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Reflection and Rejuvenation: EALC 2021-2022

This year has been challenging everywhere in many ways: pandemic, war, inflation, climate change, geopolitical conflicts. It has been challenging to our faculty and students as well. It was the first year when we returned fully to campus, even as the pandemic was still ravaging our world. We lived in uncertainty. We all shared anxiety, stress, and sorrows. But despite all this, I am proud to say that EALC has made remarkable progress this year. I am proud of our hard working, devoted faculty members--professors, lecturers, visiting instructors, and language assistants; and I am particularly proud of our excellent students, including the first-years who studied in our 101s and 102s, also including the class of 2022, who are about to enter new chapters of their lives. You have all done your best to make 2021-22 an unforgettable year, a year of progress, growth, and prosperity!

EALC has seen some important growth this year. In particular, our Korean Program has been building up its own “Korean fever” on campus, attracting unprecedented numbers of students to study Korean language and culture. At the same time, we have maintained healthy enrollments in all our classes, and the three language programs have all been robust. The four senior lecturers in Chinese and Japanese--our beloved laoshis and senseis, successfully extended their long-term employment contracts, which increased the stability of the Japanese and Chinese programs. In this past year, we also saw two promotions in the Korean Program, which now has two full-time lecturers. Another piece of good news is that we have successfully recruited Dr. Heng Du to be our Andrew W. Mellon Assistant Professor of Chinese (see p3). With two more visiting lecturers signing contracts to join us in Fall 2022, EALC has increased our staffing for the first time since 2018. Another sign of our growing strength is that we have received an unprecedented number of applications for our language corridors. We will have nearly 60 students in residence, along with three language assistants in the coming year. We are on track to get back to normal and to further develop and prevail!

This past year EALC, in collaboration with Harvard, hosted one of the most popular online events in the academic world, the conversation with film director Mr. Jia Zhangke, which was joined by a record number of viewers. We also hosted two in-person events on campus. We worked with colleagues across campus to increase Asian Awareness and stop Asian Hate. Our faculty and students worked tirelessly to make EALC one of the strongest departments in the humanities on campus.

In sum, 2021-22 was a year to recover, reflect, and rejuvenate. We are now looking forward to the new academic year 2022-23, which I hope will bring more joy and success to all of us!

Mingwei Song
Chair of the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures

News from the East Asian Studies

The 2021-2022 academic year has been relatively quiet for the East Asian Studies program due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In-person events like faculty members and students getting together to share meals or attend lectures by guest speakers have been significantly curtailed. The cumulative effects of adhering to safety protocols and striving to avoid the pandemic have taken their toll on students and faculty alike. A restorative summer break has never looked so good.

But through it all our dedicated faculty spanning Art History, East Asian Languages and Cultures, History, Political Science, and Religion have continued to offer inspiring courses in their regional and disciplinary areas of expertise. Carrie Cushman, who finished her time as the Gruber Curatorial Fellow in Photography at the Davis Museum at the end of 2021, gave a talk in the spring about curating *Creative Destruction: Komatsu Hiroko*—an outstanding exhibition of the Japanese photographer's work.

Our seven intrepid majors have continued to explore the societies and cultures of East Asia with enthusiasm, five of them doing so while earning a second major (one each in Political Science and Astrophysics and three in Computer Science). And our three graduating seniors—Savannah Cary, Paige Jones, and Yiran Wu—have reached the conclusion of their studies with distinction for the tremendous dedication they've shown during such a challenging period of time, emerging with bright smiles as they look to the future beyond Wellesley. We congratulate them and can't wait to see how their lives intersect with East Asia in the years ahead.

Robert Goree
Director of East Asian Studies

Congratulations to the Class of 2022

Congratulations to the class of 2022. You lived through the most difficult years of Wellesley's history and you all prevailed. You are all heroes! I wish all of you a brilliant future! EALC and EAS will be your home forever. We will always be here, ready to offer advice and support you in your future studies and career development! Keep us updated about your progress!



Senior Dinner

On May 5th, the faculty of EALC and EAS gathered with graduating seniors to celebrate the accomplishments of the Class of 2022 at the department's annual Senior Dinner.

