Congratulations to EALC and EAS!

In the face of the challenges and struggles during the COVID-19 Pandemic, the EALC and the EAS community have stayed strong and consolidated our solidarity. In this particularly challenging time, we come together to approach urgent issues of public health, the BLM movement, Anti-Asian Racism, climate change, and equity. Although there are more demanding tasks and responsibilities waiting ahead of us, we would like to send the most heartfelt congratulations on the achievements of the year 2021.

We are grateful for the Wellesley spirit that values hard work, generosity, resilience, and compassion. All the struggles and juggling with zoom, hybrid, in-person classes, activities, and daily life made us even closer and enabled us to move forward to a better future.

This year, we have 13 majors and 10 minors and 4 EAS majors graduating seniors. Also, we are pleased to recognize the accomplishments of four honor thesis projects lead by Jill Mankoff, Rachel Rabayeva, and Majesty Zander in the Japanese Program and Chloe Pearce in the EAS.

The past year has been especially a remarkable year that we will never forget. Thank you all for your true dedication and love for our community. We all send our very best to all of you. Congratulations on successfully finishing the 2020-2021 academic year successfully!

Sun-Hee Lee, Chair of the EALC department

Celebrating together

On May 27, EALC and EAS faculty virtually gathered with students to send off the Class of 2021 with love! Each professor gave congratulatory remarks to the seniors and reflected on what the class of ’21 has accomplished in their time at Wellesley. Professor of EAS and Art Heping Liu also recited a poem sharing a memory of his youth with students. Afterward, everyone had a moment to enjoy the slide show created from the senior survey about their experience in EALC and EAS.

Students then had the opportunity to mingle and celebrate with their peers and professors in their programs’ breakout-rooms. We congratulate the Class of 2021 once again for their hard work and tenacity, and we look forward to seeing what other amazing work they will accomplish in the future!

Go Green Class of 2021!
Faculty Updates

We have three thrilling news on the promotion this year. Sun-Hee Lee and Mingwei Song are now full professors, and Robert Goree is tenured.

Good News about Sun-Hee Lee and Mingwei Song by Professor Ellen Widmer

EALC had one of its most thrilling days on record on May 25, 2021, when we learned that Sun-Hee Lee and Mingwei Song were both promoted to full professor.

Sun-Hee is the current chair of the department. She has been at Wellesley since 2005. She holds two PhD degrees, one from Yonsei University in Seoul, the other from Ohio State University. Both are in linguistics. At Wellesley, Sun-Hee founded the Korean program. She also helped launch the program in Korean at MIT. At Wellesley, she has taught Korean at all levels and has taught seminars on language and nationalism in East Asia and corpus linguistics, and she is about to launch a course in business Korean, to be taught in winter session 2021-2022. Her research lies in four areas: theoretically based linguistic analysis in morpho-syntax; pedagogy for learning Korean as a second language, and translation. She has turned out a number of books and articles in these areas. Her service contributions have been outstanding. Not only has she taken a three-year term as chair of EALC, she has also been the director of EAS, another three-year term. She has worked hard to develop extracurricular activities for students interested in learning Korean. These include founding EALC house and providing opportunities for students to study in Korea. She has also organized faculty seminars. Outside of the department and program, she has served Wellesley in the areas of minority recruitment, admissions, and a trustee committee on the Wellesley experience. Sun-Hee is a great believer in community. Thanks to her boundless commitment of energy to the college, communities of students are markedly more robust than in previous years, language teaching is increasingly professional, and EALC/EAS are a more visible part of the college as a whole.

