



APAC News

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY WEATHERHEAD EAST ASIAN INSTITUTE
NEWSLETTER OF THE ASIA PACIFIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL

April 8, 2005

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/weai/apac>

Seeing Sakura in NYC, sans Sake



By Lucia Vancurra

Long before the first hint of spring in Japan, the anticipation of the arrival of the cherry blossoms begins. Department stores fill with cherry blossom-flavored cakes and pink decorations adorn train stations and streets.

The cherry blossoms, or *sakura* bloom for only a few short days and the *hanami* (flower-watching) parties that crop up in parks across Japan are a national tradition. Japanese media vigorously track the progress of the blossoms on the daily news, from the first appearance in tropical Okinawa to the final blooms in northern Hokkaido. The sakura wave usually hits Tokyo by mid- to late-April but because it is so difficult to predict exactly when the flowers will bloom, *hanami* is one party that is hard to plan in advance.

But when they do bloom, parks and sidewalks suddenly fill with picnickers and strolling couples. After 5 p.m., the parties get

raucous as office workers pour out of buildings, rip off their ties or kick off their high heels and get down in the grass (or pavement in many cases) for an evening of sake and song with their coworkers.

Junior office staff are often sent to the parks early in the morning to “reserve” a spot for the evening’s party. Vendors set up shop to sell the ubiquitous sake as well as food and beer so little party prep is needed.

The sakura are the ultimate symbol of the impermanence of natural beauty. The bare trees of Japan’s parks suddenly explode into a haze of ghostly pink and white flowers, often rapidly opening within the space of a few hours. And then, a few days later the petals begin to fall. Before the day is out, the ground is covered with faded flowers.

A few cups of sake is often the only encouragement needed to inspire otherwise stoic office workers to take this annual

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Upcoming Events...

Zhongwen Luntan/ China Forum

- **Chinese Language Table (all levels)**

Friday, April 8, 4-6 p.m., IAB 918

NBK/JEF (with LASA)

- **SUSHI-SALSA Party**

Tuesday, April 26, 7:30-10 p.m., Ancel Plaza

APAC/NBK

- **End of the Year/Graduation Party**

*Friday May 13, 5:30-7:30 p.m. (tentative),
location TBA*

opportunity to wax lyrical about the transience of youth and the importance of cherishing life.

Thanks to Japan's generosity hanami parties can now be enjoyed in the United States too. The most famous stateside cherry trees are those in Washington D.C., which were a gift from the city of Tokyo in 1912, a sign of friendship between the two cities. The D.C. Cherry Blossom festival attracts thousands and even crowns its own Cherry Blossom Queen.

However, restrictions on sake-drinking in America's parks may leave Japanese visitors disappointed at US hanami parties. Anyone who has experienced hanami in Japan will doubtless feel that it just isn't quite *hanami* without sake.

New York has its own Sakura Park near Columbia University; however the best place for hanami in NYC is the Brooklyn Botanical Garden with its hundreds of sakura. Its annual Sakura Masturi (Cherry Blossom Festival) will be April 30-May 1, complete with Japanese cultural performances, food, but unfortunately no sake.

Visit www.bbg.org to check out the CherryWatch, a map that will track the progress of the blooms as the season draws closer.

Anyone interested in learning more about culture and history of hanami can join Nihon Benkyo Kai/ Japan Exchange Forum (NBK/JEF). The groups will attend the Sakura Matsuri in Brooklyn, on April 30 for lunch among the blossoms.

Contact lv2128@columbia.edu for more information on this and other NBK events.

If you have any comments or suggestions for future APAC events, please write your PAs:

Aiko: al2220@columbia.edu
Jocelyn: jmc2111@columbia.edu
Veronika: vlr2102@columbia.edu

Asia-related Student Groups

Greater China Initiative (GCI)

Jimmy Zou (jz2107), Le Li (ll2178), Cheng Hong (ch2203), Ivy Yang (isy2101), Jocelyn Chan (jmc2111), Riga Tenzin (rt2123)

Korea Focus

Sung-Min Cho (sc746), Mimi Do (md2214), Song-Hee Ghim (sg2186)

Mongolia Club

Ganbat Chuluunkhuu (gc2123), Bat-Erdene (bb2129), Jargalan Batbayar (jb1298), Otgonjargal Okhidoi (oo2006)