Photo:

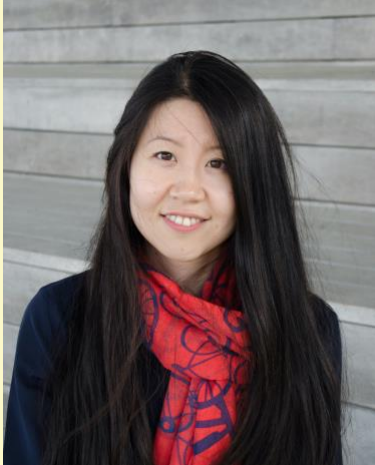
Left: Faculty and graduating seniors

Below from left: Faculty and graduating seniors of the Chinese Program, Japanese Program, and Korean Program



Faculty Updates

A new department member, Professor Heng Du by Professor Ellen Widmer



EALC is pleased to introduce a new department member, Professor Heng DU. Professor Du has just finished a term as assistant professor in East Asian Studies at the University of Arizona, but as of the first of July, she will become the Andrew W. Mellon assistant professor of Chinese at Wellesley. Her plan is to arrive on campus in August, 2022.

In terms of research, Professor Du is a specialist in Early China. She is particularly interested in ancient texts, such as *The Analects of Confucius*, *The Mencius*, and *The Zhuangzi*. One question central to her work is the way these texts became classics during the Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE). This interest has taken her to the study of “paratexts”, by which is meant materials attached to texts as prefaces and commentaries, or even the background materials associated with oral versions of texts. Studying these materials has allowed her to learn more about how basic classics took shape long ago. In the process, she introduces versions that have been dug up in recent excavations, often written on slips of bamboo. These can yield alternative renditions of familiar passages or otherwise help us better to understand the process from which the ancient text emerged. After that, the study of records in Han Dynasty libraries makes it possible to fathom the authority these texts eventually acquired. A key element in Professor Du’s work is understanding how and when texts became linked to authors. Once *The Analects* found Kongzi, *The Mencius* found Mengzi, and *The Zhuangzi* found

Zhuang Zhou, a process of consolidation took place, whereby the classic took on clear boundaries. This understanding is somewhat counter-intuitive: classics finding authors, rather than authors writing classics, but in the Han Dynasty, this is what happened, and the story has been retrieved and brought to world attention by Professor Du. She goes on to link it to a second story, the emergence of a class of anonymous compilers, men who determined the shape a classic ought to assume. These men became the foundation of the scholar-elite class that would dominate intellectual life in China for centuries, until the end of the last dynasty in 1911.

Professor Du’s proficiency in Western classical languages like Greek and Latin allows her to go beyond Chinese studies to the way texts were canonized elsewhere. One topic which has attracted her attention of late is the relationship between classics and calendrical science, in both China and Rome. In both cultures one finds major classics that are organized according to the calendar, and these works can be fruitfully compared.

Professor Du has received prestigious fellowships for her various projects, including an Early Career Fellowship from the Henry L. Luce Foundation and the American Council of Learned Societies.

As a side project, Professor Du has turned her interest in book history to more modern problems as she seeks to tell the story of the earliest printing in America of a Chinese text, in 1834. Not surprisingly, the missionary organization behind this effort eventually concluded that Chinese woodblock printing carried out in China was more efficient than Western movable type when it came to bringing religious materials into being, but the story of this failure makes an interesting cross-cultural comparison.

Professor Du’s plans for teaching are just as imaginative and bold as her research. In the fall semester she will start off with a course called “Classical China on the Silver Screen” (CHIN 236). It aims to explore how some of the great stories of Chinese antiquity and more recent times have been presented in film. Examples include *The First Emperor* and *The Assassin*, *The Red Cliff*, *Mulan*, and *The Butterfly Lovers*. In her plans for the future, Professor Du also intends to teach courses on classical Chinese language, on Women and Gender, on how Chinese Bronzes reached Boston Brahmins, and on *The Chinese Script: The History of Writing in East Asia and Beyond*. Her interest in media and digital humanities means that these courses will introduce students to a variety of types of material and help them to do research on their own.

