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Dear Friends,

*In my first year as Director, I am delighted to welcome three new colleagues specializing in the East Asian field: Professors Hajime Nakatani in Chinese art history, Griet Vankeerberghen in early Chinese thought, and Margaret Kuo in modern Chinese history. We introduce their teaching and research in this newsletter. Their fascinating work will bring fresh intellectual breadth to our program and enrich the course offerings of East Asian Studies at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.*

*The academic year 2004-2005 has certainly been an exciting one in East Asian research. Two of our senior faculty members, Professors Margaret Lock and Kenneth Dean, received prestigious awards from the Killam Foundation for path-breaking research in their respective fields. We proudly feature the details of their achievements and projects in this newsletter.*

*Our students participated enthusiastically in a number of East Asian Studies conferences and events. In particular, they enjoyed the great success that was the Japanese Experimental Film Festival organized by Professor Anne McKnight. Many also practiced diligently for the Chinese and Japanese Speech Contests and some won top prizes for their creativity, hard work, and performance. Some of our graduate students also presented their research at a number of national and international conferences, while others have won prestigious university and Canadian fellowships. We are very proud of their achievements.*



*The crowning event of the year was again Korean Culture Night, organized by students in the Korean language courses and attended by several hundred in the audience. Korean Studies is an important component of East Asian Studies. We are looking ahead to developing it at McGill. We are fortunate to have the enthusiastic support of the Dean of Arts, Professor John A. Hall, who will be working with the Korea Foundation to raise matching funds for an Endowed Chair in Korean History and Culture. We also look forward to your generous support in our efforts to develop East Asian Studies at McGill.*

Warm regards,



Grace S. Fong  
Director, Centre for East Asian Research

## Prof. Kenneth Dean awarded Killam Research Fellowship

**M**cGILL'S East Asian Studies Professor Kenneth Dean has received a Killam Research Fellowship, one of Canada's most prestigious research grants awarded by the Canada Council for the Arts. The award supports scholars engaged in projects of outstanding merit and enables them to devote two years to full-time research and writing.

Professor Dean's project on "*Irrigation and Individuation: Regional Ritual Networks in the Irrigated Putian Plain*" examines the correlations between a 1000 year-old irrigation system and some 130 regional ritual alliances that have

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## Prof. Margaret Lock: Killam and Trudeau Foundation Prize Winner

**A**PRIL has been a busy month for Dr. Margaret Lock, McGill University's Marjorie Bronfman Professor in Social Studies in Medicine. Awarded a Killam Prize by the Canada Council for the Arts on April 25, Prof. Lock was also named one of this year's five Trudeau Foundation Fellows on April 28. The Killam Prize is an award of \$100 000 given annually to exceptional



Margaret Lock  
Marjorie Bronfman  
Professor

Canadian scholars in the fields of health sciences, natural sciences, engineering,

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Chinese Bridge Conference: Chinese Language Teaching/Learning in Canada

**C**HINESE language and culture are growing more prominent every day, and many have labeled this century “The Chinese Century.” It was therefore fitting that McGill hosted the first annual *Chinese Bridge: Conference on Chinese Language Teaching/Learning in Canada* on December 4, 2004.

The conference was supported by China’s National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language, and was attended by Education Counselor Madame Shi Shuyun and First Secretary Dai Zhehua of the Education Section of the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China. The event was the first of its kind, bringing together thirty Chinese teachers from across Canada

who attended presentations and took part in numerous discussions. Along with McGill’s Chinese language teaching staff – which included conference organizer and coordinator Prof. Bill Wang – the event’s attendees included teachers from the Université de Montreal and the University of British Columbia.

The one-day conference was designed to stimulate conversation about the various issues pertinent to today’s Chinese teachers who, up until now, have had few opportunities to discuss the various issues and challenges they face in the classroom. Although similar conferences have been held in the United States, this event was created in order to provide a Canadian

perspective to those who teach Chinese in this country. Topics that were discussed included the changing demography of the students in today’s classes, advantages and disadvantages presented by the textbooks currently used, and the growing role of e-learning in the Chinese classroom.

It was clear that, by the day’s end, the first Chinese Bridge had been a success. Those involved decided to form the Chinese Teachers’ Association of Canada, an organization to facilitate continuing conversation between Chinese teachers in Canada and provide helpful information to its members. □

### Lock

(Continued from page 1)

social sciences and humanities. The Trudeau Fellowship prize is \$150,000 paid over three years and is awarded annually to five Canadian or foreign nationals for their knowledge and ability to build an intellectual community supporting scholarly work. Joined this year by four McGill colleagues awarded prizes by the Killam Program and the Trudeau Foundation respectively, Prof. Lock gained exceptional recognition by winning both prizes in the same year.