Mingwei Song will take over as EALC chair on July 1, 2021. He has been at Wellesley since 2007. He holds a MA degree in comparative literature from Fudan University in Shanghai and a PhD degree in Modern Chinese Literature and Culture from Columbia University. He has taught a wide range of courses at Wellesley, with those on lm, science fiction, and Eileen Chang being among the most popular. He has three main areas of research: the Chinese bildungsroman, Chinese science fiction, and the baroque, as manifested in the various Chinas across the world. He has a book from 2015 on the bildungsroman, a book soon to be published on science fiction, and great plans for a book on the baroque. Especially in the field of science fiction, he has become a leader of world research in this area. He has also organized a book of translations of science fiction writings. Another outstanding accomplishment has been his organization of an event celebrating the May Fourth Movement of 1919. It took place at Harvard in 2019. At Wellesley, both in his capacity as director of EAS and in his various courses, he has introduced many important authors and lm makers to the campus, has shown important films campus-wide, and has been active in assisting the Newhouse Center to increase its offerings on China and East Asia more generally. One of his most effective roles has been as chair of the Fudan Committee. In that capacity, he has helped Wellesley students to study at Fudan University. He has also chaired the Mayling Soong Committee and participated on the Career Education Committee, the Luce Internship Committee, and the ER and D Committee. We anticipate that Mingwei’s three years as EALC chair will strengthen the department further and will provide exciting cultural opportunities for students, faculty, and the entire Wellesley community.

The department is proud of its two new full professors!
Interview with Robert Goree, our new associate professor  

by Sydney Yi, Class of 2023

Professor Robert Goree, was tenured this academic year as an Associate Professor of Japanese. In the six years since joining the faculty, Professor Goree has taught nine different courses. After completing his Ph.D. program in 2010, he went on to gain four total years of pedagogical experience from a post-doctoral position at Harvard and subsequent professorial work at Columbia and Boston University. In 2015, he was offered positions at both the University of Virginia (UVA) and Wellesley College.

“I went to a small liberal arts college as an undergrad...but I liked that smaller community and I always imagined my dream job as being at a small liberal arts college. And so when I heard back from Wellesley I thought that would be the right place for me.” While UVA offered a more research-centric opportunity, the tight-knit quality of a small liberal arts college like Wellesley proved far more appealing. Professor Goree was drawn to the role of having the flexibility to take on different roles, whereas at UVA he would have been expected to teach in a more narrow lens.

Through his coursework each semester at Wellesley, Professor Goree has expanded his knowledge of new subjects and fields and consequently furthered his personal and academic growth. He has never encountered a comparable level of diligence from students at other institutions: “Since students come to class well-prepared, I need to be well-prepared...That's been good and very inspiring as a professor at Wellesley.” By embracing the challenge of providing a fulfilling academic experience for his students, Goree feels that he is a “valuable member of the community.”

Due to the nature of the academic schedule, most of his research—a critical component of the tenure review—is inevitably carried out over the summer, with the support and guidance of his colleagues should he need advice. “That kind of support meant the world to me and it made everything go very smoothly; not only in support for teaching but also for my research...just enabling me to do the work that I needed to do,” said Professor Goree.

Professor Goree was first considered for reappointment by the Committee on Faculty Appointments in 2018, after which he was then eligible for tenure appointment this academic year. Tenure applications at Wellesley College come in three parts: first, a personal statement on teaching, research, and service; second, a more detailed research statement; lastly, supplementary materials from the Research & Promotions Committee, including a letter summarizing the applicant’s contributions to the Wellesley community. The applicant’s research is heavily scrutinized by a handful of external reviewers commissioned by the College, and their feedback is critical to the appointment process. Nevertheless, Professor Goree remarked that his tenure approval process went very smoothly—certainly, in no small part due to the quality of his tenure-worthy research.

Professor Goree’s research is self-described as focusing “on the intersection of print culture, cultural geography, and popular literature during the Tokugawa period.” The pinnacle of his research Printing Landmarks: Popular Geography and Meisho Zue in Late Tokugawa Japan (Harvard Asia Center) functions as an analysis of the “travel books” (meisho zue) of 18th and 19th century Japan and their rise to popularity. His work has been published in various academic journals and books, with a particularly noteworthy accomplishment being the publication of his essay “The Culture of Travel in Edo-Period Japan” in the Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History.

Looking ahead, Professor Goree detailed a handful of research areas he would like to further explore. Chief among them is an investigation into media and popular representations of gardens and their democratizing role in 18th century Japan—an outgrowth of Printing Landscapes. Other research interests include a translation of 17th century Japanese literary works, as well as studying the nuances of higher education and the potential clash in pedagogical practice between its traditional in-person approach and outsourced, corporate-sponsored virtual learning.

