



SIGUR CENTER FACULTY AND STAFF MODEL NEWLY DESIGNED SIGUR CENTER T-SHIRTS

# The Asian Connection

## Spring 2012

## Message from the Director

by Edward A. McCord

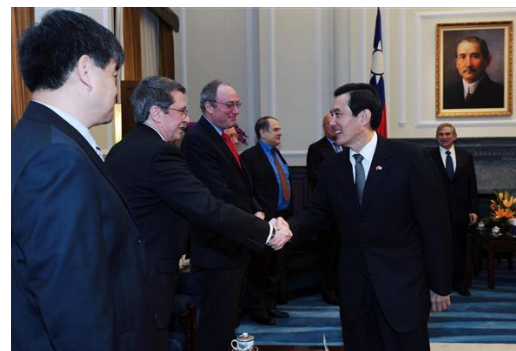
The Spring semester began for me with an exciting opportunity to join a group of scholars invited to observe presidential and legislature elections held in Taiwan on January 15. The host of this group was a long-time friend and partner of the Sigur Center, the National Chengchi University (NCCU)—particularly significant for me because I recently discovered that the founding of the Sigur Center twenty years ago was based on a memorandum of understanding between GWU and NCCU that began a series of biennial conferences on Taiwan that continues on today.

As a historian, I am very leery of ever using the word "historic" to describe a current event. But Taiwan's elections are a case where observers may still feel themselves inserted into a process of great historical import—the transition of a country from an authoritarian one-party state to a vibrant democracy. The newness of Taiwan's elections was demonstrated this time by the continued enthusiasm of the Taiwan people for the electoral process, with massive public rallies and 74 percent turnout of the electorate at the polls. At the same time, one now sees the growing maturity and confidence of the Taiwan people in their democratic system, which unfolded smoothly without incident and ended with

graceful victory and concession speeches by both winners and losers. Those who say that Asian culture (and particularly Chinese culture) is not suitable for democracy only have to look at the model provided by Taiwan where democracy was not only fought for but is enthusiastically accepted and practiced by its people.

The highlight of my trip, however, was a special invitation to join twelve foreign scholars in a meeting with President Ma Ying-jeou on the morning after his successful reelection to a second term. The president spoke generally to us about his hope to follow up on the success of his first administration in improving relations with both the People's Republic of China and the United States. But he also noted how students from the PRC in Taiwan, whom he met while campaigning, were following the electoral process with great interest, which suggested the potential influence of Taiwan's democratic experience on China's own political development. In doing so, the president confirmed my own sense of the significance of this election as part of a process with results beyond the victory of any one candidate.

Edward A. McCord  
Director



*Sigur Center Director, Ed McCord, meets with President Ma Ying-jeou the morning after Taiwan's presidential elections.*

## In This Issue

### ➤ Major Events

- Taiwan Lecture and Conference Series
- Faculty Lecture Series
- Subnational Asia Lecture Series
- Transnational Asia Lecture Series

### ➤ Affiliated Programs

- Friends of Korea
- Partnerships for International Strategies in Asia
- U.S.-Japan-South Korea Legislative Exchange Program
- Organization of Asian Studies
- Rising Powers Initiative

### ➤ Faculty Profile

- Shawn McHale

### ➤ Student Spotlight

- Caleb Dependahl

# Major Events

## Faculty Lecture Series

Last semester, the Sigur Center continued its focus on faculty expertise. The Center hosted three faculty speakers focusing on Pakistan, China, and Japan.



Book Discussion of "The Unraveling: Pakistan in the Age of Jihad" with author **John R. Schmidt** and discussant **Deepa Ollapally**, September 29, 2011.



"A Poet's Journey to the Yellow Mountains" with **Jonathan Chaves**, Professor of Chinese, October 19, 2011.



"The Ozawa Prosecution and Japanese Democracy: The 2009 Amendments to the Prosecution Review Commission Law and Turmoil in the Democratic Party of Japan" with **Carl Goodman**, November 3, 2011.