Professor Du took her undergraduate degree at Cornell University in Classics and Comparative Literature. She later went on to the University of Colorado for an MA in Chinese Studies, and her PhD is from Harvard in East Asian Languages and Cultures. Along the way she undertook a year of study in Germany, so she handles German at a high level, and she is also comfortable with Japanese.

Professor Du is fully bilingual in Chinese and English. She has a special affinity for Asian-American issues, as she emigrated to the US from China at a tender age. But she looks forward to meeting all Wellesley students, whether or not they have immigrant experience. One of her strong interests is in diversity and inclusion.

She tells us that she looks forward to teaching at Wellesley, “the calling of a lifetime,” in her words.

For our part, we plan to welcome her with open arms.

Professor Eve Zimmerman

I'd like to offer sincere congratulations to the students of my spring semester "The Girl Across East Asia" course (CPLT/EALC 236) in which we read coming-of-age fiction as well as theoretical or psychoanalytic works on the theme of female development. When I took an informal poll on why students had picked the class, I expected them to say gender studies, visual media, psychoanalytic content, etc. Instead, the majority answered, "I wanted to read more literature." They ranged from first-year students to graduating seniors. Were we wrong to lament the decline of literary studies at Wellesley? Could we be doing more to reach students?

Over the course of the semester, I noticed a growing sense of common purpose in CPLT/EALC 236. Students in pairs took charge of the discussion sections, coming in with two or three questions that they presented to the class. Always respectful of each other, they would build on each other's points. "I liked the point that Holly/Noella/Kelsey etc. made. . ." was a common refrain before they began to elaborate, redirect, or offer up a critique. As the semester progressed, they also slipped into comparative mode, reading Chinese stories against the Japanese ones, Japanese ones against the stories from Korea. How had the theme of the girl been adapted and transformed as a wave of modernization, revolution and war swept through the countries of East Asia in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries?

Throughout the most difficult semester of my teaching career, with students routinely dropping out of sight with suspected cases of Covid, I observed how students cared for each other in the realm of ideas, and in doing so, embraced the empathic and expansive nature of literary study. On the last day of class, we met on Zoom for the first and last time due to suspected cases in class. One student was in isolation in the special hotel reserved for that purpose. Everyone came, continuing their commitment to ideas that they had been honoring all semester. In spite of the hierarchical nature of Zoom, I watched them debate and defend each other, while I remained silent on the sidelines.

Korean Program Faculty

1. Wellesley Korean Program in Global Forums

Professor Sun-hee Lee and Noella Ingabire '22 from the Korean program participated in 2022 GEEF (Global Engagement and Empowerment Forum) hosted by Yonsei University in Seoul Korea. GEEF is held annually to form international discourse and seek solutions for the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Professor Lee led a panel "Korean Wave for Engagement and Empowerment." In this session, the panelists discussed how the Korean language and culture can make significant contributions to achieving SDGs by promoting collaboration and integration of people from diverse backgrounds.

Noella Ingabire ('22) also joined as a student panel with the former Minister Kyunghwa Kang of Foreign Affairs of South Korea and discussed the future envisioned by the youth regarding SDGs.



Photo above left: Jae Young Song, Sun-Hee Lee, Eun Ha Hwang

2. Korean Learning through Global Networks

The global experience of online communication platforms has become an unexpected outcome of the COVID-19 pandemic. By utilizing broadly available digital resources and creative pedagogical strategies, Wellesley Korean Program launched two global network programs since Fall 2020 in collaboration with native speakers in South Korea: Wellesley-Yonsei Language Buddy Program (for the first and second year Korean courses) and Wellesley-Könyang Live Korean Mentor-Mentee Program (for the third and fourth year courses). These programs have successfully fostered dynamic online interactions through project-based learning and student autonomy whereas the design of each program has distinct learning goals and structures. Three Korean professors including Professor Sun-Hee Lee, Professor Jae Young Song and Professor Eun Ha Hwang made significant contributions and efforts to develop these innovative communication programs in collaboration with international colleagues Ja Young Shin at Yonsei Univ. and Jin Kyung Lee at Könyang Cyber Univ. In 2021-2022, 57 pairs of Wellesley and Yonsei buddies and 13 pairs of Wellesley mentees and Könyang Cyber mentors participated in each program.

