



*The University of Virginia*

# east asia center NEWSLETTER

*Winter 2002*

## FEEDING THE HUNGRY GHOSTS

*A unique Chinese Buddhist ritual comes to U. Va.*

A group of monks and nuns of the Foguangshan Buddhist Order based in Taiwan will be coming to the University to perform an uncommon and unique Chinese Buddhist rite known as “The Rite of Universal Liberation.” This rite — which will be performed in the Newcomb Hall Ballroom on Saturday, March 30 — is rarely performed in the West and will be a first at an American university.

Inspired by translations of an Indian Buddhist text in the seventh century, Chinese Buddhists have weaved together a culturally and historically diverse collection of ritual texts, oral traditions, meditative techniques and operative styles over a period of almost a millennium to give birth to what is one of the most colorful, rich, complex and enchanting Chinese Buddhist meditative rite that is still performed today. Apart from its ancient Indian roots and unmistakable Chinese heritage, it also reveals Tibetan influences dating back to the thirteenth century.

The idea of holding such an exhibition showcasing the cultural and spiritual heritage of Chinese Buddhism arose rather fortuitously this past summer at a meeting between the Abbot of Foguangshan Buddhist Monastery, Venerable Hsinting, and Hun Lye, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Religious Studies. Lye, with support



COURTESY HUN LYE

**Members of the Foguangshan Buddhist Order will perform the Rite of Universal Liberation at the University of Virginia on March 30 in the Newcomb Hall Ballroom.**

from a Weedon Travel Grant awarded through the East Asia Center and a Huskey Travel Grant awarded through the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, traveled in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan to research this “Rite of Universal Salvation.” In Taiwan, he interviewed the Abbot, who is an acknowledged authority on this special rite, and the Abbot generously offered to send a delegation of monks and nuns to the University of Virginia to perform this rite for an American — and primarily academic — audience unfamiliar

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## From the Director

Dear Colleagues and Friends of the East Asia Center:

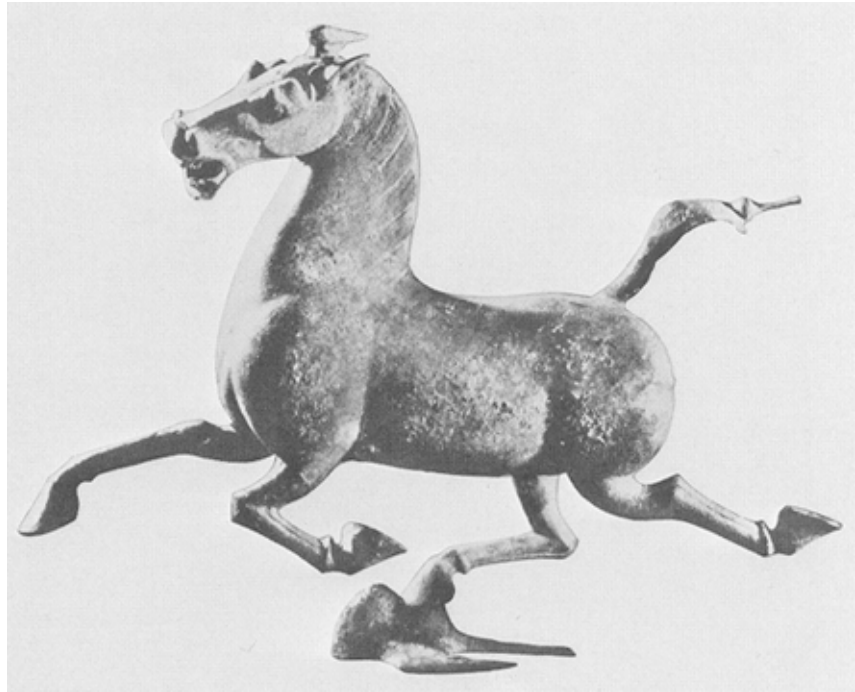
On February 12, 2002, we will usher in the Year of the Horse — the zodiacal sign associated with decisive action, fiery romance, historic turning points, and frequent travel. Chinese astrologer Shelly Wu advises you to “seek a healthy balance between deliberation and action,” to “avoid excessive physical or emotional escapades,” and “to think, reflect, and ‘look before you leap’ in 2002.”

The East Asia Center will see a new year that is in complete harmony with the energy and forward movement associated with the Year of the Horse as we launch our new study abroad program in Shanghai and travel abroad to explore ways to share scholarly resources with Chinese universities and libraries.

We also hope that in this year we will finalize exchange programs with several Japanese and Tibetan institutions. A live performance of a Buddhist ritual to appease hungry ghosts and a new Asian film series are just two of the exciting programs the East Asia Center will sponsor this semester (see a complete list in this newsletter).

