interestingly was housed in the Department of French.

The East Asia Center was first established in 1975 when the university received a Title VI grant from the Department of Education. A year earlier, Professor Dimberg, along with a colleague, had written a grant proposal, with Dimberg hand-delivering the grant proposal to the Department himself. One noteworthy project the grant included was an audio and video series called Orientations. Orientations involved audio recordings of the lectures of visiting experts in East Asian Studies and a video recorded sit down interview between a local specialist and the guest lecturer. The audio and videotapes were available to colleges and universities throughout Virginia and the (Continued on page 5)
Message from the Director

To UVa’s East Asia community and friends:

Warm greetings to all in this especially warm spring! I’m pleased to present you the second EAC newsletter under my term as Director. I’m especially pleased that we have a substantial portrait of Ron Dimberg, one of the pioneers and architects of East Asian Studies at UVa. The entire East Asia Center faculty and staff salute Ron and wish him all the best in his retirement! Peter Moody, the author of the article, is a soon-to-graduate MA student in East Asian Studies with a Korea focus. We also have a spotlight on Evan Lord, who graduated a year ago and is currently at the Hopkins Nanjing Center, from which he will return to UVa for his MS in Commerce this fall! Congratulations are in order for Michiko Wilson and Caren Freeman for their new books! Also in this issue I provide a guide to language study beyond the classroom and beyond Grounds; I’ll be putting it up on the EAC website soon so you can refer to it frequently. Speaking of language study, I want to take this opportunity to recognize the generous support of alumni for our language study programs. Two I’ve recently been in contact with are Jamie and Mary McConnell and Steven Monaghan: on behalf of UVa’s East Asian teachers and students, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude; without your generous support East Asian Studies at UVa would never have gotten to where it is today!

I wish everyone a smooth completion of the semester (or your degree, as the case may be)! I will be participating in Finals for the first time this year, and I hope to be able to congratulate as many East Asia-related graduates in person as I can!

New Courses for Fall 2012

ANTH 3590/7590—Allison Alexy
Love and Romantic Intimacies (Anthropology Department)
Tues/Thurs 2:00 - 3:15PM
South Korea and China are countries "on the move." By this I refer to their tumultuous histories as well as the increased circulation of people, ideas, and objects within and across their national borders. Through cross-cultural comparison of China and South Korea, this course asks in what ways have border crossing-activities and mobility within circuits of global capitalism altered the way life is lived and imagined both at home and in Korean and Chinese communities overseas? Seeking new transnational milieu, we will explore the challenges that mobility poses to concepts of ethnic/national identity, citizenship, gender and family formation. Topics include, but won’t be limited to, the new forms of marriage and romance mediated by the global economy; diasporic cultures; migrant laborers and "split transnational families;" consumer practices; overseas entrepreneurs; transnational adoptees; and return migrants and their (re)encounter with their imagined homelands.

ARH 3607/7607—Shiqiao Li
Architecture and the Asia Trade (Architecture School)
Tues/Thurs 9:30 - 10:45AM
This course presents a series of case studies on trading events between Asia & Europe from Renaissance to the nineteenth century and examines how architecture and urbanism in Asia changed in response to the practical needs of foreign trade. In tracing the impact of trade on architectural traditions in both Europe and Asia, this course offers an opportunity to document, organize, analyze and theorize one of the most important forces in the development of the world

GDS 3559—Clifford Maxwell
Buddhism and Development (Darden School of Business)
Mon/Wed 3:30 - 4:45PM
Buddhism takes an ethical and practical view of how individuals and societies can develop toward greater equity, sustainability, and satisfaction. In this course we will investigate a Buddhist examination of development practice in developed and developing countries, of modernization and the market economy; development programs in Buddhist societies—Bhutan, Thailand, and Sri Lanka; and we will focus on personal growth and development, questioning our own places in the world and what possible directions our lives may take given this body of knowledge and perspective.

For more information on courses being offered in Fall 2011, visit
www.virginia.edu/eastasia/courses.html
Faculty Updates: Research Projects, Summer Field Work, Recent Publications

Congratulations to Caren Freeman (Anthropology) on the publication of her book by Cornell University Press. The title is Making and Faking Kinship: Marriage and Labor Migration between China and South Korea.

Description from the Publisher: In the years leading up to and directly following rapprochement with China in 1992, the South Korean government looked to ethnic Korean (Chosŏnjok) brides and laborers from northeastern China to restore productivity to its industries and countryside. South Korean officials and the media celebrated these overtures not only as a pragmatic solution to population problems but also as a patriotic project of reuniting ethnic Koreans after nearly fifty years of Cold War separation.