Nihon Benkyo Kai/Japan Exchange Forum (NBK/JEF)

Kevin Burgwinkle (kjb2111), Lucia Vancura (lv2128), Ryoko Nakamura (rmn2102), Shoko Nakagawa (sn2156), Daisuke Kishi (dk339), Haruko Kamei (hk2228), Nozomi Hashimoto (nh2126), Kazuhiko Shimizu (ks2292), Martin Oredsson (mlo2104)

Southeast Asia Student Initiative (SEASI)

Kathleen Keiser (kek2112), Michael Roston (mr2302)

Taiwan Focus

Jimmy Zou (jz2107)

Zhongwen Luntan/ China Forum

Vanessa Pu (vp2120), Lisa Karz (ltk2103), Martin Oredsson (mlo2104), Alex Whitworth (apw2101), Ken Lee (jl2035), Kelly McAskill (kam2125)

WEAI Brownbag Lunch Lectures

The Brownbag Lectures at the Weatherhead East Asian Institute feature scholars, policy makers, journalists and activists who are engaged in research on East and Southeast Asia. These talks, which are open to everyone, take place

virtually every Monday through Thursday, from 12 - 1:30 p.m. in IAB 918, unless otherwise noted.

Friday, April 22

Red Poppies and Other Tibetan Novels

Alai, writer and winner of the Mao Dun

Literary Prize

(co-sponsored by the Modern Tibetan Studies Program)

Friday, May 6

Social Ramifications of AIDS: An Update on the Orphans of China's Henan Province

Chung To, founder and chairperson, Chi Heng Foundation-Hong Kong

Other East Asia Events at CU

Thursday, April 28

Heian Love: Domestic and Imported

Time: 6-7:30 p.m.

Location: Kent Hall 403

SPEAKER: Robert Borgen, professor of history, University of California-Davis

“Murasaki Shikibu would have us believe that, in Heian times, professors were a stodgy lot. Some of their literary output in Chinese, however, reveals that they could enjoy playful, albeit learned, erotic diversions. More remarkably, they chose to include such compositions in their anthologies of literary exemplars. This talk will introduce one example of Heian erotic writing in Chinese and attempt to place it in the context of both Chinese and Japanese literary traditions.”

Part of the Donald Keene Center's Special Lecture Series

Sunday, May 1

Speech by Dr. Peng Ming-Min

Time: 3-5 p.m.

Location: Low Library

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“China's ‘anti-separation’ legislation, among other things, has put Taiwan on the front pages of newspapers worldwide again. Many in the world view ‘the Taiwan issue’ as one of the few causes for regional instability today, or at its best, a trigger for WWII.”

Sponsored by Columbia Taiwanese Student Association (CTSA)

Monday, May 2

Special screening of *Godjira* (1954), in its original, uncut version (Japanese with English subtitles)

Time: 8 p.m.

Location: Lerner Hall, Roone Arledge Auditorium

Price: free

RSVP: call 212.854.4019 by April 27 for complimentary tickets

Part of “Godzilla in New York,” a series co-sponsored by the Donald Keene Center and WEAI.

Sunday, May 15

2005 Spring Taiwanese Arts & Literature Festival

Time: 5 p.m.

Location: Lerner Hall, 2F, Game Room

Price: \$5

RSVP: register online at www.ColumbiaTSA.org

Opening reception and cultural exhibit will include photography, oilpaper umbrellas, pottery, paper and traditional gloved puppet shows. At 6 p.m., screening of Taiwanese award-winning film, “Millennium Mambo,” by Hou Hsiao Hsien.

Co-sponsored by Columbia Taiwanese Student Association (CTSA)

East Asia Events around NYC

Monday, April 11

Contemporary Russian Policy Towards the Korean Peninsula

Alexander Vorontsov, head of section for Korean Studies, Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences

Time: 2:30-4 p.m.