Also, as part of your celebration of the new year, plan to visit “Year of the Horse: Chinese Horse Paintings,” a special exhibit that opens on February 10 and which runs through September 2 at the Freer Gallery in Washington, D.C. Finally, on behalf of all the staff of the East Asia Center, we wish you a Happy New Year!

— Anne Kinney



## New Students

The East Asia Center is pleased to welcome three new students into the M.A. in East Asian Studies program. Miya Lee entered the program in the fall, and Michael Brannen and Seth Snider joined us this semester.

**Miya Lee** received a B.A. in History from the College of William and Mary in 2000. She enters the program with a strong research background — as an undergraduate, she completed an extensive research project on the seventeenth century African-American slave community in Virginia. After taking courses in philosophy and East Asian religion, she became interested in the varied experiences of Asian women and the roles that women play in shaping Asian cultures. Fluent in Korean and proficient in Chinese, she writes that her current area of interest is “the connection between nationalism and feminism in East Asia.”

**Michael I. Brannen** earned a B.S. in Criminal Justice from Missouri Western State College in 1990. A cap-

tain in the U.S. Army, he chose upon promotion to that rank to become a Northeast Asia Foreign Area Officer, with a Japanese specialization. This program, he explains, is designed to train military officers to support the American embassy’s Defense Attaché. Mike has completed a 16-month Japanese language program at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, Calif., and, most recently, an assignment in Seoul, Korea, for additional language and military training. His goals in the program are to improve his proficiency in Japanese and to focus on Japanese economics. He also expresses interest in foreign policy and government in Japan, China and Korea and identifies security issues facing the region as his largest area of concern. He looks forward to serving in Japan or Korea with the Department of Defense and, as he puts it, moving “from being a policy analyst and executor into becoming a policy maker.”

See **STUDENTS**, Page 9

# THE RITE OF UNIVERSAL LIBERATION

**RITUAL**, from Page 1

with and unexposed to the richness of the Chinese Buddhist heritage.

Traditionally, this rite is performed at the behest of an entire community for the universal relief of the plight and suffering of all beings, with special emphasis on the miseries of a class of supernatural beings known as "hungry ghosts." The term "hungry ghosts" refers to a state of being in which one is tortured by the sufferings of discontentment, emotional and spiritual hunger, and thirst for peace and rest. "The Rite of Universal Liberation" is believed to contribute significantly to the pacification of physical, mental and emotional unrest and the healing of the individual person and the larger community.

Although it is a highly valued rite, it is not very commonly performed as there are not many Chinese monks or nuns who are fully trained in its performance. The advent of communism

in China and the mass destruction of Chinese Buddhist monasteries during the Cultural Revolution have severely diminished the number of qualified celebrants of this rite. In recent years, a revival in interest and training in this rite has occurred both in China and in Chinese communities abroad. As the Foguangshan Buddhist Order is one of the largest Chinese Buddhist organizations in the world today, it has invested itself in the revival of this rite among its order of monks and nuns in over a hundred monasteries and chapters around the world.

The rite, that normally takes about four hours to complete, will be performed in two segments on Saturday, March 30, in the Newcomb Hall Ballroom. The first session will commence at 10:00 a.m. and the second will begin at 1:30 p.m. Interested members of the University and local communities are encouraged to attend both sessions if possible. Admission is free but

limited to 300 seats. Please plan to arrive at least fifteen minutes before the scheduled commencement of each session.

The timing of this performance coincides with the University of Virginia Library's celebration of the future Stanley and Lucie Weinstein Buddhist and Asian Studies Library at the University. Professor and Mrs. Weinstein recently announced their decision to bequeath their entire personal library of over 10,000 volumes to the University.

In conjunction with the performance of the rite, University of Kansas Associate Professor of Religious Studies Dan Stevenson, who specializes in the history and development of Chinese Buddhist rituals and liturgics, will give a talk, "Troublesome Crossings: The Chinese Buddhist Rite of Water and Land and Distribution to Hungry Ghosts" at 3:00 p.m., March 29, in Campbell Hall 158.

## MONROE LANE LANGUAGE HOUSE

Opening in the fall of 2002, the Monroe Lane Language House will provide approximately 75 students at the University of Virginia the unique opportunity to live for an academic year in an environment of total language immersion in Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, Hebrew, Hindi-Urdu, Persian, or Italian. Modeled after similar houses for other languages, the Monroe Lane Language House will serve as the cultural and linguistic center at U.Va. for these languages.

The Monroe Lane Language House is located at the corner of Jefferson Park Avenue and Monroe Lane, across from the Student Health Center. Along with the already-existing Casa Bolívar and La Maison Française, the Monroe

Lane Language House is one of the foundations of the Language Precinct at U.Va., and is a convenient five-minute walk from Central Grounds and the Lawn.