While Professor Goree lamented his inability to properly celebrate his tenure due to the ongoing pandemic, he nevertheless remains joyful in regards to his accomplishments and hard work. We hope to celebrate this monumental achievement properly with him next semester in person!
Professor Mingwei Song with Two EAS events

In April 2021, Mingwei Song collaborated with the Harvard colleagues to run two events with Chinese writers on Zoom. The first event featuring Li Juan, a nonfiction woman writer famous for her books about the Kazakh nomads in China’s Xinjiang area, drew audiences from all over the world. Lilian Sall ’21 and Talia O’Shea ’23 read excerpts from an English translation of Li Juan’s Winter Pasture.

The second event was a workshop titled “Sci-fi China: Avatars, Aliens, and Anthropos.” Five young scholars, including Wellesley alumna Emily Jin ’17 (now a Ph.D. candidate at Yale), presented their research on Chinese science fiction, and Mingwei Song conducted a conversation with four leading science fiction writers from China and Taiwan -- Han Song, Egoyen Cheng, Stanley Qiufan Chen, and Regina Kanyu Wang.

Creating Online Communities of Korean Language Learners with Global Partnership

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the transition to online teaching brought a paradigm shift demanding significant digital transformation in higher education. One especially challenging task is to maintain solid, coherent communities of language learners on online platforms. Korean Program at Wellesley College launched two innovative programs in partnership with Yonsei University and Konyang Cyber University: a language exchange program and a mentor-mentee program.


Based upon enthusiastic student evaluation and reviews of these programs in 2021 Annual Conference of Association of American Teachers of Korean (AATK) on June 25, 2021. The pedagogical strategies for promoting dynamic teacher-student collaboration and bridging curricular and extracurricular activities will be presented. Based upon enthusiastic student evaluation and reviews of these programs, Wellesley Korean Program will continue developing valuable resources for global online communities by utilizing technological tools and global network. In addition, Korean 101 and 102 have new online textbooks and exercises tailored for Wellesley Korean learners in 2020-2021. More new resources will come in 2021-2022!!!
Spring is a beautiful season, and it is even more in South Korea. In early March, after so many days spent wrapped in my winter jacket and scarf, the weather forecast of a Saturday with 16° Celsius and sunshine only made me radiate with happiness! Taking advantage of the occasion, my friends and I decided to inaugurate the return of the beautiful days by having a picnic at the edge of the Han River: a river that crosses Seoul from east to west before flowing into the Yellow Sea. Of course, we were not the only ones who had this idea. Yeouido Park (여의도), one of the many parks along the river, was filled with Korean families, delighted to take out their picnic mats, small tents, and kites. Bicycle and skateboard enthusiasts also stormed the riverfront as children looked on in wonder.

I usually have fun activities planned most weekends, like taking pottery classes, taking walks along unique and pretty streets, then going to famous restaurants (맛집) and trying out foods I have never had before. On weekdays, I get to experience what it is like to work and study in Seoul. As the 2021 Ted Wang Fellow for South Korea, I have had the invaluable opportunity to do an internship at the Ban-Ki Moon Institute for Global Engagement & Empowerment. Thanks to this opportunity, I learned about Global Citizenship and Social Development Goals (SDGs), a field that I have had an interest in for a long time.

In February 2021, I assisted with the planning and organization of the third Global Engagement & Empowerment Forum (GEEF), themed — 3Ps Beyond Security: Peace, Prosperity, and Partnership. The GEEF forum is a global annual event that I had previously wanted to attend myself. And this year’s forum was marked by keynote speeches from Jim Yong Kim, the 12th President of the World Bank, Amina J. Mohammed, the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, and the exclusive conversation with the UNHCR Special Envoy Angelina Jolie. The forum was live-streamed on YouTube and has been watched by more than 22,000 people from all over the world.