On top of newly designed Korean online textbooks and exercises, Korean language communication programs not only enhance our students' language proficiency but also promote cultural awareness and diversity. The outcomes of these programs were presented in 2021 Annual Conference of Association of American Teachers of Korean (AATK) and Fall 2021 Conference of New England Regional Association for Language Learning Technology. Moreover, the Korean program faculty will lead a workshop in 2022 AATK highlighting on newly developed online textbooks and teaching materials.

Professor Mingwei Song

Professor Mingwei Song published a short story “First Snow” in *Shanghai Literature Monthly* in February 2022. This is the first story he published signing his real name, after a hiatus of 26 years during which he was pursuing an academic career. He published short stories in 1989-1996 with a *nom-de-plume*. Professor Song’s “Fifteen New Poems” appeared in *Poetry*, China’s top poetry magazine, in May 2022; and his five science fiction poems appeared in *Today* (Spring/Summer 2022), a literary magazine founded by Bei Dao in 1979 (as an underground magazine) and revived in Oslo in 1990. Professor Song’s cycle of “Four Elegies and One Short Poem,” which he composed during the early days of the Pandemic and published in *Today* in Spring/Summer 2020, has now been translated into English by Jingyun (Kelly) Song '24, who submitted it as a final project for Professor Lawrence Rosenwald’s class at Wellesley. The second elegy, “Outro,” won the First Prize in English Department’s Writing Contest in the category of Translation.



Photo above left: Mingwei, right: *Shanghai Literature Monthly*

During the academic year of 2021-2022, Professor Song delivered more than twenty online talks to audiences in the United States, Germany, Turkey, Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China. He taught seminars at Yonsei University, Oxford University, Zhejiang University, and Shandong University. He published research articles in Czech Republic, Hong Kong, the United States, and China. From December 2021 to March 2022, Professor Song’s four thought pieces on the nonbinary thinking and the Neo-Baroque aesthetics, under the series title “Science Fiction as Method,” made an impact on the Chinese academic world and caused an ongoing debate.



Photo: Screenshot of Professor Song’s conversation with Mr. Jia Zhangke, the internationally renowned film director. (see EALC on Zoom on page 11)

Professor Mingwei Song’s first in-person talk (since his last in-person event in Frankfurt, Germany in 2019) took place at Wellesley. On December 6, 2021, he delivered a talk, “She-SF: Gen Z Women and Nonbinary Writers in China,” to the audiences of the Chinese Student Association/Slater International Student Society at Collins Cinema. He is currently editing a new volume of writings by women and nonbinary authors for Columbia University Press.

Qiuyan Tang, Lecturer in the Chinese Program

Qiuyan Tang completed her translation of Ha Jin’s novel *A Song Everlasting* (Pantheon, 2021). This is the fourth full-length novel by Ha Jin that Ms. Tang translated from English to Chinese. The Chinese version is coming out this summer in Taiwan, published by China Times Publishing Co.

Erik Mo Welin, Visiting Scholar from Sweden

Mr. Erik Mo Welin, currently a Ph.D. candidate at Uppsala University, is the first on-campus visiting scholar of EALC since the pandemic began. He worked under Professor Mingwei Song’s supervision to complete his Ph.D. dissertation on Chinese science fiction at Wellesley.

From our graduating seniors

Reminiscence on my time in EALC

By Zoe Owen '22, EALC Chinese Major

At 10:30 pm on Thursday, May 5, 2022, I finished decorating the Chinese department with my fellow EALC-Chinese



major Liz Zhou. After an hour of taping streamers and blowing up balloons, we were exhausted but satisfied with our work. As we left the building, I couldn't help but reminisce on my time in the department. I started learning Mandarin in high school and decided that it would only make sense to continue studying the language in which I had a background. I thought I might complete the language requirement and not return to the department, instead of focusing on my Political Science major. Thankfully, that is not where my story ended.