Trained as a cultural anthropologist and recognized to be an expert in medical anthropology, Prof. Lock’s research has focused on aging and reproductive and transplant technologies in Japan and North America. Prof. Lock has been the recipient of numerous awards and grants, and is the author of many internationally acclaimed publications. Published in 1993, *Encounters With Aging: Mythologies of Menopause* in Japan and North America won six prizes, including the Staley Prize of the School of American Research, the Canada-Japan Book Prize, the Wellcome Medal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and the Eileen Basker Memorial Prize of the American Anthropological Association. Based on Prof. Lock’s comparative research findings, the book presents an argument for recognition of the inter-

dependence of biology and culture when researching life cycle transitions. Among her most recent publications, *Twice Dead: Organ Transplants and the Reinvention of Death* was the product of 12 years of research and won the British Sociological Association’s Sociology and Illness Book of the Year Award. *Twice Dead* examines the creation of the concept of brain death and its formal recognition as the end of human life in order that organs for transplant could be legally procured; the book compares the political, medical and moral responses to the organ transplant enterprise in Japan and North America. Both *Encounters With Aging* and *Twice Dead* have been translated into Japanese, as have many of her articles.

Prof. Lock has also done extensive research in Japan into both the revival of traditional medicine and the embracing of newer technologies, such as reproductive technologies which may be used to accommodate Japanese society’s expectations of normality by facilitating the creation of “planned families.”

Prof. Lock’s current research focuses on emerging knowledge about Alzheimer’s and psychiatric disease as a result of findings in molecular and population genetics. She is examining the social implications of the gradual routinization of genetics testing for late onset complex disease. □

### Prestigious Order of the Sacred Treasure for Prof. Ikawa-Smith

**I**T was announced on April 29 that an Order of the Sacred Treasure, Gold Rays with Rosette, is to be conferred on retired Professor of Archaeology in the



Department of Anthropology, Prof. Fumiko Ikawa-Smith, for contributions towards promoting academic interchange between Canada and Japan, and towards greater understanding about Japan in Canada. The ceremonies will take place on May 20 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and at the Imperial Palace in Japan. Prof. Ikawa-Smith was Director of the Centre for East Asian Research from 1983 to 1988. □

## McGill Harvard-Yenching Ming-Qing Women's Writings Digitization Project

**A**N exciting new resource, the McGill-Harvard-Yenching Ming-Qing Women's Writings Digitization Project, born of the cooperative efforts of the Department of East Asian Studies, McGill's Digital Collections Program, and the Harvard-Yenching Library was officially launched on May 12 of this year. The project marks a giant step forward in uncovering contributions made by women to Chinese culture and society by providing scholars, researchers and students with digital access to texts of Chinese women's literature, history and culture from the Ming-Qing Period.

As Project Editor, Professor Grace Fong has seen the project through from its initial stages of negotiation and formal inception in June 2003:

"My interest in women's self-representation in the restrictive gender regime of Confucian China led me to research extensively in rare book archives in China, where writings by women in late imperial China are usually preserved. In the process, I discovered a multitude of women's voices, some preserved in handwritten manuscripts, some in printed collections, in the form of poetry and prose. The general inaccessibility of these materials led me to the idea of using new technology to make them more available for research, by digitizing these texts and putting them on the web. I therefore turned my attention to the small but significant corpus of women's writings in the Harvard-Yenching Library, whose director James Cheng was very interested in the potential for research the digitization of these texts would bring about."

Working with a superb technical team directed by David McKnight, Digital Collections Librarian, and a group of student assistants for data entry supervised by Project Metadata Manager Zhang Zhongda, Prof. Fong oversaw the construction of an extensive database which supports numerous browse and search functions and the design of the website for the project. By means of this search engine, researchers and students will be able to search for specific information on authors

and titles and on literary form and content through keyword and compound searches and browse functions, and to generate various kinds of data and statistics related to contexts, such as biographical, geographical, and publishing information.

"The access to the data fields of these texts and contexts will provide a rich gendered perspective on Chinese culture and society," states Prof. Fong. "They will further complicate the official and orthodox perspectives that have tended to inscribe women as passive and subordinate."

Prof. Fong recently held a planning meeting on May 15 at McGill for an international conference to be held at Harvard next year around the materials and technological resources generated by this digitization project entitled "Ming-Qing Women's Writings: Exploring New Technologies and New Research Potentials." Prof. Fong will co-organize the conference with colleague Prof. Ellen Widmer of Wesleyan University, a pioneering scholar in research on Ming-Qing women's literary culture. The planning meeting was supported by the American

Council of Learned Societies/Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation under their new funding initiative "New Perspectives on Chinese Culture and Society." Next year's conference will have the additional support of the Harvard-Yenching Library and the Fairbank Center for East Asian Research, Harvard University.

"Since late February, the unofficial 'pre-launch' website has had several hundred hits," Prof. Fong remarked before the official launch of the project, "and I have received very enthusiastic responses from the designated group of graduate students and colleagues who have used it. Somehow, it has already been listed as a link on the website of the University of Washington Library."