I also participated in organizing the first ‘GEEF for ALL’ special seminar, which took place on May 10, 2021. The GEEF for ALL was held online under the theme: "Human rights & peace of Myanmar." This forum was held to diagnose the Myanmar crisis caused by military actions and discuss partnerships and the path forward to better engage in the safety and protection of human rights of residents in Myanmar.

It is now the month of May, and summer is right around the corner. It is indeed the return of warm weather and clear and sunny days. Generally speaking, the spirit is festive, and I feel a vitality and enthusiasm in the air that had been lost during the rough winter months. In different circumstances, festivals would be numerous at this time of the year. Many of which are related to nature, which explodes with a thousand colors. Like for instance, the Cherry Blossom Festival (벚꽃 축제), or the Lotus Lantern Festival (연등회). Unfortunately, none of these festivals took place this year due to the pandemic. Even the acclaimed Yonsei AKARAKA Cheering Festival, which I was very much looking forward to, was canceled.

With only about a month and a half left until I fly back home, my schedule is packed. And so is my small suitcase. There are many places in Korea that I would like to visit before I leave, including Gangneung, Sokcho, Yeosu, Busan, and Jeju Island. I probably won’t be able to go to all these places, especially with final exams coming up, but my goal is to visit at least three of them. And as for the remaining locations on my travel list, I will have to leave them for the next time I am in Korea. Because I know for a fact that “I WILL BE BACK.”
A Story of Your 
EALC Life
By Xinhui Xu ’21

You are almost done with your first year at Wellesley College. How does it feel? I bet your head is deep in the finals season cobwebs, and “LDOC” doesn’t feel real. I can tell you this: in three years, it still won’t feel real. What else can I tell you? I am you three years later, and I don’t know too much better than you do. All I have is a little more experience to share, if you don’t mind.

At this point in your life you don’t realize you will be an EALC major. You still introduce yourself as a “Math and CS double major interested in machine learning” or something, right? Don’t worry, we all have those phases.

Calculus was fun, but your favorite class is JPN 101. You enjoyed it from the first day, tracing the squiggly lines of kanji and chanting them with your 10 classmates and a wonderful professor, sitting in round table like elementary schoolers. The class is hard, but you treat it like a hobby, like how you watched anime growing up. What I mean is, you are absolutely hardcore at it, and you spend more time and effort there than your “serious academic pursuits,” to the point where you feel embarrassed.

Surprise, Japanese becomes your serious academic pursuit. Thank goodness you started early! There’s so much ahead of you. So many things to learn, yes, but more importantly, so many amazing people to get to know. EALC is a closed-knit community, warm to the core, and that’s a rare thing to treasure. Now you’re a sophomore living in Japanese corridor. Great choice! You have even more opportunities to practice your language in daily-life settings and get to know your TA better. (continued on page 7)

Four Students with Honors Theses

JILL MANKOFF, Japanese Language and Culture Major

Objects in Contemporary Japanese Dystopia

This academic year, I wrote a thesis entitled “Memory, Spirits, and Objects in Late Twentieth-Century Japanese Dystopian Fiction,” in which I examine two dystopian novels by Japanese authors from the 1980s and 1990s. In particular, I focused on how the novels explore the historical dynamics of the bubble period by playing with objects in magical ways and imbuing objects with a sense of spirit, memory, and nostalgia. I became interested in this subject after taking two fascinating classes in the Japanese program my junior year: JPN 280 (Japanese Pop Culture) and JPN 314 (Contemporary Japanese Narrative). These courses exposed me to a wide variety of contemporary authors and allowed me to form connections between different authors’ works. Taking JPN 352 (Postwar Japan Literature and Visual Culture) during my senior year helped me crystallize my ideas about the dynamics of the postwar period in literature and refine the argument of my thesis. Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed both the research and writing process for my thesis, although the longer format of writing was new to me. Writing a thesis in the EALC department was a wonderful opportunity to explore topics that interest me in greater depth, and I am grateful to have had the support and guidance of my advisor Professor Zimmerman and the other professors in the department.

