



RSEA Winter 2023 Newsletter

Letter from the Chair

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

Happy 2023! And Happy Year of the Rabbit!



The Program in Regional Studies East Asia is in full swing, enjoying our second year back on campus, and the first year with a roster of in-person events that rivals pre-Covid days. Life on campus feels almost "normal." Our students have been actively preparing for the upcoming HEAS conference on February 17th and 18th, and they are finalizing their grant applications for summer funding. Our G2s are also hard at work on their theses, pursuing a broad range of topics, from the life and work of Kim Hyang-an to the destabilization of the Taiwan Straits from within Taiwan. Over the next few months, our students will be receiving competitive job offers and offers from top PhD programs. Graduation will soon be upon us, with 26 students set to earn their AMs.

Shortly before the holidays, Harvard announced that current Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Claudine Gay would become president of Harvard, effective July 1, 2023.

Dean/President-Elect Gay has long been a supporter of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, including RSEA, and we are thrilled at her historic appointment.

We are also delighted that Dean of GSAS Professor Emma Dench will continue as Dean for a second five-year term. Dean Dench has made the well-being of graduate students her priority, and we appreciate everything she has done for RSEA. I am particularly honored to be accompanying Dean Dench on her visit to Singapore and Taiwan in midFebruary, where I'll be speaking on interconnections among mental health, environmental health, and inequality. I hope to see many of you! (All Singapore- and Taiwan-based RSEA alumni will have received invitations to the GSAS events).

Thank you as well to the Harvard-Yenching Institute, which over the past 14 years has generously funded 64 RSEA students, many of whom have gone on to stellar careers in academia, business, journalism, and social media among others.

I'm grateful to the Committee on Regional Studies East Asia (Carter Eckert, Jinah Kim, Jie Li, Melissa McCormick, Meg Rithmire, James Robson, Alex Zahlten, and Xiang Zhou), which soon

will be meeting to admit a class of 25 from 184 applicants. I'm also very thankful for the tremendous contributions of Professor Jie Li (Director of Graduate Studies), Rosie Cortese (Program Administrator) and Kerry Tanwar (Program Assistant). RSEA is what it is because of their tireless and inspiring service.

RSEA also is what it is because of our phenomenal alumni. Thank you for your continued involvement. I'd be delighted to hear from you with your thoughts and suggestions on the program, this newsletter, or anything else, during my second semester as acting chair of RSEA, while Professor Alex Zahlten is on leave.

Warmest wishes,
Karen Thornber (thornber@fas.harvard.edu)

Current Students

Congratulations to Mayako Liu who will be graduating in March 2023. She was also the recipient of the 2022 Noma-Reischauer Prize in Japanese Studies for her paper, "Envisioning and Enacting Imperial Integration: Colonial Tourism in 'Northern Korea' 1931-1945."

Edward Zhi En Tan (expected AM '23) will join the Schwarzman Scholars Class of 2024 at Tsinghua University in Beijing.

Yuhao Wang (expected AM '23) will be joining McKinsey & Company as a business analyst at the Washington DC office following graduation this spring.

Alumni News in Brief

Mable Chan (AM '92) has begun working as a freelance reporter for the New York Times.

Jack Meng-Tat Chia (AM '11) has been elected as a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society in recognition of his contribution to historical scholarship. His pioneering work in Southeast Asian Buddhism has changed the way scholars understand the religion's history in the region.

Esse Yao Chen (AM '20) has been promoted to associate at BlackRock, UK.

Eyck Freymann (AM '18) is currently in joint postdoctoral fellowships at the Arctic Initiative at the Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs and the Columbia-Harvard China & the World Program, where he studies the geopolitics of climate change

Yuchan Kim (AM '21) has joined the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations as a Political Affairs Researcher in October 2022.

Lu Kou (AM '12) is now an Assistant Professor of East Asian Languages and Cultures at Columbia University.

Jessica J. Lee (AM '08) has taken a new position as Senior Congressional Advisor, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, U.S. Department of State.

In 2022, Rachel Leng's (AM '15) business, SeiRogai, was certified by the Japanese national government's SME Agency as a "Japan Brand Development Support Partner."

Joanna Linzer (AM '13) is an Environmental Fellow at the Harvard University Center for the Environment (2021-2023), having received her PhD in History from Yale University.

Yusuke Masaki (AM '18) is now engaged in the digital transformation of Kobe City as the chief digital officer after finishing his term as an associate professor at the University of Tokyo.

Greer Meisels (AM '12) has started a new position as Director of External Affairs at Intel Corporation.

Danica Truscott (AM '14) has returned to campus as a Reischauer Institute for Japanese Studies Post-Doctoral Fellow for the 2022-23 academic year after receiving her PhD in Japanese Literature from UC Los Angeles in 2022.

Jason Jia-Xi Wu (AM '20) published a law review article on Qing legal history, "Natural Resource Governance in Qing China: Lineage Institutions and the Making of Common Property Regimes" in the *Cardozo Journal of International and Comparative Law* 6(1) (2022).

Yuyan Zhang (AM '21) has entered a doctoral program at Soochow University and has just published her work of fiction loosely translated as "The Narcissus Palace" in the literary journal *Qingchun*.

Make a Difference! Directly impact our student's academic and professional experience at Harvard by donating to the [RSEA Student Fund](#). Thank you!