Professor Chen was the first person that I met in the department. She taught Chinese 201 and 202, and her commitment to her students was inspiring. Her class made me fall in love with Mandarin and inspired me to continue studying past the level that Wellesley required. In Professor Zhao's 300-level courses, I encountered the language in a completely new way, guided by her phenomenal teaching and the delicious, home-cooked food she would occasionally prepare for us.

I was sitting in her Chinese 302 class on March 12, 2020, when I learned that we were getting sent home because of the pandemic. Despite the challenges that online learning presented for language classes, she gracefully navigated the end of the semester in a way that left us students feeling accomplished and cared for in a time of uncertainty. I felt incredibly supported by Professor Zhao, and my love for Mandarin never wavered, despite the challenges of poor internet connection. In fact, I decided that I loved the language so much that I needed to officially declare a second major.

The EALC-Chinese major does not only focus on the language, so I began taking other classes in the department. From Chinese Sci-Fi to Chinese cinema, every new thing that I have learned has further cemented my joy in the decision to add the major. I am happy to have had the opportunity to grow from the curriculum and professors, and I am equally as glad to have had a role in shaping the department's future. This past spring, I served as the chair of a student committee helping in the search for a new Chinese literature professor. We attended lunches with candidates to get to know them and what they would bring to the department, and we listened to their job talks as they demonstrated aspects of their previous research. After participating in these two events, our thoughts were incorporated into the hiring decisions. When I was first asked to participate, I was immediately impressed by the care that the department was taking to ensure that student voices would be heard in the hiring process and that the person who would be integral to students' experiences would be someone that the students themselves had approved of. That commitment is just one example of the intentional care that this department has for each student with whom it interacts.

As I prepare to graduate from Wellesley, I would like to say one more thank you to everyone in this department who has educated me and guided me down this path. I am proud to be one of this department's majors, and I know that the things that I have learned from this department will guide me forever.

Thank you, Tomodachi!

By Grace Woo '22, EALC Japanese Major

One of the fondest memories I have at Wellesley College is taking a Japanese language class with Torii sensei for two years. As an enthusiastic first-year student, I decided to take Japanese because I thought learning a new language would be useful in many aspects of life, including my future career in diplomacy. But not only did I learn the language, I learned about friendship— something that I will carry with me for a long time. Students from diverse backgrounds decide to take this class for many different reasons. Whether it's because they want to be able to watch their favorite anime without subtitles, or to be able to speak their home language with their parents and grandparents, they are able to pull themselves out of bed almost every morning (we meet four days a week) to come to that class at 8:30 because they're truly passionate about learning this language. Though we struggle at times, we do our best to share our stories in the language we are yet to be fluent in— thanks to Torii sensei, we have learned to be patient with each other, to yell “すごい~(sugoi)” when we give that presentation in Japanese, and to lift each other up when we can't help but to stutter the words we had just learned in class. But to be able to laugh about the mistakes you make without feeling judged by your friends and professor is perhaps what's so special about taking a language course at Wellesley. It has truly been a privilege to learn this beautiful language and to be able to celebrate each other's growth as we finish our last Japanese



Photo: Grace in the middle in graduation gown next to Eiko Torii-Williams sensei with classmates.

language class together. I want to say a tremendous thank you to Torii sensei for encouraging us to make mistakes in class, the EALC department for offering these classes, and most importantly to my wonderful 友達 (tomodachi) for inspiring me to pursue this language and for all the laughter (and the tears too perhaps) that I desperately needed throughout my time here at Wellesley. とてもありがとうございました！

May 18, 2022

Grace Woo (めぐみ。ウー)

My Time As An Accidental Korean Minor

By Camila Lee '22, EALC Korean Minor

Before coming to Wellesley College, I never expected to pursue a minor in Korean Language and Culture. As a Korean-American, I grew up speaking Korean with my parents and watching a fair share of Korean dramas; I thought that I had sufficient knowledge of the culture and language. After hearing my roommate talk about how much she enjoyed the "Introduction to Korean Language and Culture" course with Professor Sun-Hee Lee, I decided to take the course out of curiosity and a desire to fulfill my distribution requirements. This course was the first step toward my Korean minor. The course made me analyze ideas and principles that I once did not even question. By thinking about everything from "what does culture actually mean?" to discussing the context behind why the word "we" is so commonly used in Korea, I realized that there was still so much that I needed to learn.