Location: The Korea Society, 950 Third Avenue, Eighth Floor, New York City

RSVP: 212-759-7525 or

lillian.ny@koreasociety.org

“North Korea's ties with Russia have warmed substantially since their nadir in the early 1990s under then-President Boris Yeltsin, when Russia began bolstering its connections with South Korea. Following President Vladimir Putin's inauguration, the Russian Federation moved to mend ties with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)-a move it believed would strengthen the Federation's position on the Korean peninsula. In July of 2000, Putin visited P'yongyang, where he and Chairman Kim Jong Il signed the Agreement on Friendship, Good Neighborly Relations and Cooperation-the first international accord Chairman Kim signed and the first time a Russian or Soviet leader had come to P'yongyang for a summit. Where do Russo-Korean ties stand today? As a member of the six party talks, what does Russia see as a feasible method to end the nuclear standoff on the Korean peninsula? What are the Russian Federation's policies and strategies to deal with the DPRK? What constitutes its vision of a unified Korea? Join Korea expert Alexander Vorontsov as he answers these and other pressing questions at a forum sponsored by The Korea Society.”

Tuesday, April 12

Preventive Action: Responding to the Grievances of Muslims in the Philippines, a

lecture co-sponsored by Asia Society and the Council on Foreign Relations

Time: 12-2 p.m.

Location: Council of Foreign Relations, 58 East 68th St., NYC

Cost: \$35

RSVP: 212.517.ASIA

For more information, visit <http://www.asiasource.org/asip>

Saturday, April 16

NBK/JEF's exclusive guided tour of *Little Boy: The Arts of Japan's Exploding Subculture* at The Japan Society

An exclusive guided tour for SIPA students of the new exhibition of the freshest Japanese contemporary art curated by one of the rising stars of the Japanese art scene (Takashi Murakami), which opens this month.

Time: 11 a.m.

Location: The Japan Society, Japan Society Gallery, 333 East 47th Street

Cost: FREE!

RSVP: Places for this tour are limited and based on a first come first served basis. To reserve your place on this tour please contact Ryoko Nakamura at ryoko.nakamura@columbia.edu

“*Little Boy: The Arts of Japan's Exploding Subculture* explores the culture of postwar Japan through its arts and popular visual media, from the perspective of one of Japan's most celebrated artists.

Focusing on the phenomenally influential subcultures of *otaku* (roughly translated as "pop cult fanaticism") and its relationships to Japan's artistic vanguard, Takashi Murakami explores the historical influences that shape Japanese contemporary art and its distinct graphic idioms.

The exhibition's title, *Little Boy*, refers to the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945, clearly locating the birth of these new

cultural forms in the trauma and generational aftershock. In Murakami's perspective, a resonant figure for Japan's contemporary condition is that of the "little boy"--both the nickname for the bomb dropped on Hiroshima and an image of Japan's infantilized culture.

Little Boy concludes Murakami's "Superflat" trilogy, a project conceived in 2000 to introduce a new wave of Japanese artists and to place their work in the historical context of traditional Japanese styles and concepts. The exhibition will showcase the work of key otaku artists and designers, many of whom are cult celebrities in Japan and introduces their film and video animations, video games and internet sites, music, toys and fashion to American audiences."

East Asia Opportunities

From time to time, *APAC News* will compile internship and employment opportunities for its readers. If you would like to advertise an East Asia-related position, please email vlr2102@columbia.edu.

Weatherhead East Asian Institute

Position: Ex-EAS webmaster (part-time/work-study)

Description: The Expanding East Asian Studies (ExEAS) initiative is seeking a webmaster to update site content and post new material on its website. The ExEAS website (www.exeas.org) makes syllabi and teaching materials available to undergraduate educators nationwide. Hours will vary but will usually require no more than 10-15 hours of work per week. The day-to-day schedule and hours required per week are very flexible. The webmaster must be available to work on campus during the summer (including summer 2005). Pay is commensurate with experience (\$15/hr minimum).

Qualifications: Knowledge of basic HTML required; experience with Dreamweaver

preferred; Must be extremely detail oriented, have demonstrated ability to prioritize and work independently required. Editing experience is helpful, as is knowledge of or interest in East Asian history, culture or language.

To apply:

Applications are welcome from full-time undergraduate or graduate students at Columbia. To apply, please send a short resume featuring your past web and other technical experience (including personal/recreational experience) with URLs, to hj2015@columbia.edu.