RACHEL RABAYEVA, Japanese Language and Culture Major

My mother often read fairy tales to my siblings and me when we were little, and I think that it was in large part thanks to her influence that I grew into a voracious reader of fantasy, folktales, and the supernatural. These stories were portals into worlds where I could go on amazing adventures through the eyes of the protagonists – stories where imagination ruled supreme and anything was possible. This love of imagination-spurring stories continued into my teenage and adult years, when I embarked on my journey into Japanese language and culture – something which initially began through an appreciation of anime, manga, and Japanese art and soon turned into a full-blown academic pursuit. Having been raised in a multinational, multicultural, and multilingual home, my interest in countries, cultures, and languages other than my own had begun at a young age. To me, translation was a bridge between these – a way to communicate across boundaries and celebrate differences. Thus, I think that it was quite natural for me to choose to do a translation thesis of the Japanese children’s fantasy, adventure, and coming-of-age story Maegami Tarō by Miyoko Matsutani – a choice that has given me much satisfaction and fulfillment.
CHLOE PEARCE, EAS MAJOR
Overcoming East and West: Artistic Identity in the Making of Modern Japanese Figure Painting

In examining Japanese figure painting of the 19th and early 20th centuries, my thesis explores the ways in which the importation of Western artistic ideologies prompted Japanese artists to both re-evaluate and re-define native conceptions of aesthetics. By surveying stylistic shifts in figure painting, I am able to trace how painters engaged with global artistic developments in their new quest to shape a distinctly “Japanese” modern art. The first chapter uses portraiture as a lens to investigate the enduring construct of “Eastern idealism” versus “Western realism.” In analyzing critical responses to Japanese painters’ experiments with the imported European genres of history painting and the idealized nude figure, the second chapter dissects the complexity inherent to transposing aesthetics across cultures. The final chapter provides insight into how painters relied on the symbolic resonance of bijinga iconography to negotiate Japan’s artistic identity within modern art. While Eastern and Western aesthetics are often positioned as two opposing ends of a spectrum, the rich and diverse figure paintings of Meiji and Taishō artists harmonized these supposedly dissonant traditions.

MAJESTY ZANDER, Japanese Language and Culture Major

This Spring, I completed my senior honors thesis which focuses on the Japanese government’s Cool Japan Initiative and nationalism within anime and manga. During my sophomore year, I was on the fence about pursuing a thesis project until I attended a graduating senior’s Ruhlman presentation that was based on anime. Their thesis inspired me to write my final paper for JPN 280 on nationalism in anime, which later became an outline for my thesis proposal. Although there were many difficulties attempting to complete an honors thesis with the term system, remote classes, and the on-going pandemic, I am very happy that I was able to do research and write so much about a topic I enjoy! I would like to thank all my professors and my advisor, Robert Goree, for all their support and encouragement throughout this process. If any current students are considering writing a thesis, but aren’t sure if they should—just go for it! In the end, all your hard work will pay off.

A Story of Your EALC Life (continued)

To you, what matters most in language learning is communication, and that will always be the fuel propelling you forward through your ups and downs. The following section risks sounding like a cover letter, so I will condense it as much as possible. Here are some things you did: with the generous help of the EALC department, you went to study abroad for the first time in your life. A summer in Kyoto was far too short for you; I recommend doing a full year. While you’re there, socialize as much as you can, scary as that sounds. When you return to Wellesley, your solidified interest in Japanese studies brings you to more exciting literature and culture seminars, including one in the Chinese department and another at MIT. You also join two translation courses, where you (re)discover a passion. Unfortunately for you, a pandemic thwarts your plans, but you get to spend a short summer doing some more translation work in your room, learning more and more about a world so distant yet so close to you. You get to build relationships with people at Wellesley and beyond that you couldn’t imagine before.

You might wonder: what are you going to be when you graduate? What am I now, a Japanese culture or literature or linguistics graduate student? A translator? As in like, a professional Crunchyroll subtitter? Strangely, none of those, at least not yet. Whatever you will do is beyond the scope of this letter, but I will just say, you are very excited about it, and it really is your time in EALC that shaped who you are now.