My time learning about the Korean language and culture didn't just take place at Wellesley College. During my time studying abroad at the Seoul National University in South Korea, I had the opportunity to fully immerse myself in an environment that I was only reading about. I was able to join a cohort of both domestic and international students through SNU Buddy, a program specifically designed to welcome international students. Through SNU Buddy, I was able to take part in weekly dinners, karaoke nights, pub nights, and even overnight trips to the countryside in GangWon-Do. My time spent with SNU Buddy was not the only source of enjoyment. During my time in the classrooms, the diverse range of courses offered made it possible for me to take classes that stimulated my interests in education, film, religion, linguistics, and design. My time spent in the classrooms, at social events, and even on the subways widened my perspective on life outside of the United States.

As I reflect upon my time with the Korean program, I want to deeply appreciate and recognize the department's effort to immerse students in current events and create personalized learning experiences. Through video calls with professors in Korea and even gatherings with *Pachinko* author MinJin Lee, I was able to experience firsthand the department's investment in the students' education and future. Thank you to Professor Sun-Hee Lee, Professor Jae Young Song, and Professor Jae Hee Ju.

Photo below: from left Camila in Busan, Korea,
Korean Food, and Traditional style Korean House



Year in Review

Here are some highlights from the 2021 - 2022 academic year.

Major and Minor meeting

At this year's Community Time', the EALC & EAS department welcomed majors and minors joined by professors for the first department event of the year.

Echoing Professor Mingwei Song, Department Chair of EALC, "We are glad to be back to a place we call home."



Photo left from top: Students and faculty of the Chinese Program, Korean Program, and Japanese Program.

Photo right from top: Playing Tug of War, Making Dalgona, Korean Writing, and Gonggi Nori.

Hangeul Day

On October 8th, Korean learners and professors had a blast at this year's Hangeul Day celebration playing traditional Korean games such as Jegichagi, Gonggi Nori and more. The event was themed over this year's global hit Netflix show "Squid Game", and students even learned how to make the infamous Dalgona Candy.



Japanese Speech Event

Last fall, Emma Rutkowski and Nafisa Rashid who represented Wellesley College at this year's Japanese Speech Event presented beautiful speeches that moved all listeners.

The Speech Event was started by our very own Professor Yoshimi Maeno from the Japanese program back in 2001 and is hosted annually at Wellesley College with other colleges in the Boston Area.

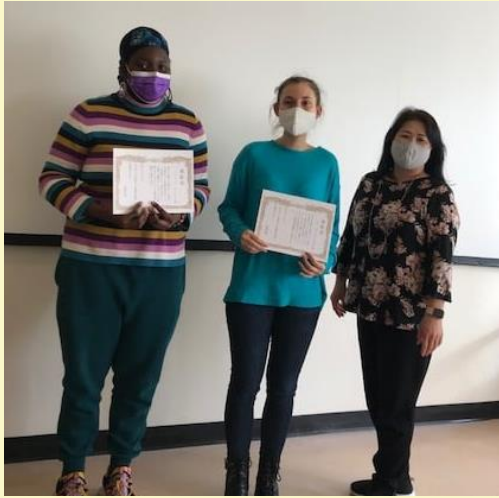


Photo: Nafisa, Emma, and Yoshimi Maeno sensei

Karate Workshop

In the Fall, JPN101-01 and JPN101-02 students attended a Karate workshop organized and led by Wellesley College's Karate Shotokan Club members. In the words of Professor Yoshimi Maeno, the club's faculty advisor and JPN101 professor, "All students did a fabulous job!"