*Students, faculty, staff, and friends of the Sigur Center enjoy a spread of Asian food at the Annual Fall Welcome Reception.*

## Taiwan Lecture and Conference Series

In Fall 2011, The Sigur Center expanded its long-standing focus on Taiwan, hosting both a major conference and a roundtable on both historical and contemporary issues in Taiwan as well as co-sponsoring a 1911 Revolution Book exhibit and a Book Launch.

Roundtable: "The 1911 Revolution Remembered in 2011," October 24, 2011.



The event featured three prominent professors from the area: "Changing Emphases in the Study of the 1911 Revolution among American Historians of China" with **Keith Schoppa**, Professor and Doehler Chair in Asian History, Loyola College of Maryland; "Narratives of Commemoration: The PRC Looks Back on the 1911 Revolution" with **Edward A. McCord**, Associate Professor of History and International Affairs and Director, Sigur Center for Asian Studies, The George Washington University; and "The Legacy of 1911 and Democracy on Taiwan" with **Steven Phillips**, Professor, Towson University.

Conference: "Taiwan in a Shifting International Landscape," December 8, 2011.

The event consisted of two panels, discussing internal and external positions on the topic.



**Panel I: Perspectives from Taiwan:** "The Ma and Tsai Proposals for Cross-Strait Relations" with **Cal Clark**, Alumni Professor, Auburn University; "Taiwan Public Opinion toward the U.S. and China and Its Impact on Trilateral Relations" with **Yuan-Kang Wang**, Associate Professor, Western Michigan University; and "The China-Taiwan Trade Deal and the Ensuing East Asian Political Economic Order" with **Nancy Chunjuan Wei**, Associate Professor, University of Bridgeport.





**Panel II: Perspectives from the U.S. and the P.R.C.: "U.S. Policy toward Taiwan: Continuities and Challenges"** with **Shirley Kan**, Congressional Research Service; "The Taiwan Conundrum: The View from Beijing" with **Michael Yahuda**, Visiting Scholar, George Washington University; and "The Polarization of Politics in Korea: Implications for Taiwan" with **Stephen Costello**, President, ProGlobal Consulting.

#### Global Resources Center Presents a Book Exhibit on China's 1911 Revolution: A Centenary Retrospective



Check out these books or find more information at <http://tinyurl.com/d2vnxpz>

#### Book Launch: "Two New Books on the 1911 Revolution," September 13, 2011



Presentations by: **Judy Lu**, Former Head of Collection Services, Asian Division, Library of Congress, author of *The Birth of the First Republic In Asia* and **Mi Chu**, Head of Scholarly Services, Asian Division, Library of Congress, author of *Ju Zheng and the Xinhai Revolution*. Co-sponsored by the Sigur Center's Taiwan Education and Research Program and the Organization of Chinese Americans, DC Chapter.

### Subnational Asia Lecture Series



"Reconstruction and Beyond: The Great East Japan Earthquake and its Implications" with **Atsushi Seike**, President, Keio University, September 9, 2011. Co-sponsored with the US-Japan Research Institute.

Film screening of "This Prison Where I Live" with Director **Rex Bloomstein**, October 25, 2011.



Roundtable: "Views from the Frontlines: First-hand Accounts from Burma's Conflict Zones" with **Mahn Mahn**, Director, Backpack Health Worker Team; **Thart Kler**, Malaria Control Program Coordinator, Karen Department of Health and Welfare; **Ryan Libre**, Photojournalist, "Portraits of Independence: Inside the Kachin Independence Army;" and **Myra Dahgaypaw**, Karen Human Rights Activist; November 2, 2011.



"Evolving Property Rights and Shifting Organizational Forms: Evidence from Joint Venture Buyouts following China's WTO Ascension," with **Fariha Kamal**, Center for Economic Studies, U.S. Census Bureau, November 4, 2011. Co-sponsored with the GW Business School.