The Housing Division of the University of Virginia is spending over seven million dollars on the building, which will consist of seven residential blocks, one for each language. Each block will house a native- or near-native-speaking language assistant who will help organize a weekly language table as well as other cultural events. Students can opt for single- or double-occupancy rooms, and the cost per bed is similar to that for other focused housing on Grounds.

The house is open to any full-

time U.Va. student who can demonstrate at least a first-year competency in one of the relevant languages.

Although priority is given to students taking classes in one of the seven languages, the house will also be open to international students and to heritage students who can demonstrate the necessary linguistic proficiency. Acceptance to the house will be based on an application completed by the student and evaluated by a committee of faculty members.

For further information, interested students should contact AMELC Lecturers Helen Shen (for Chinese, [hs5h@virginia.edu](mailto:hs5h@virginia.edu)) and Mako Koyama (for Japanese, [mk8q@virginia.edu](mailto:mk8q@virginia.edu)).

# A TICKET TO CHANGFENG PARK

## *Discovering the oddity of the everyday*

By Brantly Womack

DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

On Friday, June 29, 2001, at 5:55 a.m. by the shore of the lake in Changfeng Park, Shanghai, I saw an old woman hanging from a tree. She was in her late sixties and was wearing a cotton dress, and her tree was next to a pavilion where old men were talking as if nothing unusual were going on. For the next two weeks, as I visited nearby East China Normal University, I saw her hanging there on my morning walk around the park, and there were others hanging around as well. But among the backwards-walking head-bangers and arm-twirlers, they fit right in.

China is not known for the public display of eccentricity. On my first visit there in 1978 everyone was still wearing blue Mao jackets. Now fashion has arrived, so everyone wears what everyone else wears, and pretty much does what everyone else does. But not in the park at dawn. People are dressed in everything from spiffy exercise suits to pajama bottoms, and the variety and confusion of exercises makes for a very pleasant morning mind-boggle.

All this is happening at very close range, by American standards. Except for the sword people and the backwards-walkers, who are given plenty of room, people walk right at each other and flick past at the last moment, often touching but rarely bumping. I used to think that this was due simply to a difference in personal space, but there is something more. I walk as if I'm driving. I accelerate, change lanes, allow for braking distance and so on. Actually, it's kind of silly at three miles per hour. Chinese walk as if they are walking, steadily flexing into spaces that I don't see. The problem is that they also drive as if they are walking.

A few blocks away from the park's main gate it is already clear that something is in the air. In the usual crowd of people buying their morning vegetables and fried things, old people are shuffling silently, all in the same direction. It is reminiscent of a crowd scene from *Night of the Living Dead*, except they don't look hungry.

With the humidity at 110 percent in the sun, my fogged

glasses enhance this zombie effect. People pass purposefully by the cart of bamboo gadgets (brushes, back-scratchers, rug-beaters, etc) run by a man who could be Ho Chi Minh's brother, by the display of genuine American T-shirts ("Los Angeles Eagles"?), by the sellers of lotus roots and lucky charms. They don't even stop at the gate to pay the

entry fee (Following their example I didn't stop either for the first few days, and then I found out about the monthly tickets).

The park consists of a decent-sized lake with smaller lotus ponds, all woven together by narrow paths and occasional pavilions and small open areas. The park has an aquarium and water park, as well as sundry boats for rent, but the facilities aren't open early in the morn-



ing.

On the paths there is something going on around every bend. I saw a tall, thin man in T-shirt and shorts with a washrag on his head and one leg propped high on the fence, a spitting image for John Cleese preparing to do a funny walk. The backwards-walkers cluster in the straighter parts of the paths. Evidently backwards-walking isn't effective unless one does strange things with the arms, either slapping them up over the shoulder, or sideways, or simply banging the forehead. There are a few fishermen working with very long bamboo poles and very short lines, as if the bait is supposed to lure the fish within spearing range.

Group exercises go on in the open areas, but the overall impression there is even more chaotic than on the paths. There is always more than one group in an area, and there are never two groups doing the same thing in the same place. Sword dancing troupes rub shoulders with badminton players, usually without incident. Each group has its own music or chant, so it sounds like Charles Ives's *Fourth of July* played by a Chinese orchestra. Besides the familiar main courses of Tai Chi, fan-twirling and ballroom dancing there are exotic side dishes of synchronized hand-wringing and shoulder-shrugging.

