

Asian Studies Program

Newsletter

SPRING 2006

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President Baenninger and President Reinhart Tour Asia



President MaryAnn Baenninger and Dietrich toured Singapore, Hong Kong and Mainland China last November. After their return, CSB students Gesa Santos and Tai Ping Lee interviewed the presidents about their tour of Asia. [Page 6]

Asian Studies Program

College of Saint Benedict/ Saint John's University

<http://www.csbsju.edu/asianstudies>

A note from the editors:

As the Asian Studies Program Student Workers, we have created this newsletter so that we can inform the CSB/SJU community. We both enjoy working in this program because of the great learning opportunity it has to offer.

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**United, we can
move a
mountain.**

China Insights

This year marked the 20th anniversary since CSB/SJU started its study abroad program in Beibei. A ceremony commemorating this milestone took place in November and CSB and SJU presidents, dignitaries from Southwest China University, CSB/SJU, students and alumni of CSB/SJU were in attendance. After twenty years of solid relationship between CSB/SJU and SWU, it is clear that our program is well established.

For me personally and the 25 students enrolled in the China Study Abroad Program, Fall semester in China was a memorable learning and cultural experience. Our program started in Beijing, where we were escorted by Mr. Li and Ms. Xiao, from SWU, through the monuments and historical sites of the capital city including the Forbidden City, Tiananmen Square, the Temple of Heaven, the Ming Tombs and the magnificent Great Wall. Visiting this famous wall entailed four hours of hiking, climbing many steps and being very hot.

After our initial twelve days of touring China together, our group became quite comfortable with each other. Upon arrival at SWU everyone was eager to settle in their dorm rooms and begin attending daily classes. We quickly fell into a routine of work and play and started to forge friendships with SWU Chinese students.



We took classes in Chinese History, Calligraphy, Martial Arts, Literature and Mandarin. The professors assigned to teach our classes were very dedicated to their fields of study and enjoyed teaching American students. We learned a lot in these classes.

Now that the program is over, I reflect back on my time spent in China and think of all the rewarding experiences my

students and I had meeting the Chinese people, experiencing their incredible generosity, hospitality and the love for their country.

Thoughts of the wonders of the Xi'An terracotta warriors, the Forbidden City, Yangtze River, and the magnificent beauty of the mountains around Guilin and Yangshuo come to mind when I think of China. And of course, how could I not report on all the progress in China we were able to witness firsthand? China is undoubtedly emerging as another superpower in the world. Go China!...and for those students looking for a fascinating cultural and academic experience abroad... Go To China!

Vilma Chiu Walter
2005 Director
China Study Abroad Program
College of St. Benedict/St.
John's University

Joint Research Project between Southwest University in China

Professor Henry Jakubowski will lead 8 science (biology, biochemistry, chemistry and physics) majors from CSB/SJU to China this summer to conduct joint research projects with students and faculty at Southwest University. Participants will visit and tour Beijing for several days before arriving at Southwest University outside of

Chongqing to begin their research. At the conclusion of their six week stay in China, the program participants will return to CSB/SJU along with 8 science students from Southwest for continuing research on our campuses. Jakubowski led the semester long study abroad program at Southwest University in 2004 and has been interested in

developing deeper ties to Southwest ever since. This innovative and groundbreaking project is a tremendous opportunity for CSB/SJU and Southwest University to deepen our friendship and mutual understanding through the pursuit of shared goals and principles.

Asian Studies Learning Community Welcomes Dr. Matthew Welch for Annual Residency Program, Leads Trip to the MIA

Dr. Matthew Welch, the curator of Japanese and Korean art at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, visited CSB/SJU for a two-day residency program on March 13-14. Paid for with a grant from the Twin Cities-based Bush Foundation, the residency program has been an important addition to Asian Studies programming over the past five years. Dr. Welch's visit included a dinner and group discussion with Asian Studies faculty and administration, lunch with officers of the Asia Club, a lecture to students in Professor Richard Bohr's East Asian history class, and a key note address entitled, "Beyond the Bamboo Curtain: Why Asian Art Matters." His program left many members of our community eager to learn more about Asian art and what

is has to teach us about the various Asian cultures.