19th Annual Hahn Moo-Sook Colloquium in the Korean Humanities: "Staging Korea: Korean Theatre in Search of New Aesthetics," November 5, 2011. Co-sponsored with the Department of East Asian Languages & Literatures.



Invited Lecture: "Chinese Views of China's Role in Global Governance" with **Yan Xuetong**, Dean, Institute of Modern International Relations, Tsinghua University, November 8, 2011.

Student Forum: "Why Afghanistan is Worth It: A Conversation with the Ambassador from Afghanistan" with Ambassador **H.E. Eklil Hakimi** and Professor **Benjamin Hopkins**, November 14, 2011. Co-sponsored with International Affairs Society and Afghan Students Association.

### Transnational Asia Lecture Series



Book Discussion: "Warriors after War: Conversations with Indian and Pakistani Military Brass" with **Tridivesh Singh Maini**, Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, September 14, 2011.



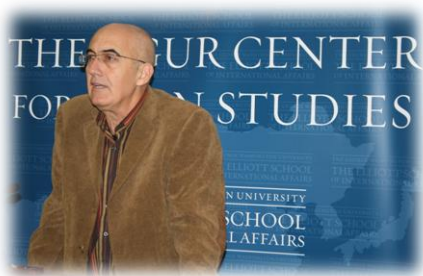
Conference: "The Okinawa Question: Regional Security, the US-Japan Alliance, and Futenma," September 19, 2011. Co-sponsored by the Nansei Shoto Industrial Advancement Center.



Roundtable: "Fifty Years of the Peace Corps in Asia: Voices from the Field" with former Peace Corps volunteers **Rachel Hatch**, **Laura Ahearn**, **Luke Ventura**, and **Robert Shepherd**, November 7, 2011.



Conference: "China, Russia, and the Existing World Order: Seeking to Overthrow the Status Quo or Merely Pursuing Advantage within It?" With **Kimitaka Matsuzato**, Hokkaido University; **Atsushi Ogushi**, Osaka University of Law and Economics; **Yuko Adachi**, Sophia University; **Shinichiro Tabata**, Hokkaido University; **Yugo Konno**, Mizuho Research Institute Ltd.; and discussants **Marlene Laruelle**, IERES; **Deepa Ollapally**, Sigur Center; and **Jiawen Yang**, GWU Business School, November 21, 2011. Co-sponsored with Rising Powers Initiative, and the Institute for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies.



Invited Lecture: "Japanese Internment of the Jewish Community in the Dutch East Indies, 1942-1945: Survivors' Memories and Reconciliation in Present-day Israel," with **Rotem Kowner**, Professor of Japanese History and Culture, University of Haifa, Israel, October 4, 2011.



Invited Lecture: "Chinese and Japanese Investments in South and Southeast Asia: Case Studies from the Automobile and Electronics Industries" with **Eric Harwit**, Professor, Asian Studies, University of Hawaii, November 16, 2011.



Invited Lecture: "Japanese Diplomacy and Military Maneuvering Prior to the Attack on Pearl Harbor" with **Takeo Iguchi**, Former Ambassador and Professor Emeritus, Shobu-Gakuen University, December 5, 2011.

## Affiliated Programs

### Friends of Korea

The Sigur Center increased its lineup of Korea-focused events this fall, co-sponsoring a Colloquium in the Korean Humanities, a faculty discussion with students, a policy briefing, and a film screening as well as hosting a Korean Visiting Scholar.



19th Annual Hahn Moo-Sook Colloquium in the Korean Humanities: "Staging Korea: Korean Theatre in Search of New Aesthetics," November 5, 2011. With **Ah-jeong Kim**, **Suk-Young Kim**, **Esther Kim Lee**, **Oh Tae Suk**, and **Chan E. Park**. Co-sponsored with the Department of East Asian Languages & Literatures.