There are educational activities as well. A man walked  
See **PARK**, Page 5

## STUDY ABROAD IN SHANGHAI

Undergraduate students wishing to study abroad in Asia now have an exciting opportunity to do so with the University of Virginia's new nine-week program in Shanghai, China. Coordinated and accompanied by U.Va. faculty, the program is ideal for students who have never traveled to China. For those students with more advanced language skills and travel experience, the program will also provide ample time for independent travel.

The program is directed by Helen Shen, a lecturer in the Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures, and History Professor Chen Jian, and hosted by the East China Normal University (ECNU) in Shanghai. Language courses will be taught by ECNU faculty, and Professor Chen will teach a course in Chinese history and culture. One of the program's highlights will be language partners — ECNU students who have volunteered to serve as language conversation partners and peer mentors as students explore Shanghai. Optional non-credit courses include martial arts and calligraphy. Students in the program receive U.Va. grades and credits which can easily be applied towards graduation requirements. In Shanghai, students will be housed in double-occupancy rooms at ECNU (single rooms may be available upon arrival for an additional fee paid to ECNU).

Students will attend courses daily (except Saturday and Sunday), and participate in group field trips/excursions. The program includes many opportunities for independent and group travel, field trips, and excursions, beginning with a seven-day excursion from Beijing to Xian. Other trips will include excursions to Suzhou, Hangzhou, and sites close to Shanghai.

One of the largest port cities in Asia, Shanghai is a dynamic and exciting city situated on the central-eastern coast of China on the mouth of the mighty Yangtze River. Despite its illustrious commerce, it is also a city of paradoxes — poverty is prevalent while international financial institutions thrive. Students in the program will have a unique opportunity



Shanghai has long been thought of as one of China's most cosmopolitan places, as this magazine cover from 1928 suggests.

to intensively study language while immersing themselves into the community and culture of Shanghai.

Interested students should contact Ms. Shen for further information on the program, or Study Abroad Director Sandi Smith, in the International Studies Office, for information on applying to the program.

## CHANGFENG PARK, *continued*

**PARK**, from Page 4  
by pushing a baby-carriage and chanting numbers in the Shanghai dialect, causing permanent linguistic damage to the baby. A group of old men did exercises to a tape of numbered English proverbs — “3: Knowledge is the mother of virtue. 4: Experience is the mother of wisdom. 5: Saddam Hussein

is the mother of ... .” The 6:00 a.m. news can be heard at irregular intervals as people with Walkmen go by. Walkmen have arrived in China, but evidently headphones were not included in the shipment.

Changfeng is a lovely park, and, being a possessive American individualist, I'm sure that if I were the only

one in it I would consider myself lucky. But there is something very refreshing about walking by women and men hanging from trees and from the awnings of closed amusement stands. It puts normalcy in perspective.

*Brantly Womack is Professor of Government and Foreign Affairs.*

# Spring Lectures and Events

## DEMON IN A SUMMER ROBE

*Katsura Yukiko (1931-1991)  
and the Avant-Garde*

**ALICIA VOLK**

Department of the History of Art  
Yale University

**Feb. 8, 4 p.m., Campbell Hall 158**

## THE DYNAMICS OF THE U.S.- JAPAN-CHINA TRIANGLE

*The Shift of Power Distribution and the Change  
of International Relations*

**QUANSHENG ZHAO**

Professor of Comparative and Regional Studies  
School of International Service  
American University

**March 1, 4 p.m., Cabell Hall 345**

*co-sponsored by the*

*Department of Government & Foreign Affairs*

## THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A TIBETAN BUDDHIST HERMITESS

**KURTIS SCHAEFFER**

Associate Professor of Religious Studies  
University of Alabama

**March 18, 4 p.m., Minor Hall 225**

*co-sponsored by the*

*Center for South Asian Studies*

## TROUBLESOME CROSSINGS

*The Chinese Buddhist Rite of Water and Land  
and Distribution to Hungry Ghosts*

**DAN STEVENSON**

Associate Professor of Religious Studies  
University of Kansas

**March 29, 3 p.m., Campbell Hall 158**

*co-sponsored by the*

*Department of Religious Studies*

## JAPANESE AND AMERICANS IN THE TRANSNATIONAL WORKPLACE

*Identity and Idealization*

**ELLEN FULLER**

Lecturer, Studies in Women and Gender  
University of Virginia

**April 5, 4 p.m., Cabell Hall 345**

## TELLING DEMOCRACY

*How Japanese Men and Women  
Talk About Politics*

**ROBIN LeBLANC**

Assistant Professor of Politics  
Washington and Lee University

**April 12, 4 p.m., Cabell Hall 345**

## MISPERCEPTION AS A FACTOR IN U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS

*Notes for a Research Agenda*

**BRUCE REYNOLDS**

Professor, McIntire School of Commerce  
University of Virginia

**April 19, 4 p.m., Cabell Hall 345**

# UPCOMING LECTURES

## *Spring series begins with Japanese art, international relations*

The East Asia Center's spring 2002 lecture series features an array of prominent scholars in such diverse fields as modern Japanese art, East Asian international relations, Tibetan religious literature, Chinese Buddhist ritual, and contemporary Japanese politics. The complete schedule of lectures can be found on Page 6 of this newsletter. All lectures are free and open to the public.