The McGill team is delighted by the immediate and enthusiastic reception of the project's website and would like to express their gratitude to the many whose vision and generous funding have supported its realization, among whom are: the Drs. Richard Charles and Esther Yew-pick Lee Foundation, Mrs. Amelia Wong, the Harvard-Yenching Institute, the Richard H. Tomlinson Digital Library Access Award, the Dean of Arts Development Fund, Mr. Arthur Lau and Prof. Robin Yates. To access the McGill-Harvard-Yenching Ming-Qing Women's Writings Digitization Project, visit <http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/mingqing/>



D I G I T A L . L I B R A R Y .  
M C G I L L . C A / M I N G Q I N G

### Prof. Deborah Davis of Yale University: Consumer Revolution in Shanghai

**I** attended Prof. Davis' talk with great interest because I was eager to find out how a sociologist connects China studies with general theoretical debates in sociology. She situates the debate on income inequality and argues that existing measurement on growth and income based on figures such as GDP per capita may not truly reflect the transformation China has experienced in the past two decades. Rather, she proposes to use "consumption"

as a measure of income and suggests that a study of consumption power may be a better way of capturing the real changes in the average standard of living in both urban and rural China. Prof. Davis reviewed the policy changes that allowed for the rise of the consumer revolution. Her research focuses on housing reform and the issue of property rights, because a major way of consuming wealth in China is by building

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## Melodrama at 4th Annual Kinema Club Conference

**I**N October 2004, faculty, students and alumni from EAS participated in the fourth “Kinema Club” conference. This collective of scholars, writers, film industry and students has been participants in a lively on-line discussion group for ten years. This version of KC featured participants from Quebec, elsewhere in Canada, the U.S., and Japan. The focus of the conference was melodrama genre with great currency in Japanese theatre and literature, as well as in film, since the 19th century.

Melodrama is currently a resurgent research topic in the field of film studies for three reasons: for the last century, it has enjoyed far-flung popularity, in both high culture arenas (such as serious literature) and low culture arenas (such as comics and



Miike Takashi: Iconoclastic

“barnstorming” kabuki plays); because melodramas allow new media styles and kinds of expression to meet and draw on earlier styles of modern theatre and film; and because melodrama is presently a popular way of framing serious historical issues under discussion in contemporary Japanese media, including the relation of Japan and Korea, as seen through melodramatic romances in Japanese TV’s “Korean wave” boom of 2004-5.

The conference featured 5 presentations: on iconoclastic director Miike Takashi’s use of melodrama in horror film; on how girls’ fiction in the early 20th century incorporated melodrama into its style and design; on why the animé Millennium

Actress chose to map its romp through history by framing its historical events in melodramatic terms; on the use of multiple languages in films about modern romances in colonial Japan; and, lastly, a project on how postwar animation theory analyzed “the commodification of everything,” to analyse the rise of neo-liberalism.

In keeping with the group’s usual DIY spirit, the conference was held in a theatre-conference space called Cinésalon, run by a documentary film-maker, nestled in the artists’ galleries in the Belgo building in downtown Montreal. This version was organized by Anne McKnight, and was attended by Grace Fong, Sharon Hayashi, Tom Lamarre, Tom Looser, and Hajime Nakatani. The group’s fifth conference will take place this summer in Tokyo. □

## Japanese Experimental Film Festival

**F**ROM January 7<sup>th</sup> through January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2005, Montrealers had the rare and exciting opportunity to partake in JPEX: *Japanese Experimental Film & Video 1955-Now* screenings and roundtable discussion. These short films were rarely, if ever before, screened in North America. Montreal was the only Canadian stop on the JPEX tour after being shown to sold-out crowds in New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago. This event took on even greater importance to the McGill Community as it was organized by our own Professors Anne McKnight and Sharon Hayashi. Students, faculty, and other interested spectators packed the de Seve Cinema at Concordia each and every night of the festival.

The three nights of screenings were split up based on 3 major themes: Sex Underground, Exploded Visions, and Expanded Visions. Sex

Underground explored issues of sexual pathology, homosexuality, the male gaze, and emotional abuse. The emotional impact of these pieces solicited responses ranging from disgust to anger to delight. Indeed, that was much of the point. Expanded Vision featured psychedelic and pop-art short films, many of which shaped postwar anime, while Sunday’s Exploded Visions explored modern political ideologies of nationalism and nationhood, as well as critical views of Japanese political movements. The favorites of JPEX were Taku Furu-kawa’s *Coffee Break*, Maki Idemitsu’s *At Santa Monica*, and Saito Yukie’s



*Benighted but Not Begun.*

Rarely do Montreal events bring such a large inter-University spectatorship, but JPEX managed to bring together students and faculty from UQAM, Université de Montréal, and McGill in order to view such an outstanding series of experimental Japanese films. After the extreme success of this event, Professor Hayashi has been looking into screening a series of independent Japanese films in Fall 2005 on campus. For more information, contact her at [shh@gol.com](mailto:shh@gol.com). Thanks to Dean John Hall for his generous contribution, which allowed JPEX to come to Montreal. All East Asian Studies students at McGill and in the rest of Montreal look forward to more rare East Asian cinematography. □

## Speech Contests

### CHINESE SPEECH CONTEST

The Chinese Speech Contest was held on March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2005 at the Université de Montreal and was co-organized by McGill Professor Bill Wang and U de M Prof. Yu Hongju.