As Caren Freeman's fieldwork in China and South Korea shows, the attempt to bridge the geopolitical divide in the name of Korean kinship proved more difficult than any of the parties involved could have imagined. Discriminatory treatment, artificially suppressed wages, clashing gender logics, and the criminalization of so-called runaway brides and undocumented workers tarnished the myth of ethnic homogeneity and exposed the contradictions at the heart of South Korea's transnational kin-making project.

Unlike migrant brides who could acquire citizenship, migrant workers were denied the rights of long-term settlement, and stringent quotas restricted their entry. As a result, many Chosŏnjok migrants arranged paper marriages and fabricated familial ties to South Korean citizens to bypass the state apparatus of border control. Making and Faking Kinship depicts acts of "counterfeit kinship," false documents, and the leaving behind of spouses and children as strategies implemented by disenfranchised people to gain mobility within the region's changing political economy.

Michiko Wilson (Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures) recently published her English translation of Minako Ōba's 1985 novel, Of Birds Crying (Naku tori no jeou).

The novel, the recipient of the Noma Bungei Prize, is loosely based on the author’s own life, recounting six months in the lives of Yurie Mama, a well-established middle-aged novelist married to a scientist. Their only child, a daughter Chie, born overseas, has long since left the nest. The portrayals of the free spirited Yurie and the early retiree house-husband Shōsō in their private life and among friends show the sophistication of Ōba at her best: a fine intermeshing of unusual characters and a probing of the complex workings of their minds. A tapestry of extraordinary moments expands and interconnects via interior monologues and dialogues ranging from the humorous, outrageous and farcical to the somber and meditative. Acutely perceptive social and cross-cultural commentaries fill the narrator’s voice and the characters’ conversations. Long-forgotten incidents come back to life, triggered by the sight of an ancient tree, the name of a flower, or the crying of a bird, and memories spawn tales within tales. Despite the fact that the characters’ motives for their actions defy prediction, all of these seemingly disparate elements are woven into a coherent whole, a reflection of the interdependency of humanity and nature in its wholeness that is one of the many underlying threads of the story.


Tomoko Marshall has been named a member of the Mead Honored Faculty. Each year, the participants are handpicked by their Deans for "their outstanding potential to become a friend of students and an example for other faculty." The Mead program was created by a group of alumni to encourage faculty to "become more actively involved with students and student life." The Mead Endowment is designed to maintain the tradition of close faculty-student engagement.

John Shepherd (Anthropology) was on leave this year, but has been busy. He served as discussant at the Conference co-sponsored by the Institute of Political Science at Academia Sinica (IPSAS) and UVA (EAC & CIS) on “Chinese Model(s) of Development in Global and Domestic Aspects,” Nov. 4-5, 2011 in Taipei. The day before the conference began, Wednesday, Nov. 3, the conference delegation met with the President of Taiwan, Ma Ying-jeou.

Following the conference, Prof. Shepherd presented his recent research in a paper entitled “The Prevalence of Smallpox in Late Nineteenth Century Taiwan: Evidence from the Household Registers” to the Programs for History of Health and for Historical Demography of the Academia Sinica on Nov. 7, and to the Sociology department at Tzu-chi University on Nov. 8. During his stay in Taipei Prof. Shepherd also made use of the valuable collections in the libraries of the Academia Sinica and the Central Library, Taiwan branch. Prof. Shepherd also presented his recent research on footbinding “The Practice of Footbinding: Neglected Evidence from the Censuses of Taiwan” to the Hong Kong Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Hong Kong, Nov. 10, 2011. On Nov. 11, David Faure, Professor of History, Chinese University of Hong Kong, arranged for Shepherd a round table with his students and colleagues to share information on current research projects. From Nov. 12 to Nov. 15, Prof. Shepherd visited the field site of Anthropology graduate student Julie Starr, who is doing her dissertation fieldwork in Shanghai.
Spring East Asia Center Events

The East Asia Center sponsors a lecture series each semester and co-sponsors a number of other events related to East Asian Studies. In the Spring semester we sponsored and co-sponsored a number of talks and events including:

China Moves in Africa, Speaker: Ambassador David Shin, co-sponsored with Carter G Woodson Institute

Lovesick Japan, Speaker: Mark West from the University of Michigan, co-sponsored with the Anthropology Department

China and East Asian Regionalism, Speaker: Xiao Ren from Fudan University

Patching a Broken Sky: China, Manifest Destiny and Literature, Speaker: Sabina Knight from Smith College

Lunar New Year’s Festival at Fashion Square Mall co-sponsored with Piedmont Chinese Association and the Asia Institute.