Students and faculty received a second opportunity to learn from Dr. Welch on March 23, when 90 members of the CSB/SJU community traveled to the Twin Cities for a Chinese dinner and a private tour of the Asian art collection at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. Matthew Welch joined the group for dinner at Peking Garden before the visit to the MIA. With so many participants, Dr. Welch broke the group into three and led a

tour of the Japanese collection. Richard Bresnahan, artist in residence at SJU, led groups through the museum's Chinese ceramics collection, while Manju Parikh, Professor of Political Science, and Jennifer Joffee, the recently hired Assistant Professor of Art, led students through the South Asian collection. Like the Residency Program, this event was made possible by the Asian Studies Learning Community and the generous support of the Bush Foundation.



Japan Study Abroad

BUNKYO University hosts Japan Study Abroad Program and Alumni Reunion

Bunkyo University, located in the heart of Tokyo, served as the site for CSB/SJU's Japan study abroad program. This was the third year CSB/SJU students studied at Bunkyo, but the relationship between CSB/SJU and Bunkyo goes back many years. Students on this year's program had the amazing experience of climbing Mount Fuji and visited the controversial Yakasune Shrine. The students particularly enjoyed the Japanese language

instruction at Bunkyo, which gave them the tools to help build friendships with Japanese people and gain a deeper understanding of Japanese culture.



During the course of the semester, Bunkyo played host to a CSB/SJU alumni gathering. The event was held on Friday,

November 25th 2005, the day after American Thanksgiving and included CSB/SJU alums, several students from the current Japan study abroad program, several Bunkyo students who had studied at CSB for a year, as well as Bunkyo University President Shimada and other staff.



Eve Vang Researches Hmong Community in Minnesota

Eve Vang, a junior Political Science major at CSB, was recently recognized for her research on recent Hmong immigration to Minnesota. After presenting her research project on "The Hmong Refugee Resettlement in Minneapolis" in the annual National Hmong Conference in mid-March, she received mention in several media sources, including the Star Tribune and is seen as a future leader of the Hmong community.

"I am the first generation of Hmong Americans. Now, I am witnessing the second wave of Hmong refugees arriving in the U.S., thirty years after the first wave. I feel very connected to my Hmong heritage and I really want to help my people," said Eve. Eve's passion to gain a deeper understanding of, and make a difference in, the Hmong community was made possible after receiving a highly competitive summer research fellowship from the Social Science Division of the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR). With CUR's support, Eve carried out a research project on the Hmong refugee

resettlement in the summer of 2005. "The research process was very challenging but very rewarding!" said Eve. She interviewed eighteen Hmong families to get first-hand information about their Hmong resettlement experience. Her first major challenge was communication. To communicate with the newly arrived families, Eve needed to conduct interviews in the Hmong language, and she spent many hours working with her parents to improve her vocabulary. Eve also met with various service providers and government officials to explore the kinds of help that the new Hmong immigrants get.

"Resettlement of new Hmong immigrants 30 years ago was much easier. There was better planning before they came to the U.S. and better resources provided by various religious groups after their arrival. However, today, it is much harder. We thought that we were prepared for the coming of the new immigrants, but we were not," Eve said. In the course of her research, Eve found that "anchor families" (relatives who

came to the U.S. in the first wave) are the main source of help to the new immigrants, and many of these families have struggles and hardships of their own. Competition and rivalry among different Hmong organizations made cooperation difficult. Lack of communication among the organizations lead to a redundancy of service programs in certain areas and a shortage of services in other areas.

Eve expressed that her faculty advisor, Dr. Manju Parikh, was very supportive throughout her research process. Dr. Parikh guided her in collecting information and in using the tremendous amount of information she collected. Eve plans to continue working for the advancement of the Hmong community in Minnesota after graduation. She hopes to work in the public sector in Minneapolis for about two years before going to graduate school for law and public policy.