McGill students did particularly well in this year's Chinese Speech Contest, with several students winning awards. In **First Level**, Lindsay Strogatz won third prize, with her speech about her recent trip to Hong Kong. In **Second Level**, Natalie Gibb won third prize with a speech that lamented the overabundance of automobiles in Montreal. Adrien Brody, who spoke about his experience at the recent protest against American president George Bush, won second prize. William Bonaldo won second prize in the **Third Level** category with a speech that described his escapades in the Nankai Summer Exchange program. Discussing his year abroad studying in Singapore and the overseas Chinese, Daniel Suss won first prize in the **Fourth Level** category – his third consecutive win in three years.

Daniel was also selected to be a contestant for the fourth International "Chinese Bridge" Speech Competition in Beijing. If he wins, he will be the recipient of a scholarship to study in China from the Chinese government.



*Finalists, judges and organizers pose for photos*

The Centre for East Asian Research would like to thank the Education Office of the Chinese Embassy for making this event possible.

### JAPANESE SPEECH CONTEST

The 16th Japanese Language Speech Contest of Quebec took place at McGill University on Saturday, March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2005. The contest was hosted by the McGill Department of East Asian Studies and organized in collaboration with the Consulate General of Japan at Montreal. The 30 participants were students from McGill University, the Université de Montréal, the Université du Québec à Montréal, the Montreal Japanese Language Centre and the GEOS Language Academy. McGill students won the following prizes:

**Beginner's Category** (3 minute speech)  
**3<sup>rd</sup> prize:** Ms. Maya Orzechowska,  
*"Kurosawa and his Movies"*



*Beginners' 3rd place winner Maya Orzechowska with McGill Prof. Miwako Uesaka*

**Advanced Category** (5 minute speech)  
**1<sup>st</sup> prize:** Ms. Joo Yong Chun,  
*"A Dog that Tamed me!"*  
**3<sup>rd</sup> prize:** Mr. Zachary Dovel,  
*"The Mysterious Number of Colours"*

**Open Category** (5 minute speech)  
**2<sup>nd</sup> prize:** Ms. Emily Nakada, *"Vimy Ridge"*

All winners received prizes and certificates presented by the Consul General of Japan, Mr. Nobutaka Shinomiya. All first place winners went on to compete in the finals rounds of the National Speech Contest which took place at York University in Toronto on Sunday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2005.

## Dr. Jin Wu brings the Expeditions of Zheng He to McGill

**T**HE former Minister of Education of the Republic of China on Taiwan, Dr. Jin Wu, gave a lecture hosted by McGill's East Asian Studies Department on March 1, 2005. Dr. Wu, an internationally renowned oceanic scientist and professor at both the University of Delaware and Cheng Kung University, spoke about the achievements of Zheng He, the Muslim eunuch admiral whom some claim was the first discoverer of the Americas.

After receiving his orders from the Yongle Emperor to display the glory of the Ming dynasty and to collect tribute from the "barbarians from beyond the seas", Zheng He embarked upon seven expeditions from 1405 to 1430. Zheng He thus managed to traverse the oceans earlier than his European counterparts on ships that were far ahead of their time. Among other features, the innovative

ships featured water tight compartments; they were also the first ships to be built as "duck vessels", so they could more easily stay afloat. Moreover, the ships were also huge; a typical ship measured 400 feet long – in comparison, Columbus' flagship was 85 feet in length.

However, although these ships and Zheng He's voyages were incredible achievements, Zheng He's political opponents ensured that all of the ships were burnt after his last voyage. Virtually all material concerning the ships was destroyed, leaving little record of their existence.

The lack of a reliable record about Zheng He's voyages is what drives the dedicated efforts of Dr. Wu. He noted the many scientific, technological and historical aspects of the voyages that are worthy

of study. Dr. Wu emphasized that through the combined efforts of the world's scientists, engineers and historians, more insights can be gained on Zheng He's expeditions. The aim he had with his lecture was to spur some of those sitting in the room to commit to those efforts. These mutual efforts, according to Dr. Wu, would not just serve to improve relations between China and Taiwan – but would also highlight the global significance of Zheng He's accomplishments.

For sharing his continuing efforts to bring the accomplishments of Zheng He to light with the McGill community, the Centre for East Asian Studies Research would like to thank Dr. Jin Wu. □

## New East Asian Studies Department Professors

### Griet Vankeerberghen

**P**ROFESSOR Griet Vankeerberghen was appointed Assistant Professor in the Departments of East Asian Studies and History at McGill University in August 2004. Having completed her undergraduate studies at the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium, with degrees in Western Philosophy and Chinese Studies, Prof. Vankeerberghen then went on to earn a Ph.D in East Asian Studies at Princeton University. Prof. Vankeerberghen has taught at California State Polytechnic University, and currently teaches a variety of courses related to Chinese and East Asian culture and history at McGill.

It was during her pursuit of her first degree in Western Philosophy that Professor Vankeerberghen first became interested in Chinese history and culture, particularly Chinese philosophy. Finding her initial undergraduate education rather Eurocentric, Professor Vankeerberghen found herself intrigued by a course she took in her last year of undergraduate

studies which dealt with the problem of cultural relativism in philosophical studies. This course spurred on an interest in Chinese philosophy, and her continued study of the subject resulted in the pursuit of a degree and, eventually, a doctorate in Chinese studies.