Sculpture and Painting from Hozanji, Weeden Lectures for the Arts in Asia, sponsored by the Universify of Virginia Art Museum; Speaker: John Rosenfield, Harvard University, Emeritus

Uno Kozo’s Theory of Capitalist Crises, Speaker: Ken Kawashima from the University of Toronto

Tibetan Medicine and Meditation Symposium, co-sponsored with Arura Medicine of Tibet UVa Tibet Center, UVa Contemplative, Sciences Center, UVa School of Nursing, Page-Barbour, Lecture Series at UVa, South Asia Center, UVa Center for International Studies, Featheridge and Sacred Plant Traditions,

Leisure and Chinese Culture Conference, See below for more details.

Vietnam’s Foreign Policy since the Eleventh Party Congress, Speaker: H.E. Nguyen Quoc Cuong, Ambassador of Vietnam to the United States, co-sponsored with UVa Center for International Studies.

For more information on past lectures, as well as information on upcoming lectures in the Fall, see our website at www.virginia.edu/eastasia/events.html, or find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/UVa.EAC or Twitter @EastAsiaCenter. To join our mailing list send an email to eastasiacenter@virginia.edu.

“Leisure and Chinese Culture” Conference Held at UVA

On April 21st, we hosted a small conference entitled "Leisure and Chinese Culture," sponsored by the US Department of Education, UVa’s Center for International Studies and the East Asia Center. Participants included Timothy Brook of the University of British Columbia, Chih-ping Chou from Princeton University, James Hargett from SUNY Albany, Wilt Idema of Harvard University, Michelle Yeh of the University of California at Davis, as well as our own Anne Kinney, Charles Laughlin, and Ellen Zhang.

The conference extends from Charles Laughlin's 2008 book, The Literature of Leisure and Chinese Modernity, which uses the xiaopin wen form of familiar essay to explore the relationship between traditional Chinese culture and the search for modern forms of artistic expression. The xiaopin wen form is part of a system of late imperial/modern culture that extends well beyond the realm of linguistic art, including appreciation of the performing arts, life in the pleasure quarters, material cultural practices such as art and antique connoisseurship, landscaping and the arrangement of living space, including gardening, interior decoration, furniture and the appreciation of cuisine, tea and incense. What becomes of this culture in modern China, and how does it interact with non-Chinese cultures of leisure?

Chinese leisure culture also extends to intellectual history and debates about the individual, subjectivity, the interpretation of the classics, as well as the relationship between pleasure, sensual experience, and spiritual enlightenment. Here we will explore the question of whether the culture of leisure is a perennial aspect of Chinese culture or a particularly late imperial/early modern phenomenon and its relationship to cultural modernity. Finally, the culture of leisure raises questions about its relationship with counterparts like labor, business and governance—whether they are opposed, combined, or complement each other, as well as the roles of servants, hosts, guests, and performers in leisure activities.
Professor Ronald Dimberg to retire

(Continued from page 1)

Southeast, and one of the audio recordings was even broadcasted on NPR. Professor Dimberg also started teaching a course on Korea as part of the grant.

Most recently, Professor Dimberg has devoted himself to teaching Korean History full-time and building the Korean program at the university. He has taught a three-part lecture series on Korean history and has offered a Colloquium course every semester for specialized subject areas such as North Korean History and Korean Christianity. When it comes to the courses he has taught and subjects he has lectured on, Professor Dimberg does not play favorites. “I’ve thoroughly enjoyed all of them [including the courses on China and Japan],” he said. He does admit however, that he has a hard time keeping himself from talking about Confucianism in his Korean history lecture class because of his early academic work on Neoconfuciansim during Ming Dynasty period of China.

Professor Dimberg does not intend to close the books after his retirement. He plans to continue looking at the unfolding of Korean Christianity, specifically Korean Presbyterianism, as a research interest. Furthermore, he plans be increasingly active in local volunteer organizations. For example he has recently been elected to the board of directors for the organization Advocates for a Sustainable Albemarle Population (ASAP).

While the contributions of Professor Dimberg are vast and numerous, perhaps what he will be missed most for is his dedication to his students. Even with a lecture of more than 100 students, Professor Dimberg makes every effort to meet with all of his students and constantly reminds them of his availability. The East Asia Center salutes Professor Dimberg for all he has done and wishes him the best in his future endeavors.