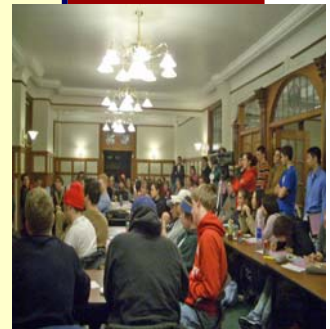


Asian Studies Learning Community and Career Services Sponsor Program on Careers in Asia

The Asian Studies Learning Community and CSB/SJU's Career Services office co-sponsored an event on February 1, 2006 to introduce students to opportunities for careers related to Asia. Professor David Bennetts moderated a panel of four individuals who work frequently in Asia or with Asian people. The panel included Sue Halena, an Editor at the St. Cloud Times, who accompanied the Governor's Tour of China last

year; Tom Ensteveldt, an SJU alum who has worked in the international trade business for more than three decades; Vijay Puri, Vice President of International Sales at Stearns County based DeZURIK Water Controls; and Megumi Sunako, an analyst with J.D. Power's and Associates whose work is focused on the Asian automotive industry. The panelists encouraged the students to take advantage of internationally focused courses, study abroad

opportunities and foreign language study as the best way to prepare themselves to live and work in the new "Asian Century." The program attracted more than 100 students. Many of the students stayed after to meet the panelists individually and ask questions related to their career paths.



Rogers to Lead May Term Trip to South China

Joseph Rogers, the Coordinator of Asian Studies at CSB/SJU, will lead a group of 12 students to Hong Kong and South China this May and June. Students will stay at Maryknoll House while in Hong Kong and get the opportunity to visit and learn from the large CSB/SJU alumni community there. The

program also includes a tour of the Pearl River Delta area of Guangdong Province, China's wealthiest and most economically progressive region. The program will also visit Zhanjiang Normal College in the Southwest corner of Guangdong, where the students will study Chinese language and culture

and have a home-stay experience with a Chinese family. Many CSB/SJU alumni have taught English at Zhanjiang Normal over the past decade, and several groups from Zhanjiang Normal have visited our campuses in Minnesota.

S. Janet Carroll, MM, Visits CSB/SJU

S. Janet Carroll, a Maryknoll Missionary who has devoted her life to reaching out to the Catholic Church in China visited CSB/SJU on February 21, 2006. S. Janet is a Maryknoll Missionary who lived in Taiwan for 16 years. In 1989, she helped create the U.S. Catholic China Bureau to conduct outreach to the Church in China and to

educate Americans about the Church in China. S. Janet has also served as editor of *China Church Quarterly*. She frequently leads travel tours to China, helping build bridges between the US and China's 12 million Catholics. S. Janet was introduced by Abbot Timothy Kelly, OSB. Her talk focused on the impact of economic development in

China and how it relates to the spiritual longings of individual Chinese. S. Janet also answered questions from the audience on many issues facing China and Chinese Catholics today.

President Baenninger and President Reinhart Tour Asia

To President Reinhart: *You have been traveling in Asia frequently, what do you enjoy most about visiting Asia?*

President Reinhart: First of all I enjoy connecting with our alumni when I am in Asia and learning about their lives and the rich culture in which they participate. I like to see what they have taken from Saint John's and how they are fitting that into their lives in Asia.

I also enjoy seeing and experiencing the amazing contrasts between the Asian culture that includes great economic transformation and the existence of the indigenous cultures. Additionally, I love the glimpses of the Buddhist, Shinto, and Dao philosophies and religions that I observe in the region.

How has China changed since you were first there?

President Reinhart: My first visit was in January 1990, just six months after the Tiananmen Square tragedy. Our program in Beibei had been cancelled that year because we were not sure how to deal with the political unrest that China was going through at that time. That visit was before the great economic transformation that China was about to undergo. I remember there being bicycles everywhere at that time whereas now the number of cars just takes your breath away. Since then there has been an incredible amount of building done, especially in the larger cities, with high rise buildings, beautiful lighting, and the obvious appearance of a great economic boom.

To President Baenninger: *Was this your first trip to China?*

President Baenninger: This was my first trip to China. I've traveled a lot over most of Europe and some of the Middle East, but I've never had the opportunity to go to Asia. In fact, I almost didn't go on this trip because it was going to take so much time. In the end, I decided to go, thinking it could be a once in a lifetime experience.



Were you surprised by what you saw and learned?

President Baenninger: I had read a lot about China before I went on the trip, and most recently I read Thomas Friedman's book, *The World Is Flat*, about how the world economy is changing, and how China is a big part of that. I was mostly surprised by the fact that a lot of China that I saw was more like a modern, technologically sophisticated country than like a third world country. I was very surprised by the commerce and a little dismayed by the Westernization of some of the cities, most especially Beijing. There are parts of Beijing that feel like 5th Avenue in New York.