- Organization of Asian Studies Conversations with Scholars discussion on "The Emotions of Justice: Gender, Status, and Legal Culture in Choson Korea, 1392-1910" with **Jisoo Kim**, Korea Foundation, Assistant Professor of History and International Affairs, GWU, November 17, 2011.





Roundtable/Policy Briefing: "U.S. and Korean Perspectives on the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement" with **Yoon-shik Park**, Professor of International Finance, GWU; **Kim Ghee-wan**, Minister for Economic Affairs, Embassy of the Republic of Korea; and commentator **Gregg Brazinsky**, Associate Professor of History and International Affairs, GWU, December 14, 2011.

Organization of Asian Studies Film Series: "Take Off" (Korea), February 7, 2011.

## Partnerships for International Strategies in Asia (PISA)

This past fall, PISA welcomed participants in **The Global City in World Affairs program**, the second year of PISA's collaboration with the Hong Kong Civil Service Bureau. Seven Administrative Officers participated in courses at the Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration and the Department of Organizational Sciences and Communication, as well as a weekly seminar taught by PISA's director, **Linda Yarr**.



Global Cities Participants in the DC Council Chambers

Additionally, the group had the opportunity to meet with policy-makers such as the Director of Washington DC's District Department of the Environment, and DC Council member Tommy Wells. The group also experienced the cultural diversity of Washington DC, with visits to Arena Stage and Clinica del Pueblo, which serves low-income Latino residents. The coursework and site visits together provided meaningful insight into what is required to manage and

lead the global cities of today and those of the future.

With the Institute of World Economics and Politics of the Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences, PISA co-sponsored an **International Colloquium on Climate Change Research, Leadership, and Community-based Initiatives** in Hanoi on November 16, 2011. Leading Vietnamese scholars and officials presented papers and debated a wide range of topics related to climate change. PISA publicly screened for the first time its video, *Adapting Our Lives, Changing our Legacies*. The conference received positive coverage in the Vietnamese press.

Hosted by Singapore Management University's School of Social Sciences, under the leadership of Dean James H. Tang, PISA brought together five Elliott School faculty (**Llewelyn Hughes**, **Joanna Spear**, **Marcus King**, **Lisa Benton-Short** and **Paul Williams**, as well as **Linda Yarr** and **Suzanne Kelly-Lyall** of PISA, to participate (in person or virtually) in a workshop to launch a new collaborative research project titled, "Climate of Insecurity: Governance in the Age of Uncertainty."

In collaboration with Planet Forward.org, a program of the School of Media and Public Affairs, PISA produced a video entitled *Adapting Our Lives, Changing Our Legacies* to expose a wide audience to the ways in which Vietnamese women in Giao Luc Commune, Nam Dinh Province, are adapting to climate change. The film also examines the impact of climate change-induced migration, and what it means for both rural and urban areas. The video was screened in Hanoi on November 16th, 2011 and received a warm reception. Stay tuned for an event announcement regarding a screening of the film and a discussion panel called "Investing in Women's Leadership for Climate Change Risk Management and Adaptation."

## U.S.-Japan-South Korea Legislative Exchange Program (LEP/TLEP)

The 46<sup>th</sup> session of the U.S.-Japan Legislative Exchange Program and the 12<sup>th</sup> session of the U.S.-Japan-South Korea Legislative Exchange Program took place from January 11-13, 2012 at the Japanese National Diet office building in Tokyo. Elliott School Professor **Henry R. Nau**, who participated at high levels of government under Presidents Ford and Reagan, helps Congress run the program, a bilateral exchange (LEP) with the Japanese Diet and a trilateral exchange (TLEP) adding the South Korean National Assembly. Principal topics for discussion at

this year's meetings included succession politics in North Korea, the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement, and regional military base realignment. The next round of LEP/TLEP meetings is scheduled to be held in Washington in May 2012.