Alicia Volk, a doctoral candidate in the Department of the History of Art at Yale University and a visiting lecturer at Northwestern University, will speak on the Japanese avant-garde painter Katsura Yukiko (1913-1991). Though most women of Katsura's generation painted in the traditional *nihonga* mode — a mode which

tended to romanticize and reinforce traditional gender roles — Katsura worked in the "Western-style," which was considered masculine, intellectual, and inappropriate for female artists. Her choice of artistic idiom and her success among the artistic avant-garde and the artistic establishment make her an ideal case study for gender issues in modern Japanese art. Volk, who took her B.A. at the University of Virginia, will present her talk, "Demon in a Summer Robe," at 4 p.m. Friday, February 8, in Campbell Hall 158.

Quansheng Zhao, professor and division director of Comparative and Regional Studies in the School of International Service at American University, will give a talk, "The Dynamics of the U.S.-Japan-China Triangle:

The Shift of Power Distribution and the Change of International Relations," at 4 p.m. Friday, March 1, in Cabell Hall 345. The talk will be co-sponsored by the Woodrow Wilson Department of Government and Foreign Affairs. Zhao, also an associate-in-research at the Fairbank Center for East Asian Research at Harvard University, has published extensively on East Asian international relations.

On March 18, the University of Alabama's Kurtis Schaeffer will speak on Tibetan Buddhist autobiography in a talk co-sponsored with the Center for South Asian Studies. The series also features talks by McIntire School of Commerce Professor Bruce Reynolds and Studies in Women and Gender Lecturer Ellen Fuller.

## *The Margaret Morgan Coughlin Award*

### IN ASIAN HISTORY

#### ELIGIBILITY

Graduating fourth-year students, any major, with 12 hours of credit in Asian studies, including 6 hours in Asian history; commitment to pursue Asia interests in graduate school, in professional school, or in a career.

#### PRIZE

- \$2,500
- up to \$1,500 for airfare to Asia
- award certificate
- recognition in graduation ceremonies

#### TO APPLY

The application deadline is Wednesday, March 20. A complete application will include an application form, a transcript, two supporting letters, a 500-word statement of purpose, and an academic paper of at least 1,000 words from an Asian history course. Please see <http://www.virginia.edu/~eastasia/coughlin.html> for more information.

# Faculty and Student News

C. K. Yen Professor of Chinese-American Relations and Professor of History **Chen Jian** published a new book, *Mao's China and the Cold War* with the University of North Carolina Press in June 2000. He gave two talks about this book in September, at the George Washington University (GWU) and at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

He has also recently published several chapters and articles, including "Beijing's Changing Policies toward Taiwan: A Historical Review," in *The United States and Cross-Straits Relations: China, Taiwan and the U.S. Entering a New Century*, edited by Kenneth Klinkner (Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies, University of Illinois, 2001); "Re-reading Chinese Documents: A Post-Cold War Interpretation of the Cold War on the Korean Peninsula," in *Ending the Cold War in Korea: Theoretical and Historical Perspectives*, edited by Chung-in Moon (Yonsei University Press, 2001); and "Problems Concerning China and the International History of the Cold War" (in Chinese) in the *Journal of East China Normal University*, No. 5., 2001.

In May, Professor Chen appeared as a commentator on the French television program "Histoire parallèle." In June, he organized an international conference, "Sino-Soviet-American Relations and the Transition of the Cold War" in Shanghai. Also while in Shanghai, he gave a keynote address, "Changing Chinese-American-Soviet Strategic Relations during the Post-Cold War Age" to a conference, "Changing Societies in Russia and other Countries." In late August, he was a discussant in a BBC television program commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of Mao Zedong's death, "Inside the Mind of Mao," aired by the BBC World Service on September 12.

In October, he gave a keynote address on the study of the international history of the Cold War at an event

marking East China Normal University's (ECNU) fiftieth anniversary. He also gave a keynote speech at "The Legacy of Korea: A Fiftieth Anniversary Conference" at the Truman Presidential Library and the University of Missouri-Kansas City, and gave a presentation on Mao's China and the Cold War at the Miller Center of Public Affairs.