Photo: Karate Workshop

New England Korean Speech Contest

The 2nd New England Korean Speech Contest took place in the fall, and gathered more than 50 Korean language learners and professors from 11 colleges in the New England area. Big congratulations to our well-deserved 1st prize winner, Michelle Jung!



Photo: Screenshot of the 2nd New England Korean Speech Contest

The 3rd New England Korean Speech Contest took place in the spring, and this time, not one but two Wellesley students walked away with prizes! Taylor Woody '24 won 1st place in the Intermediate level category and Timotea Garcia-Mendez '23 took 2nd place in the Advanced level category.

A special thank you to Professor Sun-Hee Lee, Jae Young Song, and Eun Ha Hwang from the Korean program for their effort in organizing and planning this event.

Japanese Flower Arrangements



Photo: Japanese Flower Arrangements

On April 28th, JPN202 and JPN232 students enjoyed learning and discovered the beauty of Japanese Flower Arrangements (*Ikebana*), a centuries-old practice that uses carefully selected blossoms, greenery, and other flora to convey a specific feeling or emotion to an observer.

Minhwa(Korean Folk Painting)



Photo: Minhwa(Korean Folk Painting)

On April 15th, KOR102 and KOR202 students took part in a special class on Minhwa (Korean Folk Painting). Korean Folk artist In Sun Cho was invited to teach students about Korean Folk art, and students displayed their enthusiasm and art skills as they painted peony flowers.

EALC on Zoom

During the academic year 2021-22, EALC organized a series of academic events on Zoom. In November 2021, Professor Mingwei Song co-organized two workshops, "Posthuman Fabulations" Sinotheory Seminar: Series Part I-Flora & Fauna and Part II-Humanism & Posthumanism. Professor Mingwei Song and the Taiwan novelist Lo Yi-chin had an online conversation "From Tangut to Taiwan: Diaspora and Identity Politics in Fiction" for Harvard's Fairbank Center in April 2022. Wellesley students interested in science fiction, posthuman theories, and nonbinary thinking attended both events. In April 2022, EALC and KSA co-sponsored the online talk "Women's Spaces and Gender Politics: Feminist Activities in South Korea," a lecture delivered by Professor Judy Han (UCLA).

On October 21, 2021, EALC, in collaborations with Harvard University Fairbank Center, Wellesley College Newhouse Center, and Beijing Contemporary Art Foundation, sponsored the online event "Walking till the End of Reality: A Workshop on Documentary and Nonfiction Writing with Liang Hong and Jia Zhangke." This Zoom event attracted a large number of online viewers from all over the world. Mr. Jiang Zhangke is one of most recognized names in the world cinema, with award-winning films such as *Platform*, *The World, Still Life*, *A Touch of Sin*, and *Swimming Out till the Sea Turns Blue*. Ms. Liang Hong is China's most influential nonfiction writer, with her book *China in One Village* recently published by Verso. Two Wellesley alumna/student (Emily Jin, '17 and Funing Yang, '22) worked as the on-spot simultaneous translators. The transcript of the entire conversation was published in *Frontiers*, a literary magazine, in March 2022.

Doreen Chen at Ruhlman Conference

At the 25th Ruhlman Conference, Doreen Chen '22 from the EALC department presented her research titled "Samurai in War Tales: Examination of Historicity and Fictionality in Heike Monogatari," where she examined the historicity and fictionality of Heike Monogatari by exploring the depiction of



Photo: Doreen at Ruhlman Conference

the vassal-lord relationship in the context of their social, economic, and political relationships in 12th century Japan. *"This research challenged me to muse about the analysis of war tales as historical evidence and literature. My experience helped me improve my ability to critically assess historical evidence and think carefully about how scholars approach sources to support their arguments."* - Doreen Chen '22.

Alumnae Spotlight

An Interview with Christine Keung by Audrey Sun '24, EALC Chinese major



Throughout her career, Christine Keung '14 has demonstrated what it means to live out the Wellesley motto, "Non Ministrari sed Ministrare" (Not to be ministered unto, but to minister). As a 2014-15 US Department of State Fulbright Scholar, Christine began a watershed restoration project to combat pollution on the Loess Plateau in northwestern China. Her project would eventually lead to a Rolex Award for Enterprise and recognition by TIME magazine as a Next Generation Leader.