In the Words of His Students and a Colleague

"Professor Dimberg joined the UVA faculty a short time before I did and was part of the committee that welcomed me to the university. I remember him consistently exhibiting the image and professional qualities of a professor. He was the most well-dressed faculty member. He always showed up to meetings with a coat, tie, and well-coiffed hair. His lectures were always methodically and interestingly organized, and he valued the professor-student exchange very highly. Furthermore, he took on important responsibilities and developed projects that otherwise would have been left undone. The East Asia center, in particular, will go down as one of his many great accomplishments."

- Professor Emeritus Gilbert W. Roy

"I was told by an older student to be sure to take at least one of Professor Dimberg's classes. Four courses in Korean History later, I have made sure to pass on the advice to all my friends. Professor Dimberg has been an indispensable professor, advisor, and mentor to myself and others."

- Sebrell Bryant- 4th Year

"Professor Dimberg is the reason I became a History major. From his lectures, it was clear to me that he is articulate, an expert in his subject matter, and has a sense of humour. In his office hours, he is caring, personable, and an absolute dear."

- Yonji Kim- 4th Year

"Professor Dimberg is one of the most influential professors in my life. Academically, he is absolutely an expert in East Asian and especially Korean history and knows how to clearly teach his subject to his students. Personally, he also takes care of each student's personal matters and understands international students’ cultural differences by being a great mentor."

- Mindy Shin- 4th Year

"Professor Dimberg not only taught me how to improve my scholarship on course subjects, but he taught me how to personally and professionally cultivate myself to become a better human being."

- Jane Kim- Alumnus (Class of 2011)
Outreach and Asia Institute News

By Rachel Stauffer, Asia Institute

As an interdisciplinary organization, the Asia Institute houses faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students who have a variety of areas of expertise and in-country experience in South Asia, East Asia, and Tibet. Currently the Institute seeks to provide outreach to public and private K-12 institutions by extending the immeasurable knowledge and experience of Institute-affiliated faculty and students through the development of custom long- and/or short-term programming for Virginia K-12 students, instructional staff and administrators as well as for business and community organizations across the Commonwealth.

The Asia Institute procured a $5,000 grant from the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership this spring to implement a program for K-12 teachers in any grade level or subject area to participate in a curriculum development project called the Tsunagaru Initiative. In Japanese, tsunagaru means ‘network’ – the goal of this project is to create a network of Virginia teachers who are well-versed in the basics of Japanese language and culture and can work to create lesson plans that will include Japan in standard content areas (language arts, math, science, arts). On February 4th, the Initiative kicked off with a workshop led by Mieko Kawai, Tomoko Marshall, and Tomomi Sato, who taught introductory language, and continued with presentations from Paul Groner (Religious Studies) and Robert Stolz (History). The workshop was a huge success, generating coverage (twice!) by NBC29. The Tsunagaru Initiative is now in its second stage, the request for proposals from workshop participants who will submit ideas for curriculum development. A special thanks to the Japanese lecturers for their invaluable commitment of time and expertise to this project. Coinciding with this initiative is the hope that we will have a coordinator from the Laurasian Institution’s Japan Outreach Initiative (JOI) program next year, who will continue to work with schools to implement the curriculum created this spring.

The Chinese outreach program has been active since January, with volunteers from U.Va’s Chinese Student and Scholar Society (CSSS) visiting schools in Nelson County and Waynesboro. Margaret McNett and Dean Fassassi (Graduate Students in the East Asian Studies program) have also visited schools in Nelson and Roanoke.

Sara Epperly, who teaches Mandarin at Charlottesville High School (and a U.Va alumna and a former participant in U.Va in Shanghai) is taking a group of 12 high school students to Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, and Xi’an this spring. A small amount of Title VI outreach funds is being contributed to these efforts.

Congratulations to Miao-fen Tseng for procuring another STARTALK grant for Chinese language teacher training this summer.

UVA Receives nearly $100,000 in grants to host Startalk

The Virginia STARTALK Chinese Teacher Academy has received federal funding of approximately $100,000 for the fifth consecutive year since 2008. This summer the three-week program will once again be implemented on grounds at UVa. Miao-fen Tseng serves as the program director and key trainer. Teacher participants receive up to five graduate credits on teaching Chinese as a foreign language. Last year, the program recruited 15 teachers nationwide and 24 local high school students for the fulfillment of practicum requirements.