Early in December, Professor Chen presented a paper, "The CCP's Changing Relations with Moscow during the War of Resistance against Japan," at the Seventh International Conference on Sino-Japanese Relations in Washington, D.C. Later in December, he gave two speeches at Peking University and a series of speeches at ECNU, all on topics about the international history of the Cold War.

He has recently completed editing a documentary briefing volume on the Chinese-American rapprochement in the early 1970s, which will be used for an international workshop on the Chinese-American opening to be held at GWU in February. Also in February, Professor Chen will give a presentation at an international conference commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the U.S.-China Shanghai Communiqué.

Professor Chen and **Chen Zhihong**, lecturer in the Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures, have translated Odd Arne Westad's *Cold War and Revolution* into Chinese, to be published by Contemporary World Press in Beijing later this year.

Government and Foreign Affairs Professor **Brantly Womack** published "How Size Matters: the US, China and Asymmetry" in the December issue of *Journal of Strategic Studies*.

Assistant Professor of Art History **Dorothy Wong** published an article, "The Making of a Saint: Images of Xuanzang in East Asia," in the *Early Medieval China*. She has also recently been appointed to serve on that journal's editorial board.

History Professor **John Israel** will be in China on a Fulbright research grant from February to August, on a project entitled "The 'Fifty-five Educated Youth: A Portrait of China's Sixties Generation.'"

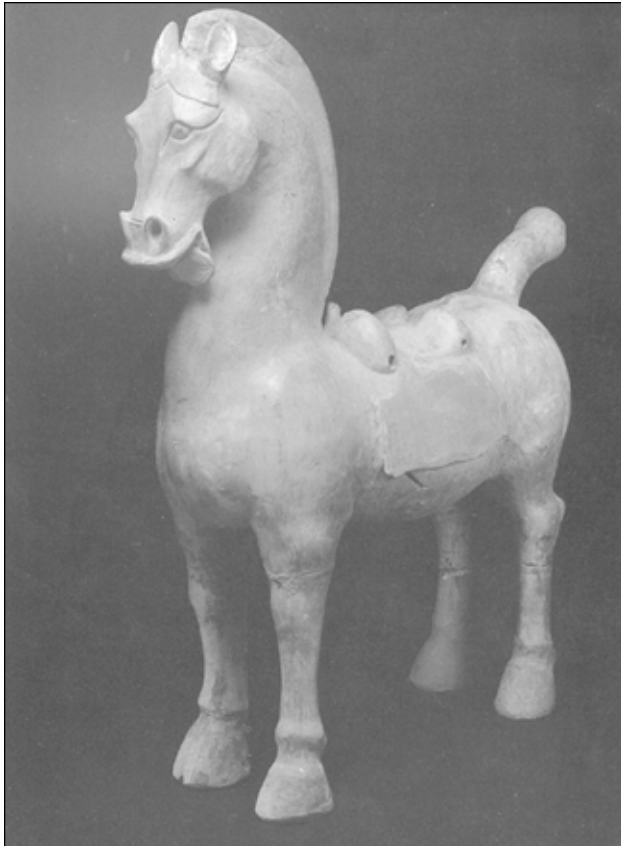
Asian and Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures Librarian **Ming Lung** and East Asia Center Director **Anne Kinney** received a University Librarian Project Grant to create a searchable version of an early Chinese text, *The Spring and Autumn Annals*, and to make it available online in both English and Chinese for the first time.

The grant includes funding for scanning equipment. The project, "Opening the Closed Book of Chinese Texts: A Prototype Demonstration of a Searchable Chinese Text for Faculty and Students," is a collaborative effort on the part of Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures, Alderman Library, and the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities.

**Matthew Rosefsky**, a student in the M.A./M.B.A. program in East Asian Studies, has left for Tokyo, where he will be an intern with the Sumitomo Chemical Corporation.

**Robert Watts**, a fourth-year Foreign Affairs major, received a Harrison Undergraduate Research Award for research last summer on the effects of the Three Gorges Dam project on Chongqing Municipality. He also presented a paper based on his research at the meeting of the Southeast Regional Conference of the Association for Asian Studies in Chattanooga, Tenn., in January.

**Kate Palmer Kaup**, a recent U.Va. Ph.D. in Foreign Affairs who is now an assistant professor at Furman University, was recently featured in a front page article in the *People's Daily Overseas Edition*. The article discussed Kate's research on the Zhuang minority in Yunnan and Guangxi, which began as her dissertation research and led to her widely acclaimed book, *Creating the Zhuang*.



## New Students

**STUDENTS**, from Page 2

*J. Seth Snider* received a B.S.F.S. (Foreign Service) in International Economics from Georgetown University in 1998. He has had an array of educational experiences in Asia — he studied abroad at the Shanghai American School and the Seoul International School and is proficient in Japanese.