Professor Vankeerberghen's research is primarily focused on the intellectual history of the late Warring States and Han Periods. She is particularly interested in how the literary and philosophical traditions that were consolidated in that era were formed and their subsequent effects on China.

Among her published works, the most recent is *The Huainanzi and Liu An's Claim to Moral Authority* published by Albany State University Of New York Press. In this book, Dr. Vankeerberghen examines the enigmatic Han era text which was written by numerous authors and covers a range of topics. It is a text which, according to Prof. Vankeerberghen, can yield multiple interpretations, depending on the angle from which it is perceived. Rather than a philosophical text, Professor

Vankeerberghen sees *The Huainanzi* as a political and legal text.

Professor Vankeerberghen is also clear in her enthusiasm for her new McGill appointment. She comments on her colleagues' enthusiasm towards students and her own appreciation of students' enthusiasm towards learning. A dedicated member of the McGill teaching staff, Prof. Vankeerberghen has a great desire to challenge her students. She has a penchant for using primary sources as opposed to secondary sources, even in her more basic level classes, because she feels that they more directly express the feelings and values of the time periods dealt with in her courses. Prof. Vankeerberghen also favors instructional methods such as weekly essays, which compel her students to consistently keep up with their reading in her course.



Photo: Silke Force

Prof. Vankeerberghen

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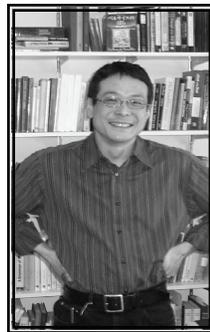
### Hajime Nakatani

*A native of Tokyo, Professor Hajime Nakatani was appointed to the Departments of East Asian Studies and Art History at McGill University in August, 2004, after having received a joint Ph.D. in Art History and Cultural Anthropology from the University of Chicago and teaching East Asian Art at Rice University in the US. Prof. Nakatani's scholarly interests include the intersection of Art History and Media Theory, with particular focus on the "graphic regime" in early and medieval China.*

**Interviewer:** Could you explain to us what the "graphic regime" is?

**Nakatani:** I'm considering the fact that writing seems to have such a central place in Chinese culture. Texts are revered. I'm thinking of the authority of writing. It's not only that what was written was important, revered and kept, but also how the system of writing itself was thought to reveal some

cosmological pattern. There's a whole set of beliefs and ideologies tied to the perception of writing. If you start looking further, there are various systems, like the symbols of the *Book of Changes*, that are related to writing in various ways and are thought to have particular power or access to knowledge that would be otherwise inaccessible.



Prof. Nakatani

When you look at all these things together, you start seeing a system of thought, a way of understanding the world which is very much grounded in written symbols, and it goes beyond writing in the strict sense. So that's what I call "graphic regime": things like calligraphy, or painting. I use the term to designate a set of inter-relations.

**I:** You mentioned the *Book of Changes*, a text on which you plan to offer a course.

How essential do you think it is for students of EAS to be familiar with that particular text?

**N:** I want to use the *Yijing* as a nexus of a number of concerns: divination, philosophical and intellectual history. Then there are various popular religious practices that also use the *Yijing*, and certain thinking about art is also tied to the *Yijing*. Since the *Yijing* uses images, it became a reference for people who think about pictures. So the *Yijing* can be used as example of how a canonical text stands at the intersection of various cultural concerns, and by doing so can also give you an idea of how canonical texts functioned in China.

**I:** What are your current research interests?

**N:** Now I'm working on a manuscript that looks at the graphic regime in the Six Dynasties. The transition of the Han Dynasty to the Three Kingdoms— that's the period I worked on in my dissertation. The Han Dynasty interests me because it's very much tied to the formation of the imperial

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## New EAS Associate Members

### Sarah Turner

*As part of an exploration of marginalized groups within Southeast Asian societies, Professor Sarah Turner's research focuses on socio-economic and political processes that shape the "informal sector", highland marketplace dynamics, and identity and subjectivity in specific locales. Her study of small-scale enterprises in urban Southeast Asia has led to **Indonesia's Small Entrepreneurs: Trading on the Margins**, published by Routledge in 2003. The year before, 2002, Sarah, a New Zealander, was appointed to McGill's Department of Geography (and made associate member of the Department of East Asian Studies) where she currently teaches Development and Southeast Asian Geography.*

**Interviewer:** Your research in Southeast Asia is on-going [Prof. Turner was in Hanoi and Sa Pa last June]. Could you tell us what you have been looking at in particular

recently, and what your latest findings have been?

**Sarah Turner:** The Hanoi work that I'm doing started off looking at change over time in a specific trading area called the Ancient Quarter. It was looking at the small scale entrepreneurs who work there and how they survived through a number of different types of economic and political rule. More recently in Hanoi I've been talking to a number of young, small-scale entrepreneurs, and considering the idea of social capital, that is, how they're using networks and connections to succeed, how far-flung these connections are, do they just rely on their family to help them or do they have help in the broader community, who do they trust to help them get ahead, and so



Prof. Turner

on. My co-author Nguyen An Phuong and I were pleased to hear the other day that this work is to be published in *Urban Studies* later this year. In Sa Pa, a Northern highland area close to the Chinese border, my research is a continuation of a 3-year research project funded by SSHRC and FQRSC. Specifically I'm looking at commodity chains, what are all the connections along the way and who are the people involved, what are the power relations involved and what are the gender relations.