The program connects legislative leaders from the United States and the two most important democratic countries in Asia to foster better understanding of politics and policy among the three countries. A core group of Members meets regularly, joined each year by new Members. The frequent meetings, twice a year, facilitate an in-depth and informal discussion of the broad range of issues affecting domestic and foreign relations. Since 1993, the LEP/TLEP has been co-chaired by Republican and Democratic Members of Congress and involved over 170 Members, half Republican and half Democrat. Current co-chairs are James McDermott (D-WA) and Tom Petri (R-WI).

Professor **Mike Mochizuki**, a Japan expert and holder of the Sigur Chair at the Elliott School participates regularly in the meetings, and Elliott School students assist in the preparations and logistics. The program competes each year for funding from the Japan-United States Friendship Commission. Funding was awarded for 2012 for the 24<sup>th</sup> consecutive year.

## Organization of Asian Studies

The Organization of Asian Studies (OAS) student group completed a busy fall semester, hosting a variety of events for GW students interested in Asia and Asian affairs.



Participants in the November 27<sup>th</sup> Conversations with Scholars roundtable, featuring Dr. Gregg Brazinsky

Their *Conversations with Scholars* series provided students with the opportunity to engage with GW professors and on contemporary Asia-related topics. These special luncheons were exclusive to GW students and held in the Sigur Center conference room. Topics included "The US, China, the Cold War, and the Third World" with **Dr. Gregg Brazinsky**, "Why Do Groups Kill? Understanding Khmer-Vietnamese Violence in an Out of the Way Place" with Dr.

**Shawn McHale**, and “The Emotions of Justice: Gender, Status, and Legal Culture in Choson Korea, 1392-1910” with Dr. **Jisoo Kim**.



Participants in the November 9<sup>th</sup> Conversations with Scholars roundtable, featuring Dr. Shawn McHale

In addition, OAS continued its Asian Film Series at the Elliott School. In collaboration with the Global China Connection student group, OAS showed the popular Chinese language films *Let the Bullets Fly* (2010) and *The Beginning of the Great Revival* (2011). Each film was preceded by a reception with food from popular Chinese restaurant Sichuan Pavilion.

OAS also brought in guests from outside the GW community to speak with the students. In September, the organization hosted noted Chinese activist Chai Ling to discuss her NGO All Girls Allowed, which works to end gender discrimination and female infanticide in China. In December, OAS co-sponsored an event with Davidson College political science professor Shelley Rigger, who discussed “The Taiwan Issue in American Politics and U.S.-China Relations.”

OAS will continue its faculty luncheon series and Asian film series this spring, in addition to collaborating with other student groups, bringing in outside speakers, and hosting social events for GW students interested in Asia. You can contact OAS at [oas1@gwu.edu](mailto:oas1@gwu.edu).

#### VISIT THE RISING POWERS INITIATIVE ON THE WEB

Website: <http://www.risingpowersinitiative.org>

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RPI Visiting Scholar, Sudha Mahalingham, takes a question from the audience at the December 1 event with GWU Professors Llewelyn Hughes, Robert Weiner, and Deepa Ollapally

## Rising Powers Initiative

### Carnegie Corporation of New York Announces \$2 Million Grant to GWU

The Carnegie Corporation of New York announced a \$2 million grant to the Elliott School supporting research that advances understanding of important global issues. The grant supports three major research programs within the Elliott School, including the RPI's Worldviews of Aspiring Powers project. **The Corporation's \$2 million grant is the single largest grant the foundation has awarded to the Elliott School and will support a second phase of the Worldviews project that focuses on domestic debates around energy security.** The second phase also features four major conferences that bring together representatives of differing schools of thought in China, India, Japan and Russia in Washington, D.C. The first conference on “India as a Global Power: Contending Views from India” was held on January 23-24, 2012. Another conference featuring prominent representatives from Russia will be held on April 24-25, 2012.