He wrote an undergraduate thesis entitled “Restoration or Renovation: Which force dominated the Western reception of law in Japan?” and his primary work experience and his continuing area of interest lies in conflict resolution. He has been working in Washington, D.C., for firms working in international law, helping with documents relating to border disputes in African nations. He writes that he is pursuing our program “to analyze and understand Asian techniques of interstate conflict resolution as current Western approaches may not provide adequate rectification.”

The interdisciplinary M.A. in East Asian Studies combines study in the social sciences and humanities with advanced language training. The East Asia Center also offers, in conjunction with the Darden School of Business, a joint M.A./M.B.A. program in East Asian Studies. For more information, please see the East Asia Center website at <http://www.virginia.edu/~eastasia>.

## ADVENTURES IN RAILROADING

### *Fourteen unforgettable hours in the heart of China*

**TRAIN**, from Page 10

one family — an old grandmother, mother, and infant child who sat in two of our seats, begging us to let them stay. As a result, two of our number had to stand throughout the trip, which we did in shifts.

However, with extra people squeezed into the seats, and almost no leg room because of the people sitting under the tables, where one’s legs should have gone, sitting wasn’t necessarily much better. On a two-person bench seat where we had our two seats, an old peasant woman (with whom we had generously “agreed” to share our seat) continually made liberal use of her sharp elbows in order to carve a little more space for herself on the edge of our seat.

At 7:15, our ordeal almost at an end (our scheduled arrival time was 7:30), the train stopped at a station well before Huangshan. The train waited there for a long time, and while we were waiting, another train pulled up along side of us. The other train was a luxury train, and our car was next to the dining car of the other train. We could see passengers being served by waiters, eating caviar while drinking champagne. Perhaps these last details are not entirely accurate, but by that point I may have been halluci-

nating. In any case, compared to our car, it seemed to be unimaginably luxurious, how I might have previously imagined the Sultan of Brunei’s personal yacht would look like.

After inexplicably remaining stopped at that station for an hour and a half, and having watched the luxury train arrive and leave again, our train departed, and we finally arrived at Tunxi (the train station for Huangshan) at 9:00. We jumped off the train, and someone in our group took a picture of the train. We were just glad that our ordeal was over, and we went and found a hotel room, and promptly fell asleep for the remainder of the day.

I don’t mean to give a bad impression of Chinese trains or traveling in China — this was the only bad experience I had on a Chinese train, and I traveled on many other ones, both hard sleeper and hard seat. Experiences I had in China were among the best of my life, and I would strongly encourage others to travel in China. However, the 14 hours spent on that train remain the most unforgettable event of my semester abroad.

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*Nick Higgins, a fourth-year Asian Studies major, received a Weedon Travel Grant for language study in China.*

# RIDING THE RAILS

## *A Weedon Grant recipient reveals his adventures on the Chinese railroad*

**By Nick Higgins**

Last summer, I traveled to China on a Weedon Grant to study Chinese language in Beijing. Overall, my experience was amazing, particularly camping at Huangshan (Yellow Mt.), which has the most spectacular natural scenery I have ever seen. Furthermore, I am now life-long friends with my companions from that trip.

To some degree, this is largely because we have been through so much together. One train ride — from Nanjing to Huangshan — was perhaps my most memorable experience in China, and one of the most difficult. It was during the National Day fall break that five friends and I embarked on a ten-day trip. I had traveled by train in China before, but we had no idea what was in store for us on this particular journey.

With the Chinese train system, one can only buy tickets from the station from which the train will leave, so we could not buy our tickets for Huangshan until we got to Nanjing. In terms of travel, National Day in China is like Thanksgiving in the United States — extremely busy — and Huangshan is one of the most popular destinations for Chinese tourists. By the time we bought our tickets, the only seats still available were hard seats. For a 14-hour overnight train ride, we really wanted to have sleepers, but there was nothing we could do.

At the train station, a gigantic mass of people awaited the opening of the gate to the quay. Once the doors opened, a frenzied stampede of people wielding their bags like weapons surged forward in a no-holds-barred free-for-all to get onto the train. To make matters worse, one of my friends



COURTESY NICK HIGGINS

**When Weedon Grant recipient Nick Higgins boarded his train for Huangshan, he had no idea what was in store for him on his 14-hour journey.**

got knocked down and dropped her ticket, so we had to push back against the waves of people to look for her ticket. We later found out the reason this occurs is that many people buy standing-room-only tickets, and so, understandably, they want to get onto the train and grab a seat, in case the person who has that ticket does not show up. Also, the room in the overload luggage bins quickly gets filled up, as we discovered when we had to hold our heavy bags in our laps the entire trip.

