



## Summer Newsletter 2022

### Letter from the Chair

Dear Alumni of Harvard's Program in Regional Studies East Asia,

Greetings! I hope everyone is doing well and having a peaceful and productive summer.



I'm glad to be stepping in for Professor Alex Zahlten as Chair of RSEA for the 2022-2023 academic year, while Alex enjoys a very well-deserved sabbatical. I'm grateful to Alex for his expert leadership of RSEA, as well as to Professor Jie Li (Director of Graduate Studies), Rosie Cortese (Program Administrator), and Kerry Tanwar (Program Assistant), for their inspiring and dedicated contributions to the Program. I'm also thankful in advance to the 2022-2023 Committee on Regional Studies East Asia – Professors Carter Eckert (EALC, Korea), Jinah Kim (History of Art and Architecture, South and Southeast Asia), Melissa McCormick (EALC, Japan), Meg Rithmire (HBS, China), James Robson (EALC, China), and Xiang Zhou (Sociology, China).

This coming year will be one of the celebrations, as RSEA turns 75! We'll be kicking off 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary events on September 23, 2022, with a community building event for all RSEA students and their faculty advisers. This will be followed by our fall alumni careers panel, which all our students attend. We are very grateful to the many alumni from across the professions who have participated in this panel in years past and provided invaluable guidance to our students. Smaller 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary events will be held throughout the year, with a large symposium planned for fall 2023, when Alex is back from sabbatical.

On May 26, 2022, 16 of our students earned their A.M. degrees from RSEA, as part of Harvard's 380<sup>th</sup> Commencement (the first was held in 1642). Having spent their first year attending classes remotely, sometimes from as far away as East Asia (Harvard was all-remote in academic year 2020-2021), their second year, the class of 2022 was able to take full advantage of RSEA's and Harvard's many on-site resources. We were so pleased to welcome them back to campus and are so proud of their resilience, manifested throughout the year and especially in their theses.

In just a few short weeks, we'll be welcoming 24 new students to campus, RSEA Class of 2024! These students come from China, Italy, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and Thailand, as well as from across the United States and Canada.

RSEA has changed significantly in the decade since I last served as Chair. Since 2009-2010, the Harvard-Yenching Institute has most generously funded 59 students, 32 (of 52 graduated) of whom have gone on to prestigious graduate programs. The Pro-Seminar was developed to ensure that RSEA students had a class in the fall of their first year in which to form a cohort and learn about the unique and fascinating research undertaken by our faculty. And just this year RSEA has formed an Alumni Advisory Board, to build on the connections between current students and our extraordinary alumni.

Thank you to the many of you who have supported us over the years and made possible our success – your contributions are invaluable, helping our students acquire research materials, providing the Fletcher Awards during the pandemic, funding pizza socials and movie nights for our students, and even assisting a student with the cost of medical insurance so they could complete their degree. Please let us know if your travels take you back to the Boston area – we'd love to see you on campus!

Warm wishes,

**Karen Thornber**

Interim Chair, Regional Studies East Asia

Harry Tuchman Levin Professor in Literature and Professor of East Asian Languages and Civilizations

Harvard University

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**Update your Information**



We kindly ask that you take a moment to fill out a brief survey and update your information using this QR code or this link (<https://forms.office.com/r/pmrcYkSKV3>).

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## News on Campus

In March, the RSEA Office Team welcomed Ms. Kerry Tanwar as our Staff Assistant. Kerry joined us from the Harvard Chan School of Public Health where she was a Program Coordinator for the HaSET research program. Kerry lives in Cambridge with her husband and two children. In her spare time, she enjoys hiking with her family and their dog, Simon. She is thrilled to be part of the RSEA team and looks forward to meeting many of you in the year ahead.

## Newly formed RSEA Advisory Board

Chosen from the many alumni who have worked to create and maintain connections with RSEA alumni and our students, the new Advisory Board will be a valuable asset to the RSEA Program and in strengthening the connections between alumni and students. The Advisory Board will also provide a continuous connection between the program and alumni as the program leadership changes throughout the years.

In addition, each member of the board will contribute their talents to the building of our community. The current members of the Advisory Board are Mable Chan (AM '93), Karl Eikenberry (AM '81), Daniel Hauck (AM '00), Margaret Lindsey (AM '77), Robert Murowchick (AM '80), Richard Palmer (AM '88), Julie Sheetz (AM '12), Marc Szepan (AM '11), and Harriet Wong (AM '97). We welcome them and thank them for their work and commitment.