East Asia Center Awards Almost $40,000 in Travel Grants

Approximately $40,000 was awarded this year in travel grants, including 4 faculty members, 5 graduate students and 12 undergraduate students receiving Ellen Bayard Weedon Travel Grants, and 2 graduate students receiving the Irwin S. Penn Memorial Grant.

Several of the students receiving awards will attend language programs, including the UVa-sponsored Shanghai Language Program. Grants awarded for research include:

- Shu-shan Lee (PhD candidate, Politics), who will be travelling to Xiamen, China to do field study research on Chinese understanding of political obligation.
- Christina Robinson (PhD candidate, Religious Studies) will be conducting field research on women’s childbirth rituals on the Tibetan plateau.
- Xinyan Peng is an undergraduate student in Economics and Anthropology. She will be studying the influence of media on the development of tourism in China.
- Thomas Talhelm (PhD candidate, Psychology) was also granted the Weedon (though he will be funded by a Fulbright Fellowship) for his dissertation research on “The Rice Theory of Culture: How Rice and Wheat Shape China Thinks.” Congratulations Thomas!

For more information about grants available, please visit: www.virginia.edu/eastasia/grants.html

SPOTLIGHT on Incoming Student Evan Lord
by Dean Fassassi, East Asia Center

With courses in US-China Relations, China's Constitution, Ethnic Minorities in Chinese Society and Chinese Rural Politics, Evan Lord is getting well-groomed for a promising career in Chinese politics and social affairs. Lord completed a double major in politics and East Asian Studies here at UVa, and is presently at the Johns Hopkins University-Nanjing University Center for Chinese and American Studies, a jointly administered program where academic study is said to be “enriched and expanded through daily social and intellectual exchanges among Chinese and international students and faculty over an extended period of time.” (Source: Hopkins-Nanjing Center, http://nanjing.jhu.edu/about/index.htm). In his own words Lord affirms:

The Nanjing Center is really great; definitely made the right choice in coming here […] We're very fortunate to be able to see for ourselves many of the issues we're studying; in the Social Issues class, while talking about environmental problems, we read an article about pollution control efforts in the Qinhai River, which runs right through Nanjing and is only a quick bus ride from campus. For the Ethnic Minorities class next semester we have an optional field trip to Ningxia and Gansu during our spring break. Plus I've been amazingly fortunate to be able to hear the perspectives of many of my Chinese classmates; my roommate is a rather idealistic young Party member from Beijing, and it’s really interesting for us to challenge each other's viewpoints every now and then.

As much as he's enjoying his experience in China, we are looking forward to welcoming Evan Lord back to UVa. in September of 2012.

Chinese Language Corner Now Twice a Week

This semester the UVa Chinese Corner has expanded to a second meeting on Tuesday 5-7 in New Cabell Hall room 341. The new Chinese Corner is designed for advanced students taking 3rd year Chinese and above, or who have previously reached 3rd year proficiency and need practice to keep up their Chinese language skills. The Thursday program continues to meet and is geared towards beginning Chinese students at 1st or 2nd year level. The Thursday meeting is 5-7 in Monroe 130.

The UVa Chinese Corner provides a place where students of Chinese meet with native speakers of Chinese and practice speaking what they just learned in class, or other topics of interest. The East Asia Center sponsors the event while the Chinese Students and Scholars Society members provide administrative support.
Studying Abroad

There are many opportunities for learning languages that go beyond the few hours per week you spend in the classroom. The faculty of the East Asia Center is united in the awareness of the fundamental importance of language study to the study of East Asia from any discipline or perspective. That’s why we strive to broaden the language environments on Grounds for Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Tibetan, such as our expansion this semester of the Chinese Corner to include a new weekly meeting on Tuesdays 5-7 for learners at the advanced level and beyond—many thanks to the Chinese Students and Scholars Society for helping make this a success! Going forward, the Center will also promote language across the curriculum initiatives and hosting talks given in East Asian languages.