The train itself was the most crowded, densely populated space I have ever been in for any period of time. Bench seats meant for two actually held three or four people, and the seats for three had five or even six

people squeezed in. Literally every square inch of floor space was filled, including the aisles, even under the tables between the seats, where people sitting in the seats are supposed to put their legs. Many people stood as well,

and there were even a couple of nimble people who managed to sit up in the overhead luggage bin! At many points throughout the trip, I would have said the train was

as full as possible, but somehow at every stop, one or two dozen more people would get on the train! To this day, I still have no idea how that was possible, and where those people went.

Of course, when we got on, our seats were already occupied. We convinced everyone to move except for

*Literally every square inch of floor space was filled, including the aisles, even under the tables between the seats ...*

See **TRAIN**, Page 9

# THE ELLEN BAYARD WEEDON EAST ASIA TRAVEL GRANTS

**E**ach year the Grants Committee of the East Asia Center allocates money to be used to defray the cost of travel to East Asia by University faculty members and students. These funds may be used to cover all or part of a round trip airfare between Charlottesville and East Asia. Travel within an East Asian country will not be covered by a Weedon travel grant.

## ELIGIBILITY

The Ellen Bayard Weedon travel grant is available to any University of Virginia faculty member or student who:

- Intends to spend at least two weeks in East Asia pursuing study or research.
- Agrees to be in residence at the University during the subsequent academic year.
- Agrees to share with the University community knowledge and experience acquired in East Asia through lectures, colloquia, seminars, media presentations, etc.

In addition, student applicants must intend to enroll in structured programs offered by accredited academic institutions in East Asia, or plan to pursue a specific research project.

## TRAVEL GRANT AWARDS

Applicants intending to spend two to eight weeks in East Asia under the conditions outlined herein may apply for a travel grant to cover **partial (25% or more)** round trip air fare between Charlottesville and East Asia.

Applicants intending to spend eight weeks or more in East Asia under the conditions outlined herein may apply for a travel grant to cover **up to full** round trip air fare between Charlottesville and East Asia

Under special circumstances students and faculty members may apply for **up to full** round trip air fare

regardless of length of stay in East Asia, provided the trip has a sound and genuine professional or academic purpose, i.e., to attend a professional conference, to conduct research that can only be conducted in East Asia, etc.

These travel grants **cannot** be used cover the following: (1) trips designed to enable a student or faculty member to simply “visit” East Asia, (2) in-country travel, (3) program and/or conference fees, (4) lodging and accommodations.

## SELECTION CRITERIA

Travel grant applications shall be judged according to the selection committee’s assessment of the quality of the applicant, the intellectual and academic cohesiveness of the applicant’s project, and financial need. Preference shall be given to the applicants who have not recently been to East Asia and, in the following order, to:

1. research, language and cultural study;
2. participation in study tours;
3. participation in conferences.

No single travel grant shall exceed one-third of available funds, and normally no more than half of the available funds shall be allocated to faculty members.

## APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Student applicants must submit three (3) copies of the application forms, two (2) supporting letters of recommendation from U.Va. faculty members, and a U.Va. transcript.

Faculty applicants must provide a letter detailing their plans and anticipated travel costs. Application forms are available at the East Asia Center, 224 Minor Hall, and online at <http://www.virginia.edu/~eastasia>. Completed applications are due at 5:00 p.m. February 15, 2002 and should be returned to the East Asia Center.

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*To stay informed of East Asia-related events at UVa, join the East Asia Center's electronic mailing list: send an e-mail to [majordomo@virginia.edu](mailto:majordomo@virginia.edu). In the body of the message, type **subscribe easiauva**.*

# Calendar

- Feb. 8 **Lecture, 4 p.m., Campbell Hall 158**  
Alicia Volk on Japanese artist Katsura Yukiko  
*East Asia Center Lecture Series*
- Feb. 12 Happy New Year!
- Feb. 15 Weedon Travel Grant applications due, EAC office
- March 1 **Lecture, 4 p.m., Cabell Hall 345**  
Quansheng Zhao on U.S.-Japan-China relations  
*East Asia Center Lecture Series*
- March 18 **Lecture, 4 p.m., Minor Hall 225**  
Kurtis Schaeffer on Tibetan Buddhist autobiography  
*East Asia Center Lecture Series*
- March 26 **Lecture, 7 p.m., Minor Hall Auditorium**  
"The U.S. and China after September 11: Same Bed, Different Dreams," David M. Lampton, Professor of Government, Johns Hopkins  
*Issues of War and Peace Lecture Series*
- March 29 **Lecture, 3 p.m., Campbell Hall 158**  
Dan Stevenson on Chinese Buddhist ritual  
*East Asia Center Lecture Series*



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