## Congratulations to the 2022 Graduates:

Hanna Baek (March)  
Yufan Chen  
John Ferguson  
Kuo Jiang  
Sophie Lei  
David Li  
Ziyi Lin  
Boya Ouyang  
April Peng

Helen Chenyu Qu  
Hilary Xu Zi Thean  
Annie Zhanling Wang  
Gavin (Zhuoming) Wang  
Julia Qingye Wang  
Jacob Williams  
Joy Wu  
Elaine Yeo

## The 2022 Fletcher Prizes were awarded to:

**John Ferguson** for his work "PROJECT TERRA: U.S.-China-led Global Energy Diplomacy for Climate Change"

**Joy Wu** for her thesis "*Multivalent Likeness: Picturing Sociality, Biography, and Soteriology in Medieval Chinese Portraiture.*"

## Fletcher Prize Honorary Mention:

**Hannah Baek** "*Queer Visions of a Dark Age: Rethinking Gender in and through the Cinema of Yusin (1972-1979)*"

**Boya Ouyang** "*Why Money Can't Buy Stability: Opportunity, Threat, and State Power in China's Health Care Protests*"

**Zhuoming Gavin Wang** "*Rural Poverty Reduction in Contemporary China*"

**Yufan Chen** "*Posthuman Flights: On the Use and Abuse of Otherness*"

**Sophie Lei** "*How to Depict the Act of Holding a Thought? A reinterpretation of Dunhuang Mogao Cave 285*"

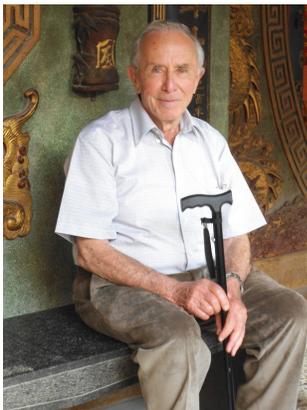
**David Li** "*Between Maritime and Continental: The Qing–Zheng Negotiations and the Taiwan Question in the Seventeenth Century*"

**Ziyi Lin** "*Space Read, Made, and Played: Maps in Japanese Video Games in the Twenty-First Century*"

**April Peng** "*Spirited Away: Visualizing the Spirit Consciousness in Medieval Chinese Buddhist Art*"

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## Alumni News



It is with sadness that we inform the RSEA community of the passing of Major Robert Sheeks (AB '46, AM '48) at the age of 100 on July 4, 2022.

As a member of the greatest generation, Maj. Sheeks disrupted his undergraduate studies to enter World War II in the US Marine Corps. He returned to Cambridge after the war to complete his Harvard College degree, after which Maj. Sheeks joined the newly formed China program and was one of the first to graduate from what would become RSEA.

We believe that Maj. Sheetz was the oldest living RSEA alumni. Read more about his life in this recent brief biography written in response to our invitation to participate in the 75th Anniversary celebrations.

Alexis Agliano Sanborn (AM '13) has been selected by Hunter College's NYC Food Policy Center as part of their class of 2022 "40 Under 40: The Rising Stars in NYC Food Policy."

Tarryn Li-Min Chun (AM '10, PhD '16) assistant professor at Notre Dame in Film, Television, and Theatre, with a concurrent appointment in East Asian Languages and Cultures, since 2017, received the National Endowment for Humanities Fellowship for her second book "Spectacle and Excess in Global Chinese Performance." More information is available [here](#).

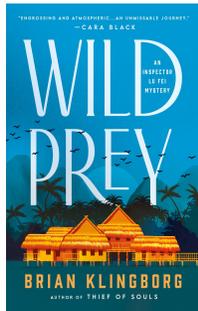
Adam Frost (nee Mitchel) (AM '15), having received his PhD in March 2022 from the Department of EALC at Harvard, is currently a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Management, Politics, and Philosophy at Copenhagen Business School. Adam is doing research on topics related to informal entrepreneurship and business history of the People's Republic of China.

Samuel M. Galler (AB/AM '12) has a new position as a researcher at the Economist.

Dingru Huang (AM '14) received her doctoral degree from the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations at Harvard in May 2022 and immediately thereafter married Kevin Luo (AM '15).

Joe Kahn (AM '90) has been promoted as the executive editor of the NY Times and is a two-time Pulitzer Prize winner.

Hyung Joon Kim (AM '16) has recently received his JD degree along with his US attorney license and has begun his practice in the law firm of Yoon & Yang in Seoul.



Brian Klingborg's (AM '92) has published a sequel to his recent book, called [Wild Prey](#).

Parker Pflaum (AM '12) has started a new position as Associate Director of Global Engagement and Risk Management at the University of Utah.

Congratulations to Anka Lee (AM '07) for starting a new position as Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator at USAID.

Zachary Lim (AM '14) recently began working as a Software Engineer @Open Source.

Ziliang Alex Liu (AM '14) received his doctoral degree from Harvard's History of Art and Architecture Department in May and will be enjoying a one-year post-doc at Dartmouth College after which he will begin teaching at Williams College. Congratulations.

Congratulations to Dana Mirsalis (AM '14) on receiving a doctoral degree from the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations at Harvard in May 2022. Mirsalis will join the History department at Pacific University as an Assistant Professor in the fall.

Jonas Rüegg (AM '16) graduated from Harvard EALC in May 2022 and will be joining the History Department at the University of Zurich. Congratulations Jonas.

**Correction:** We apologize for a misprint in the Winter 2022 newsletter, the correct spelling is: Ann Bennett Spence (AM '69).

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N.B. You are invited to celebrate the life of Ezra Vogel on Sat. Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at 2:00pm at The Memorial Church of Harvard University. A reception to follow at the Harvard Faculty Club.