**I:** What is it like to collaborate at such a distance and how might your work as a teacher and graduate studies supervisor here give you insight into your research?

**ST:** Ideally I'd be there three or four months every year but it's hard to do with other work commitments. We have different collaborators doing field work for us in Vietnam, and we have graduate students

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### Margaret Kuo

*Margaret Kuo was born in Taipei, Taiwan and raised in Southern California. She received a B.A. from the University of California, Los Angeles, then went on to earn a degree in Law from Georgetown University Law Center, and finally returned to UCLA to pursue graduate studies in History. She recently completed a year as post-doctoral fellow at the Center for East Asian Studies, Stanford University and was appointed to teach modern Chinese and East Asian History in the McGill University History Department in Fall 2004.*

**Interviewer:** You started off by studying law, with a special interest in the promotion of social justice, and then went on to complete graduate studies in History and post-doctoral studies in East Asian Studies. Could you describe this process for us?

**Margaret Kuo:** Sure. Years ago when I was doing my undergraduate work I was debating between law school and graduate school in history. Law school was three

years versus graduate school in Chinese History which is something like eight to nine years. I decided to go to law school. And I just found going to law school and practising law not to be personally fulfilling, and decided that I really did love history and wanted to be writing history, Chinese History in particular, and I should spend my life doing what I enjoy. So I made the change.



Prof. Kuo

**I:** In your year as a post-doctoral fellow at Stanford, you were particularly interested in pursuing research in law as a site of historical conflict between sentiment and power. Could you talk a little about this?

**MK:** After spending the years writing my dissertation on formal law and legal codes and case records, what I was finding was that a lot of human behaviour and how individuals regulate their behaviour has a lot less to do with any kind of formal written

code and more to do with other kinds of codes, mores and attitudes which can be loosely categorized under the notion of sentiment. Many outcomes in legal cases can never be explained just by the factual record or the written law but have more to do with the emotional appeals that women are able to draw upon or the kinds of moral nature they are able to convey in a courtroom.

**I:** One of the courses you're teaching is the Asian Diaspora: Chinese Overseas.

**MK:** Yeah. The title is a bit misleading. We're studying overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia, Canada, the United States as well as Europe, and comparing the early history of male, migrant labourers, to some of the more recent history of family reunification and how various factors like state policy and China's international status, local conditions, economic conditions all play into various decisions that overseas Chinese have made to either stay or go back to China, and whether they should bring family members. It's an interesting class because it has so much contemporary relevance, especially in Canada where Chinese

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As always, McGill's annual Korean Night was a triumph. Organized by Professor Myunghee Kim and her students, Victoria Shin, David Sturgeon, and Glen Yu – the event was a combined effort, involving McGill students, Montreal's Korean community, the Korean Consulate and a host of others. The Shatner Ballroom was filled to capacity on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2005. The people inside were eager to see performances that displayed and celebrated Korean culture, and to eat the delicious Korean meal that awaited them at the end of the evening.

## Korean Night 2005



This year's event began with a performance of a traditional Hwa Gwan Dance, followed by opening remarks by the

Chair of the East Asian Studies Department, Professor Grace Fong and Rhee Soo-Taek, the Korean Consul General in Mont-

real. This was followed by a series of musical performances, which included a special percussion performance led by Han Kwang Soo, who had organized national percussion performances in Korea prior to his arrival in Canada. The classic play, "Hengbu and Nolbu", was also performed. The program concluded with a Korean Drum Dance. This elicited a standing ovation from the audience, and reflected the successful nature of the evening. □



### Nakatani

(Continued from page 6)

order, which means the formation of a bureaucratic system centrally revolving around text production: bureaucrats write and then they classify their texts. But they were also producing commentaries on various canons. The notion of canon itself emerged a little bit before the Han, but it was with the Han that it became codified. So I'm interested in the transition of this first systematization to the various permutations that happened.

**I:** You've carried out research in Japan, London, the USA and now you've come to teach in Canada. Do you find the methods and approaches in the field change?

**N:** There are definitely differences in scholarly tradition. In the Chinese case, there is the Chinese way of reading texts. Especially what's called *Kaozheng*, which pays very close attention to the physical text, which is not as present in North America. By this I mean the material form of the texts themselves, the different versions; it's very much a Qing Dynasty legacy of scholarship.

**I:** What are you hoping to bring to this department of East Asian Studies.

**N:** I was happy to find out about the interest in visual media that already exists in this department. I would like to be part of that and add to the strength of the department. Also, East Asian studies has become defined by an area; if people don't work hard to make connections with the outside it tends to become this isolated thing. Hopefully I can be one of the many bridges to other disciplines and perspectives. □

### Vankeerberghen

(Continued from page 6)

Along with her efforts in the Departments of East Asian Studies and History, Professor Vankeerberghen is also extensively involved in the innovative Arts Legacy Program that is being offered by McGill to undergraduate freshman students for the first time next year. The program, which will enroll 176 students next year, is an alternative to the freshman year program that is currently being offered. Students who are accepted into the Arts Legacy program will spend their year studying courses which are specifically designed and devised by professors such as Professor Vankeerberghen, and are meant to highlight and prompt reflection on a variety of themes relevant to the students and to modernity. □

### Turner

(Continued from page 7)

who are going over for longer periods of time and are part of the research program. The students are working on topics broadly associated with our projects so that's wonderful in terms of new information we can all gain and share.