I was very surprised by the kindness shown to us by everyone we met. In many countries, people are wary of

Americans because we have a reputation for being "selfish" travelers who want a culture to meet our needs. We tried to avoid tourist traps, we got to meet a lot of "real" people, and they were wonderful to all of us.

How did you find the Chinese culture? Was it different from what you expected?

President Baenninger: I talked about this a bit in my answer to the last question. One of the things that surprised me was that, contrary to my expectations, and my own cultural self-centeredness, not a lot of people expressed an interest in coming to the U.S., or importing talent from the U.S. China, rightly is beginning to feel quite self-sufficient. They want us as business and even cultural partners, but they don't want to "become" American or bring in Americans to run their corporations. Their approach in this regard is the right one, in my opinion.



To President Reinhart and President Baenninger: *What was the highlight of the trip?*

President Reinhart: There were actually two great highlights. The first was attending the 20th anniversary celebration at Southwest University at Beibei.

President Baenninger and President Reinhart Tour Asia

It was wonderful to see how that University has been transformed over the past 15-16 years- it is much larger in area now and has many new, beautiful buildings. The second was the visits that SJU and Board of Regent member Canning Fok arranged for our delegation in the Hong Kong area. Because of Canning's generous hospitality and significant influence, our delegation met with high ranking civic and business leaders including the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Education.



President Baenninger: There were several highlights of the trip. One of the corporations we visited is run by a (Chinese) Johnnie grad in Hong Kong. He was extremely gracious as our host. He wined and dined us and, along with other Chinese Johnnies, made us feel welcome. It was great to see our own grads as Johnnie-China hybrids, truly international people.

A couple of the small things that were highlights of the trip included buying and eating baked sweet potatoes from a street vendor in Beijing, like you would buy a brat at a football game here. They were delicious, and our group walked through a Beijing market eating and sharing them. I think they cost about 25 cents a piece! We

also saw an open air seafood and meat market that had incredible species of sea creatures that I've never seen before. There were even "unmentionable" body parts of animals that were delicacies there that we would never think of eating.

The food, generally, was a highlight of the trip. We ate from dawn to dusk. I love Chinese food, and Asian food generally (there was a lot of Vietnamese, Thai, and Japanese food served in most of the hotels we were in, alongside Chinese food). I've very adventurous with trying things, so I ate a lot of things that I hadn't eaten before.

Another highlight was visiting the Watson's water plant in Hong Kong, where they even have a spring water called San Benedetto (St. Benedict in Italian!)



To President Reinhart and President Baenninger: What was it like to visit CSB/SJU students in China?

President Reinhart: This was a very moving experience for me. It was amazing to see how well our students have settled into this very obviously Chinese college campus. It was clear that the professors there have a great love for our students and that teaching

them is the highlight of the year for the Chinese faculty.



Although I did not spend a great deal of time with our students, it was obvious that there was a great deal of energy and excitement about studying at this wonderful school.

President Baenninger: Really, the biggest highlight of the trip was visiting our students in Bei Bei. I left feeling so proud of them. They were much loved by the community at the university and they had become part of the community. I was amazed at their knowledge, their complete comfort in the environment, and their ability to take the differences in lifestyle in their stride. For example, there was only hot water a certain periods of the day for a short time. I heard not one complaint about that from our students. Electricity is also rationed and they coped with that without batting an eye. They gave their time to help other people learn English. You had to be there to see how rare they were. At a University where there are 50,000 students living, and only 100 international students, we were told, our Bennies and Johnnies were the largest single group of international students there. They all learned a fair amount of Mandarin and used it

President Baenninger and President Reinhart Tour Asia

effectively. I got to spend a lot of time with Stephanie Roers, because here parents, sister and brother-in-law were on the trip with us. Steph was awesome—and her language skills allowed her to come with her parents for a couple of days in Beijing and be their tour guide.

Southwest University showed their love for our students everywhere! There was a HUGE outdoor TV screen that reviewed the 20 year history of our relationship with them. There were banners everywhere, and we were treated like dignitaries.



To President Reinhart: How can CSB/SJU engage Asia more effectively in the future?

President Reinhart: We need to deepen our study of Asian languages and culture here on campus, and to help students who have studied abroad integrate what they have learned into our campus life. Conversely, we also need to make a deeper connection to students from Asian cultures who are studying on our campus. We need to come to understand their experience here and build bridges between the Asian culture and the larger campus community.