#### FROM THE CARNEGIE CORPORATION

*“The Elliott School's mission of sponsoring scholarship and research that enrich our understanding of international problems, along with its focus on promoting policy-relevant research on some of the most critical security challenges affecting U.S. relations with pivotal powers, is profoundly important in today's global society. We are proud to support this institution, which works toward one of Andrew Carnegie's most cherished goals: the advancement of international peace.”*  
VARTAN GREGORIAN, PRESIDENT, CARNEGIE CORPORATION OF NEW YORK

### Worldviews of Aspiring Powers: Domestic Foreign Policy Debates in China, India, Iran, Japan and Russia (Forthcoming, Oxford University Press)

The power and influence of the U.S. has declined since 1945. Through a vigorous domestic foreign policy debate, however, the United States has designed and led a world that has peacefully accommodated one rising power after the other- the European Union, Japan, the Asian Tigers and most recently China and India. The U.S. domestic debate features a wide variety of robust and influential schools of thought shaping the conduct of foreign policy: realism, liberal internationalism, nationalism and neoconservatism. Until now, no one has applied this schools of thought approach to explore the domestic foreign policy debates of other countries. This volume does so for the first time.

Worldviews of Aspiring Powers takes seriously the domestic foreign policy debates in five aspiring powers: China, Japan, India, Russia and Iran. Each country chapter is co-authored by a U.S. scholar and an in-country expert, and identifies the most important domestic schools of thought debating that country's foreign policy- nationalists, realists, globalists, idealists/exceptionalists—and connects them to the historical and institutional sources of that nation's experience. By tracking the competing schools of foreign policy thought, Worldviews of Aspiring Powers anticipates shifts in the center of gravity of each country's debate and explores the

implications, especially for the United States, of shifts in these debates across countries that can lead to either conflict or cooperation. *Worldviews* is an innovative study and essential resource for both foreign policy scholars and students taking courses in international relations, comparative foreign policy and emerging countries.

The *Worldviews* edited volume is based on research conducted by the eleven contributors in the first phase of the Carnegie-supported project.

More information will be available at [www.oup.com/us](http://www.oup.com/us)

#### COMMENTS FROM ANONYMOUS REVIEWERS:

"This is a very interesting book, and I strongly recommend ... it. It brings together two very important topics in the IR literature: rising powers and the impact of domestic politics, and shows in particular how these two issues are likely to affect American security interests. The key contribution of the volume is to demonstrate that states' security policies are not fixed, but instead are domestically contested. This contestation calls for greater nuance and flexibility on the part of US policymakers since these other states' policies are likely to change depending on which world view wins out. The chapters are well written, engaging, and highly informative. I think the book will find a big and broad audience, as both policymakers and advanced students will find the book illuminating."

"The strengths of the manuscript are many. Most importantly, it represents the most in-depth look to date at the foreign policy debates several rising powers, and offers the most insightful cross-country comparison of those debates that I have seen...The book is timely since there is great interest today in rising powers, but it should also have a fairly long shelf life since countries like India and China will probably be rising for at least another decade or so. Its readership should be quite broad, including many international relations scholars, the broader international affairs policy community (including think tank experts and some government officials), and scholars and experts in each of the countries studied in the book."

## Policy Briefing: U.S. and Korean Perspectives on the U.S.- Korea Free Trade Agreement



On December 14, the RPI held a Policy Briefing to discuss "U.S. and Korean Perspectives on the U.S.- Korea Free Trade Agreement." This Briefing was funded by the **MacArthur Foundation's Asia Security Initiative**. Congress passed the United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA) on October 12, 2011. The Agreement is the United States' most commercially significant free trade agreement in more than 16 years. Professor **Yoon-shik Park**, Professor of International Finance, GWU and **Kim Ghee-wan**, Minister for Economic Affairs, Embassy of the Republic of Korea provided their views on what the KORUS agreement means for the U.S. and Korea, respectively. **Gregg Brazinsky**, Associate Professor of History and International Affairs at GWU moderated the briefing. A Policy Commentary analyzing these views will be published by the end of this month.