**I:** Next winter you'll be co-teaching a Geography course in Barbados. Could you tell us about that?

**ST:** It's a ten day trip that the department runs every second year. It's a hands-on way that students at the 400 level can look at a country that's developing and all of the issues that go with it. We look at a broad range of topics like waste management concerns for small islands, gaining enough fresh water, coastal, marine and reef problems, social issues like tourism

and beach access, and trading sites such as markets: a host of issues that span physical and human geography. The students complete a series of exercises to become acquainted with the island and to understand the differing opinions on different aspects of the local people. Finally, they have a three day project in groups and have to tackle a certain issue that they've come across. The students had a ball last time and the projects were really impressive. □

### Kuo

(Continued from page 7)

are the largest visible minority.

**I:** In the course, you explore alienation and identity in Chinatown, and relations between overseas Chinese and China. How do you locate yourself in all of that?

**MK:** It's an interesting question, how Overseas Chinese relate to Chinese in China, because of what's been taking place in the PRC over the past 10-15 years. You see a lot of Overseas Chinese taking advantage of the cultural connections they can make with China, language skills and economic network game, which I generally tend to not be engaged with because I'm an academic and am not looking to China as a major business opportunity, or way to make money. I know a lot of students in my class are interested in Chinese History because of what's taking place in China now and they want to work in China or they want to do business in China, but I'm hoping that when they come away from the class they'll appreciate the richness of the history that has nothing to do with making money. □

## Guest Speakers 2004-2005

### Professor François Laruelle

Department of Philosophy  
Université de Paris X Nanterre

Lecture: *"Penser est-il démocratique?"*

May 5, 2004

### Professor Deborah Davis

Department of Sociology, Yale University

Lecture: *"The Consumer Revolution in Shanghai"*

November 25, 2004

### Professor Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto

Department of Modern Japanese Literature and Film  
University of New York

Lecture: *"Kitano Takeshi and Global Cinema"*

February 21, 2005

### Dr. Jin Wu

Director of Water Resources Research Centre

Director of the Research Institute for Public Affairs

Cheng Kung University

Lecture: *"Zheng He's Seven Voyages (1405-1433):*

*Historical Background and Contemporary Significance"*

March 1, 2005

### *Paul Hsiang Lecture Series on Chinese Poetry*

### Professor Zhang Longxi

Professor of Comparative Literature and Translation  
Director, Centre for Cross-Cultural Studies  
City University of Hong Kong

*History, Poetry and the Question of Fictionality*

April 7, 2004

### Professor Zong-qi Cai

Professor of Chinese and Comparative Literature  
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

*Yijing Cosmology and the Regulated Verse Form (Lüshi)*

April 8, 2005

### Dean

*(Continued from page 1)*

developed between the 600 villages within the Mulan irrigation system in Putian, Fujian, China. The study is based on a survey of ritual activities, temples, gods, and lineages within these 600 villages, conducted over 5 years (1998-2003).

Professor Dean has been studying these ritual alliances, their practices and their modern-day significance for many years.

Having had the opportunity to participate in ritual alliances himself in Fujian province in Southeast China and work closely alongside temple leaders and ritual masters, Prof. Dean has been able to observe how Chinese popular religion is "diffuse" rather than "institutional", allowing it to be continuous yet open to transformation. This led him to co-author an article with departmental colleague Prof. Thomas La-



*Procession in front of a Mazu temple during the Lantern Festival 2005*

marre, which examined Chinese ritual alliances in relation to a discourse of modernity. Now, Prof. Dean is focusing on uncovering how these ritual alliances may relate to subdivisions of the wide-spread irrigation system in place in Putian.

"Part of the challenge is to correlate environmental factors with administrative, institutional and historical factors," says Dean, "The fact that this irrigated plain has now arranged itself into about 130 regional ritual alliances has a history to it. We're trying to understand where they arose from, at what point they arose, how they spread and at what their significance is now."

Professor Dean has hypothesized that one of the factors that affected the distribution of the alliances was the mutation of the sub-administrative systems of the early Ming Dynasty when the first Ming emperor, Zhu Yuanzhang, set up an altar to the soil and the harvest in every subsection of China and required regular rites to be

*(Continued on page 10)*

### Davis

*(Continued from page 3)*

houses: the issue of homeownership could not have taken place in a pre-1979 socialist regime.

The figures Prof. Davis presented are stunning: by now, 85% of the residents (non-migrants) in Shanghai live in their own houses (compared to 67% home ownership in the U.S.). This transformation of material life from tenant to owner has occurred in a remarkably short period. Prof. Davis pointed out that this consumption-driven reform has given rise to the consciousness of consumer rights and a consumer rights movement. Even the Communist Party (CCP) has embraced the rhetoric of consumer rights. Prof. Davis concluded by suggesting that perhaps this individual-based movement and the privatization of homeownership might pave the way for transformation at the institutional level and, thus, imply the possibility for a civil society to emerge in China.