Recently, I had the opportunity to sit down with Christine over Zoom and hear about her experience at Wellesley and as a part of the EALC department. During her time in college, Christine majored in Economics with a minor in EALC. Over the course of our conversation, I asked her why she had been interested in taking East Asian language and culture courses and she responded by sharing a bit about her multicultural background: "I grew up in the San Gabriel Valley near Pasadena, California, in a predominantly immigrant Chinese and Hispanic suburb, working in my parents' restaurant. My parents were immigrants many times over and I was actually born in Rome, Italy." Describing her parents' background in more detail, she mentioned that they were born in the 1950s during the Cultural Revolution in China. As part of that generation, her father had to participate in the sent-down youth program. Her family would later immigrate all over the world, from China to Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, Italy, and finally, the United States.

Reflecting on this part of her family history, Christine explained: "I really kind of inherited almost a sense of displacement from my family, because I experienced that at such a young age. Our journey to the United States was not our first time we were ever immigrants. But the one thing that remained constant was the fact that we experienced these homes as someone who is Chinese." From this, her interest in gaining a deeper understanding of her parents' culture and her roots through the courses offered at Wellesley led her to the EALC department: "I wanted to use language and use the classes at Wellesley to help ground me in this identity."

While talking about one of the courses she took that really stuck with her, I felt I got to know her better as a person, beyond all her accomplishments. She brought up how the course introduced her to one of her favorite film directors, Wong Kar-Wai, who has directed acclaimed films like "In the Mood for Love" and "Chungking Express." "Watching those films just gave me so much empathy for what my parents must have been experiencing when they were my age, making that first immigration journey. Those courses gave me the language and the context to take agency over my own identity."

I asked Christine about her motivations and experience returning to her parents' home country with the Fulbright program. In our discussion of her environmental change project to address the water contamination in these rural Chinese villages, I could tell how passionate she felt about using her education to solve the problems that she saw. She told me, "I saw a need and I really couldn't turn away from it. Being out there when I was 19 and seeing village conditions on the Loess Plateau, it was different for me compared to my other colleagues because I actually had roots to that place. Going out, doing field research, it made me realize I have an opportunity to use some of my skills and resources and network

to essentially go back to where my parents are from and try to make a positive difference."

On the topic of her identity as a Chinese American, Christine shared about her family's unique background, with ties and cultural influences from various regions of China, and how it has allowed her to better understand and connect with a diversity of people. "My dad was ethnically born in the north, but got sent down to Xinjiang, so I really have the cultural heritage of Shandong and western China. When I'm with my dad's side of the family, we like to eat Muslim food (Xinjiang is home to a significant Muslim population). My mother is from Shanghai. And because my parents both immigrated to Hong Kong, we also have the Cantonese heritage. One thing I'm personally very grateful for is being able to connect culturally with so many different areas of China." In her position as a Fulbright Scholar, Christine traveled to many different parts of China. She recounted a memory of traveling with the ambassador on a diplomatic visit to the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, which is a predominantly Muslim part of China. "For him, it was interesting to see the diversity of China. China is often presented as a monolith, but once you actually go into the country and you travel 3000 miles in one direction, it couldn't be more different!" Thinking back on her own experience, she said to me, "I just felt that I was able to make so much of that time of my life living in China because I had the language and the interest; I was almost primed to be able to understand that diversity."

As the end of our interview drew to a close, I asked Christine what she would say if she could say a few words to herself in college. What she said really resonated with me and reminded me of what all of us came here to do: "There is equal importance to nourishing your mind, as well as nourishing your soul. Especially in a liberal arts setting. I think that it's easy to go into Wellesley and try to put yourself on a pre-professional track. And there's nothing wrong with that. But I think what's beautiful about the way we are set up to learn and the way the school wants us to learn is that it also gives us so many opportunities to find other ways that we can nourish our souls, whether that is developing language capacity in a culture that's not yours, or reconnecting with your own culture and finding identity and depth in that."

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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