## RPI Visiting Scholar Spotlight- Sudha Mahalingam

The Sigur Center hosted **Sudha Mahalingam**, a member of India's Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board, as a short-term visiting scholar from November-December. Sudha has been specializing in India's energy security for over two decades. As Member of India's National Security Advisory Board, she provided policy inputs to India's Prime Minister through the National Security Advisor. As an energy regulator, she is entrusted with the responsibility of regulating India's hydrocarbon sector. She is also a member of the Scientific Advisory

Board at Delft University, The Netherlands. Her areas of interest include energy geopolitics, energy security, energy policy, reforms, energy markets and energy regulation.



On December 1, Sudha lead a policy roundtable on "India's Energy Security Challenges," discussing the measures India's policy makers have taken to grapple with the challenge of providing energy security to its billion plus population in a sustainable and environmentally clean manner. Her presentation provided a unique insider view on the gaps in energy policy and implementation and outlined the way forward for India. **Llewelyn Hughes**, Assistant Professor of Political Science and International Affairs, GWU and **Robert Weiner**, Professor of International Business, Public Policy and Public Administration, and International Affairs, GWU acted as discussants at this roundtable. This roundtable was held under the auspices of the **GWU Centers and Institutes Facilitating Fund** award.

#### SUDHA'S REFLECTIONS

*"Sigur Center, magnificently located just across the Washington Monument, is a haven for scholars intending to do serious work. A vibrant academic environment with almost daily debates on global affairs provides a stimulating intellectual ambience. The Center's location in the national capital is a huge advantage, since it attracts the best minds visiting or passing through the city to enrich the discourses. Unobtrusive, but helpful colleagues and staff and a quiet and contemplative environment at the Center were so conducive to my very productive stint at Sigur Center in December 2011."*

# Student Spotlight

on Caleb Dependahl

## Developing an Interest in Asia

My path has certainly been unconventional, leading me to begin my undergraduate studies at GWU six years after my high school graduation in 2003. At the time I had no clear direction in which I desired to launch



my studies. I knew only that I would not be able to bear wading through a year or two of prerequisites, and that it would not result in me magically realizing what I was to be passionate about. Instead, I moved to the one place that truly fascinated me and came close to satiating my desire for exploration and discovery - East Asia.

I first moved to Seoul, South Korea, for one year. It was there that I had my first opportunity to dive into an Asian language. The experience was exhilarating, and I knew I was onto something. During that year I had applied to a few local universities around my hometown and was accepted, but after returning home I realized I still did not have an area of studies I was truly passionate about. Rather than start blindly hacking away at general intro courses, I worked construction and saved money for one year in preparation to pursue language studies in Asia again. I originally planned to continue my Korean studies, but as everything I read during that year in limbo was China this or China that, I decided to move to China and learn Mandarin. It was in the summer of 2007 that I moved to Dalian, China, not knowing so much as a single soul or Chinese character, armed only with my determination to learn that language. Looking back, I attribute much of my success and speed in learning Mandarin to the fact that I couldn't afford to fail or do any less. There was no "Plan B!"

### Why GWU and Sigur Center?

Nearing the end of my second year of Mandarin language studies in Dalian, I was satisfied with my level of proficiency and knew I was ready to begin my studies back home in earnest. During the summer

between my two years of study in China, I returned to the States to visit universities in DC. GW was at the top of my list because of its location, curriculum, and the sincere, personal attention I was given by several faculty members.



After my lengthy time spent in Asia and studying Asian languages, the Asian Studies program at GW was the natural choice. I could not be happier with my decision to study at GW, and specifically at the Sigur Center for Asian Studies. What I think sets the Sigur Center apart from other institutions is not only the incredibly high caliber of its

faculty, but also how available and personable most of the professors are. It has been an incredible journey to have so much experience and context behind what I have been learning in the classroom, but it was still a tough transition in the beginning. It is a very unique and special thing when some of the most knowledgeable and renowned professors are also the most helpful.