To President Reinhart and

President Baenninger: Did it change your views about study abroad, and about Asian studies?

President Reinhart: I have been to China five or six times and have always had a deep respect for our Study Abroad Program and for Asian Studies. It was interesting on this trip to hear how impressed the other presidents from the Minnesota Private College Council delegation were with the CSB/SJU alumni they met in China. The group met with Kevin Clancy, an SJU alum who is the coordinator of the MaryKnoll Teacher Program. This is the first time I have had a chance to see how these former CSB/SJU students are now making a difference in China and to get a sense of the great careers they are in the process of developing.

President Baenninger: I am a champion of study abroad. I even studied abroad three times myself as an adult to learn French. My family is very international. My husband was born in Yokohama, Japan. His father is Swiss (100 years old) and speaks 7 languages, including Japanese. Our children grew up with international students visiting us, and my daughter had her first study abroad experience, in Nagoya, Japan, when she was 11 years old. If it were up to me alone, I would have all CSB/SJU students study abroad. It didn't change my views at all, it just enhanced them even

more. I'm very proud of our Asian studies program. We have exceptional faculty members committed to the program, like Richard Bohr, Richard Ice, Henry Jakubowski, John Hasselberg, and many others, who make the program great, along with Joe Rogers who keeps it going, and Dallas Kenny who is a champion of all of our international programs.

To President Reinhart and President Baenninger: Given the previous visits, when do you see yourself traveling to Asia again?

President Reinhart: Well, I'd go tomorrow if I could, but more realistically it will probably be sometime in 2007 as part of our Sesquicentennial celebration. I would like to help make our wonderful alumni in Hong Kong and China part of this great celebration because they, too, are such an important part of Saint John's history.

President Baenninger: Actually, I'll be going to Vietnam this coming January on a Benedictine Center for Lifelong learning trip. I hope to one day go to Japan to see where my husband spent his first five years. Someday I'll get to Thailand to take a cooking class to help me be a better Thai cook!

CSB/SJU Welcomes Two New South Asian Experts to Our Faculty

Two academic departments at CSB/SJU completed tenure-track searches this spring that resulted in the hiring of two experts on South Asia. Dr. Jennifer Joffe was hired by the Art Department and Dr. Brendan LaRocque was hired by the History Department.

Joffe received her PhD in Asian and Islamic Art History from the University of Minnesota in 2005. She has taught courses in the arts of India, China, Japan, Southeast Asia, and the greater Islamic world at a number of liberal arts schools including Carleton College, St. Olaf College and the University of St. Thomas. In addition to teaching Asian and Islamic Art History courses, she has also taught traditional western Art History surveys. Her primary area of research is art and architecture of the Indian subcontinent. Her doctoral dissertation, *Art, Architecture, and Politics in Mewar (Rajasthan, India), 1628-1710*, which she is currently revising for publication, focuses on the use of art and architecture as political propaganda. She recently presented a paper entitled "Authority and Legitimacy in

Sisodia Court Painting, 1680-1710" at a symposium at the San Diego Museum of Art, and has recently co-authored, with Islamicist D. Fairchild Ruggles, an article entitled "Rajput Gardens and Landscapes" for a special *Dumbarton Oaks* volume to be published in 2007.

LaRocque received his Ph.D. in History from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He specializes in South Asian and Islamic history, and his scholarly research currently focuses on Islamic and Hindu religious movements in seventeenth-century India. Brendan has previously taught at UW-Madison, Xavier University, and Macalester College on subjects including colonialism, Gandhi, South Asian social movements, and religious nationalism. He frequently gives talks at local schools and community organizations, and is involved with various social justice issues including those concerning economic development, and racial and gender equity. Brendan has spent many years living overseas, in places including Pakistan, India, Israel and Palestine. His

wife Meera teaches Sociology and Women's and Gender Studies at Carleton College, specializing in the study of religious fundamentalist movements in South Asia. In his free time Brendan enjoys reading literature (his favorite writers include Arundhati Roy, Italo Calvino, and Faiz Ahmed Faiz), listening to music (favorites: Ravi Shankar, Burning Spear), and ice-skating and hiking with Meera and their daughter Rabiya.

The addition of Joffe and LaRocque will complement an already impressive list of faculty teaching South Asian-related content. The Asian Studies program warmly welcomes them to our campus community.