Your story isn’t perfect, but it doesn’t have to be. It can be an infinite possibility of things. If you had the chance to do it over, you’d still be an EALC major.

Deepest thanks to (in no particular order): Professor Maeno, Professor Torii, Mukai-sensei, Professor Zimmerman, Professor Goree, Anna, Professor Song, and many others.

Best wishes in the years to come!
Alumnae Spotlight

Amy Huang ’99 spoke with Sydney Yi ’23 about her life as an EALC alumna.

Please tell us a little about yourself (e.g. where are you from, which year you graduated from Wellesley, whether or not you majored/minored in any other subjects?)

“I am a member of the Class of 1999. I majored in Chinese Studies, an interdisciplinary major, and minored in Economics. I was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico. My parents immigrated from Taiwan in the 1970s and I grew up in New Jersey!”

What are you doing now?

“I am a Director of Onsite Technical Support for Marsh McLennan’s Global Technology Infrastructure. I lead a team of 40+ members to deliver technology support to 5,800 colleagues in 90 locations across four countries. I’m also involved in our organization’s diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts - I have been the Global Head of the Women In Technology Lean In Circles and the Buddy Program, MGTI Diversity Champion and MGTI Mental Health Champion. I also coached and delivered 14 conversations on race last year across MMC Tech, and we continue to do amazing work in the organization! I am currently the Technology Advisory Council’s Race and Diversity Facilitator.

What was your favorite or most memorable experience with the EALC/ EAS Department? Why?

“We have always had fantastic professors in the department, and I have a number of really fond memories. Even just learning Chinese, I was part of the 8:30 AM, Monday through Thursday class--so there’s no late night partying if you’re learning Chinese every morning at 8:30 AM! My first Chinese class, we went around the room--people would talk about where they grew up and their Chinese accent when they spoke Chinese. And when it came to me, they said, ‘your accent is very interesting!’ I replied, ‘it’s New Jersey!’ I remember spending a lot of time in the Language Lab and listening to Professor Ma’s voice and the fantastic dumpling parties. Another favorite memory is I was a student aid worker at the Chinese Department, and one of my jobs was to label and organize all of our movies, which were just tapes at the time, and I got to borrow them and just watch Chinese movies like Raise the Red Lantern, The Killer--really immerse myself in Chinese cinematic culture and getting paid to do it! It was a joy to work for the department and I got a lot out of it.”

Are you using your EALC language, literature, cultural studies experiences in the workplace? If so, how?

“I knew I was very fortunate to go to Wellesley; it certainly was a sacrifice for my family. I knew that I would need to pay of my loans and support myself, as well as provide funding back to my family. That’s why I got my Economics minor. My perception at that time was that I needed to go into business, and specifically financial services, in order to support myself after college and pay of my student loans. And so the Chinese Studies major was for me--my personal curiosity, my personal intellectual pursuit. To be able to take a multitude of classes around the idea of China and learn the different ways of looking at things, that was personal for me. It manifests as an ability to look at things from multiple points of view. I have context, around which I can make decisions in my life and decisions at work, that I would not have had otherwise.”

How did your Chinese Studies major contribute to or influence your future on a professional and/or personal level?

“This interdisciplinary major I have and the ability to draw upon lots of different [subject] areas are really important. It’s been especially important this year, and will become increasingly important, I think, for fighting the anti-Asian racism and misogyny we’ve seen on the rise over the course of many years. And so I consider my Chinese Studies major a gift, because I learned things that most people don’t know; I’ve learned history that’s been erased. I can point out that Chinese have been in the U.S. since the 1820s, that we have had a series of laws against us. These stories, this history, this way of looking at things are becoming increasingly important. The ability to say, ‘we’ve always been here, and the racism and hate against us has always been here’ is becoming increasingly important. I think this major has been a gift because I know my history, I know my background, I know my culture--I know I have a place in the United States.”

EALC and EAS alumnae, we want to hear from you! If you would like to be featured in our next issue, please write to Anna Park at hpark12@wellesley.edu

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