Also, GW and the Sigur Center provide so many opportunities for extracurricular learning and study abroad. In fact, I spent both of my summers at GW studying abroad for free. My first summer was spent doing field studies in rural China on a Fulbright and Luce grant the Chinese department helped me secure. However, the Sigur Center enabled me to spend my second summer fulfilling a long-time desire of mine - to study the Korean language again. My goal is to improve my Korean language skills to at least match my Mandarin, and the Sigur Center's grant has brought me that much closer to its realization.

### Post-Graduation Plans

After graduation in May, I would like to begin working before pursuing graduate studies. I am most interested in the fields of diplomacy and national security, but I am open to anything that will allow me to continue investing in myself by utilizing my languages and knowledge of East Asia. I can honestly say that the education I have received at the Elliott School of International Affairs and the Sigur Center for Asian Studies has complemented my experiences abroad beyond my expectations, and I am fully confident that I now have the proper foundation to succeed in all of my future endeavors.

## Faculty Profile

on Shawn McHale

Born in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Dr. Shawn McHale lived there and in rural Philippines for the first nine years of his life. He was homeschooled for five grades, which, more than anything, meant lots of time to play!

"Before the age of 17, I had lived in the United States less than five years of my life. That experience living abroad (in Malaysia, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, the UK, and France), not to mention travelling widely, deeply shaped me. For



one, I deeply believe in the importance of understanding other peoples, countries and cultures."

Dr. McHale has continued to hold true to these beliefs long since leaving the Philippines. He came to the United States for the first time in 1969, lived with a French family in Rennes, France from 1977-78, has hitchhiked over 10,000 miles in the United States, Canada, and France, has skied in Iran -- "It was fabulous," has given lectures in both French and Vietnamese (Dr. McHale believes every student should learn at least one foreign language), and began studying the Vietnamese language "on a whim," having since written extensively on Vietnamese and Southeast Asian history and politics.



While Shawn McHale may have “utterly failed” at his *first* ambition of becoming Pope, his accomplishments in the Asian Studies field more than make up for this minor shortcoming. His first book, on use of print and the rise of a public sphere in Vietnam, was a semi-finalist for the Harry Benda prize, the highest award in Southeast Asian studies. He is now writing a book on the Mekong delta of Vietnam during the First Indochina War (1945-54), which has sparked his interest in the study of the dynamics of ethnic and political violence. His past research has included the study of Buddhism, Confucianism, communism, the nature of

dissent in communist Vietnam, Vietnamese feminism, history and memory, and the legacies of war.

As many of you know, Dr. McHale recently stepped down from a five-year tenure as Director of the Sigur Center. He reminisces, “One of my proudest accomplishments as Director of the Sigur Center was raising money for student fellowships and choosing students to go abroad for intensive language training. I am rather evangelical about the importance of helping students learn foreign languages to an advanced level.” Over five years as Sigur

Center Director, Dr. McHale awarded \$1,170,833 in student fellowships for research, language study, and internships.

In the midst of all of these accomplishments, how does Dr. McHale sum himself up? With a sense of humor and a healthy dose of sarcasm: “Like Obama, I have lived in Southeast Asia and Hawaii, been a community organizer in the inner-city, taught at a university, and work in Washington, DC. One slight difference, though: unlike him, I don’t work in the White House.”

#### VISIT THE SIGUR CENTER ON THE WEB

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Gifts to the Sigur Center for Asian Studies allow us to provide support for faculty and student research and travel, undergraduate and graduate student fellowships, and our extensive event series. Each gift, no matter how large or small, makes a positive impact on our educational mission and furthers our standing as a vibrant center serving the Elliott School of International Affairs and the greater community of The George Washington University.

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