Study abroad is also an essential part of language learning. But students are often bewildered at the variety of opportunities available to them. The choice is easier when UVa has its own program, such as the summer Chinese program in Shanghai. But how do students evaluate the hundreds of other programs available in the summer or during the academic year? Should you go directly to a program run in-house by an East Asian university, to programs located in East Asia but created and managed by American universities, or to commercial businesses who offer language and culture classes? Your language teachers, professors of courses about East Asia, and the International Studies Office are all resources available to you to help you make the right decision, because it does matter. Here I would like to offer two general observations that should narrow down your list a great deal:

1. In most, but not all cases, where there are programs established by American universities or groups of universities

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Highlighting the Founders Student Travel Grant to Asia

In 2002, on the occasion of the retirement of veteran Chinese language teacher Gilbert Roy and historian John Israel, alumni began to contribute to the Founders endowment fund in honor of the faculty who contributed to the founding and expansion of East Asia studies at the University of Virginia. This year history professor Ronald Dimberg, who also contributed to the expansion of East Asian studies as well as to the founding of the East Asia Center, is retiring.

Founders Travel Grant is a special honor to a student planning language work in East Asia, and it supplements the available Weedon travel grants. One or more Founders Student Travel Grants to Asia of $1000 are awarded using the Weedon Travel Grant process. A separate application is not necessary. Contributions continue to be welcome to this fund.

Chinese Language Major Joseph Riley Selected as Truman Scholar

Joseph Riley, who is a third-year student double majoring in the politics honors program and Chinese, has been selected to receive the prestigious Harry S. Truman Foundation scholarship with about $30,000. The scholarship is awarded “college juniors who exhibit exceptional leadership potential and who are committed to careers in government, the nonprofit or advocacy sectors, education or elsewhere in public service.” Congratulations Joseph!

Source: UVA Today
(consortia), those are by far the highest quality in terms of the support they give to students in the field and the quality of their language instruction. Some of the best are names you definitely should know if you are planning study abroad in East Asia, such as Princeton in Beijing and Princeton in Ishikawa, Harvard Beijing Academy, and the Duke Study in China Program (these are summer programs only), the Inter-University Program for Chinese Language Studies (IUP) at Tsinghua University in Beijing, the International Chinese Language Program at National Taiwan University and the Mandarin Training Center at National Taiwan Normal University in Taipei, the Associated Colleges in China (ACC) program in Beijing, CET's programs in Beijing, Kunming, Harbin, and Osaka, the Inter-University Center (IUC) in Yokohama, and the Kyoto Consortium for Japanese Studies in Kyoto (these offer either both summer and academic year programs, or academic year only). There are not currently in-house programs in China that compare in quality to those mentioned above, but in Japan and Korea, there are many good in-house programs such as Nanzan University's Center for Japanese Studies in Nagoya, the Hokkaido International Foundation's program in Hakodate, Ewha Women's University, Korea University, Seoul National University, Sogang University, and Yonsei University. (As far as I know, Korea does not yet have any successful foreign-run programs).

2. The other most important consideration is to find a program that fits your needs. The Ivy League programs and the Inter-University consortial programs stress high-intensity language study at the expense of other aspects of the study abroad experience. The results are extraordinary, and anecdotally this is in no small part due to their location in the field (for example, in 2003-2004, the year of the SARS epidemic, Princeton in Beijing moved its operations to Princeton and the results were far inferior to running the program in Beijing). At the same time, it is possible to have a great program that is less linguistically intense and more about cultural immersion. This kind of mixed program is best suited to first-time visitors to China, as the more intensive programs do not devote as much time and resources to orientation and immersion. CET are the experts in striking a balance between quality language courses and immersion, and have worked for years to integrate the classroom with the environment outside. This principle is applied in all their programs. ACC is also a variation on this model.

There are also other things to think about, such as whether a program specializes particularly in advanced language training, such as IUP and IUC, or focuses more on beginning and intermediate levels (like CET Beijing and to some extent ACC). Another thing that distinguishes IUP and IUC from the others is that the student composition tends to be older, including many more graduate students and local professionals, while CET, ACC, Princeton in Beijing, Princeton in Ishikawa and most of the others are overwhelmingly undergraduate; these differences in student composition end up having a huge effect on the program’s culture. Talk to your advisor or language teacher also about whether the program you are interested in has financial aid, the option to transfer credits, etc.

Finally, for those of you who might be wondering why I have not mentioned the Hopkins Nanjing Center, it is a wonderful program if you are ready to take college level courses in Chinese, but it is quite explicitly not a language program. Students graduating with a strong interest in politics or international studies/international relations are the best fit, and on completion they often go on to do PhDs in Chinese studies or into Law, Journalism, or other professional schools.

So keep actively planning your multi-year strategy for language study, trying not to pause your language studies even in the summers, for at least the first three levels (beginning, intermediate, and advanced). And if there is any way the East Asia Center can help make your decision easier, we will do our utmost to provide you with support and advice.