The talk captured well the transformation that is taking place in urban

*(Continued on page 10)*

## Dean

(Continued from page 9)

performed at these altars by his administration. 50 years after they were established, these altars began to merge with popular temples dedicated to local gods, of whom Prof. Dean has discovered around 1200.

“The god of the soil will go from the classical tablet on an open air mound of earth to an anthropomorphic representation, a statue of a god,” explains Dean, “And will be given other titles by local people. In other words he’ll become a full-fledged member of the local pantheon, even though he’s represented in many different regions.”

What happened next, according to Prof. Dean, was that the combined altar to the soil and temple spun off second generation temples, especially in the regions where villages were constantly reclaiming lands from the sea (by land drainage) and themselves expanding into new villages. These new villages would take incense from the former altar and use it to set up the second generation temples.

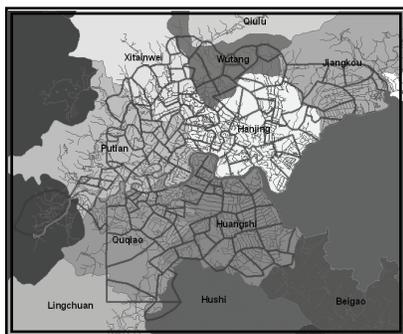
“And so you get a pattern-forming mutation of this classical altar system into a form of political alliances as these things become a nucleus to a new set of temples,” concludes Dean.

However, the formation of these ritual alliances may have been fruit of another cause. As new land was developed and new villages established, the region was subject to all kinds of historical onslaughts brought on by pirate invasions during the late Ming. This, along with floods and disease, led to the collapse of the irrigation system.

“The system had to be constantly maintained,” says Dean, “I mentioned the system of evolution of the altars and how they linked into the nucleus of a new system, but another possibility which we’re exploring has to do with the ecological limits of the system. We think that during the Ming there began to be a

great deal of contesting of the symbolic centre of the irrigation cult to the founder of the irrigation system: Li Hong.”

Li Hong, who founded the irrigation system in 1083, worked with fourteen “ancestors” who lived along the main canal and donated land and labour to help create the system, and consequently were worshipped. In the Ming, however, someone claiming to be Li Hong’s descendant showed up and requested official permission to have Li Hong



Map of Regional ritual alliances (red lines) over the Mulan irrigation system in the townships of the irrigated Putian plain

listed in the register of sacrifices, but demanded that the cult to the other 14 ancestors be eliminated. This angered the descendants of the 14 ancestors, but the problem was that the outspoken individual was backed by a group of people who had recently developed the land and were getting water

from the canal, thus drawing water away from the others. The root of the argument therefore focused on who was getting water from the system. Both groups were backed by elite families and officials who had been through the Confucian examination system and were able to walk into the magistrate’s office to work out their disagreements in the backrooms of the Yamen. But the environmental issues were such that neither could use that Confucian network peaceably and it seems that both groups simultaneously set up a temple alliance in their immediate region to draw upon a much larger group of villagers and people involved in local cults to back up their claims on the irrigation system.

In summary, the central hypothesis concerns the gradual downloading of maintenance of the irrigation system from the state to various forces in local society. The latter evolved away from literati-based, lineage-centred elites into regional ritual alliances based in temples dedicated to popular gods. These regional ritual alliances developed flexible modes of organization, and more complex modes of mobilization of local village life and labour.

“We’re interested in the impact of

temple alliances as opposed to lineages, because in a lot of other parts of China, say the Pearl River Delta, it was lineage formation that drove social change and a Confucian blueprint of model lineage was applied to local society,” says Dean. “But we’re arguing that lineages in this area play a somewhat subsidiary role; they were important in the development of local class structure in society, but the lineage becomes more flexible; for example, sometimes it becomes a trans-national corporation where you could buy shares, or you could adopt sons, send them off to Southeast Asia and see if they succeeded or not. To some degree this has to do with the requirement for cooperation in such an intensely irrigated region, so you cannot keep groups as separate or society as segmentary as in the model which many anthropologists borrowed from Africa and applied to Southeast China. At least in this area it’s not really segmentation but cooperation which is the key.”□

## Davis

(Continued from page 9)

China, as seen in Shanghai. However, I could not help but wonder whether Shanghai is an atypical example. Prof. Davis supported her argument by showing us that even in Yunnan province, the villages she visited have greatly improved their living standards and material life. Nevertheless, I think that her argument would be more convincing had she included a discussion on the life of migrant workers. While migrant workers constitute the backbone of the economic miracle in China, they are a marginalized group in cities and are excluded from most basic social rights due to the *hukou* system. Prof. Davis observes an improvement in the well-being of residents in major Chinese cities. However, I am left wondering whether this is a reaffirmation of the urban-rural divide of the past, given the increasing income inequality between urban and rural China, or whether this “consumer revolution” may have the potential to become the driver that cascades wealth and growth to the “have-nots”. If the former, we might be witnessing growing discontent and another revolution by the workers and peasants in the making.□

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