Council on International Educational Exchange

Position: acting resident director in Hanoi, Vietnam for Fall 2005

Description: Established in 1991, the CIEE Study Center at Vietnam National University in Hanoi offers students the opportunity to gain meaningful insight into Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos through studies in language, history, culture, society and the arts. All the courses offered provide a deeper understanding of the region while encouraging interaction with local scholars, students, and citizens.

CIEE offers educational programs abroad for students, faculty and educational administrators. In addition, CIEE is responsible for the Annual Conference on International Educational Exchange, a major annual event for professionals in international educational exchange and is the founding institution and one of the on-going sponsors of the Journal of Studies in International Educational Exchange, a forum for noteworthy scholarship and provocative thinking about efforts to provide quality international educational exchange programs.

The Acting Resident Director oversees all aspects of the program including: management of the academic program,

relations with host university, student welfare, finances, organizing and leading all field excursions and management of local part-time assistants. The current CIEE Vietnam resident director will be taking an academic leave of absence during the fall 2005 semester.

This is a six-month contract that will begin on July 1, 2005. Compensation includes a salary of \$12,000, health insurance, international airfare and housing in the A2 facility.

Qualifications: Advanced proficiency in Vietnamese and fluency in English; MA in Southeast Asian Studies, History, Political Science, Economics or other relevant field; First-hand knowledge of Hanoi and other cities in Vietnam; Knowledge of the Vietnamese higher education system and culture; Living experience in Vietnam; Past teaching, counseling or administrative experience in the United States; Strong organizational management and communication skills

To Apply:

Interested parties should submit a cover letter, resume and contact info for two references to the Vietnam Search Committee through the CIEE website: www.ciee.org. The position will be kept open until filled. No phone calls please.

Radio Free Asia

Position: Korean language web editor

Description: For more information, visit:

http://www.rfa.org/english/about/jobs/2005/02/27/webeditor_koreanservice/

Congressional-Executive Commission on China

Position: research associate

Description: The Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC) is a 23-member panel of Senators, Representatives and Executive Branch officials tasked by Congress to monitor the Chinese government's compliance with international

human rights standards and to monitor the development of the rule of law in China.

The CECC reports annually on these issues to the President and Congressional leadership, making recommendations for policy action and legislation when appropriate. The CECC is also charged with maintaining lists of victims of human rights abuses in China, and for this purpose maintains a Political Prisoner Database. The CECC conducts hearings and staff-led roundtables throughout the year. The CECC and its support staff serve as a resource on China-related human rights and rule of law issues for Capitol Hill offices, the NGO community, the academic community and the general public.

The research associate will conduct research and complete writing assignments on specifically assigned human rights and rule of law issues, and will assist with researching individual political prisoner cases and updating and maintaining case records in the CECC Political Prisoner Database. The research associate may be called upon to support CECC hearings and roundtables, and may be asked to attend events relevant to CECC issues that other U.S. government and private sector organizations organize in Washington, D.C., and elsewhere. The research associate may be asked to travel to U.S. cities, and possibly to China or other foreign locations, on official business.

Qualifications: The successful candidate must be a U.S. citizen. Candidates should read Chinese characters well enough to complete research using Chinese language materials, with some assistance from dictionaries and computer programs. Fluent or native ability to speak Mandarin and read Chinese characters would be a plus. The successful candidate will likely have lived or studied in China, Hong Kong, or Taiwan.

In addition, the successful candidate must demonstrate excellent interpersonal and analytical skills, exceptional written and oral communications skills in English and the

ability, energy and enthusiasm to work on a team.

Salary will be consistent with Capitol Hill entry-level staff positions, with some consideration for experience and academic qualifications. CECC staff qualify for health insurance, a retirement program, a METRO transit subsidy and generous annual and sick leave.

To apply: Send a brief cover letter and current résumé not later than close of business on Monday, April 18, 2005, to Judy Wright, CECC Director of Administration, via e-mail at judy.wright@mail.house.gov or via fax at 202-226-3804. Please do not telephone call CECC about this vacancy.

APAC News is produced by the East Asia Institute program assistants. This is the last issue for the 2004-2005.

Thank you—and congratulations—to WEAI's graduating PAs, Jocelyn Chan and Aiko Lane, for their generous efforts at APAC.

APAC also distributes event notices via e-mail on a regular basis. If you would like to be added to our list, please email Jocelyn at jmc2111@columbia.edu.