



January 2025 RSEA Newsletter

Dear Alumni of the RSEA program,

Hopefully, this newsletter reaches you well.

Last year was eventful for RSEA. As you know, with the steadfast support of the Alumni Advisory Board we organized the 75th (!) anniversary of RSEA with a large and fantastic group of alumni who came in from all over the world.

In the fall, we held our regular Alumni panel in October where we were treated to a fantastically interesting discussion with Jonathan Kaufman (AM '82, Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter, editor, and author, also Director of the School of Journalism at Northeastern University and a Professor of Journalism), Abraham Kim (AM '95, Executive Director of the Council of Korean Americans), and Susan Lawrence (AM '89, Specialist in Asian Affairs at the Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress).

But 2024 was also a year of loss. In December, Prof. Carter Eckert passed away, leaving a grieving community of colleagues, students, and former students behind. The Yoon Se Young Professor of Korean History at Harvard, Carter Eckert was a deeply beloved teacher who profoundly shaped the study of modern Korean History. He was a great supporter of the RSEA program and is sorely missed.

Currently, the faculty members on the RSEA Committee are hard at work whittling down the over 170 applicants to the 25 students we can admit. In good news, 26 of those 170 were recommended to us by alumni faculty.

In December we asked for help to support one student in the coming admissions cycle, and we received many donations. A huge thank-you to everyone who contributed – in times of increasing financial constraints for the program it makes a huge difference for the excellent, but not excellently funded, students in RSEA. We are still, however, short of what we would need to fund a half-tuition for two years. Our donation deadline has been extended to February 28, so if you are still considering a donation simply follow this link: <https://community.alumni.harvard.edu/give/51694660> . \$120 per year (just \$10 per

month) from many alumni can make a difference! Please consider supporting the alumni scholarship. Thank you!

Also, mark February 14-15 in your calendars if you are in the Cambridge area. RSEA students are organizing the 28th (!) Harvard East Asia Society (HEAS) graduate student conference, under the title *Flow: A Symposium*. The conference will be held at 1730 Cambridge Street, on the Concourse level.

We have more exciting news coming up soon, and in the meantime look forward to hearing from you. Any changes in your career or achievements we can share with the RSEA community, please let us know about them!

We wish you all the best for 2025 and hope to see you in Cambridge sometime this year.

With best wishes,

Alexander Zahlten,
Chair, RSEA

November 2024 Graduate

Di “Cindy” Xin graduated in November after submitting her thesis entitled “Rural Development in Post-socialist China: Village Autonomy, Cadre Professionalization, and the New Collective Economic Organizations.” Cindy has gone on to a doctoral program in Sociology at NYU.

Alumni News

Alexis Agliano Sanborn (AM '13) co-authored a chapter with Katsura Omori, in [“Transforming School Food Politics Around the World”](#) (MIT Press) on Japan and the everyday ways that the goals of the school lunch law become a reality. It's full of fun, practical examples of how Japanese citizens are making food matter - in more ways than one.

Alexis has also been promoted to Director of Development and Communications at Christodora.

Alex Akin (AM '99, PhD '09) is a partner at Bolerium Books and the current President of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America visited the RSEA office while in town for the annual Bookfair.

Hannah Baek (AM '22) began a full-time position at San Francisco International Film Festival as the new Community Engagement Manager and served on the Vanguard Award Jury of the Vancouver International Film Festival.

Huiyi Chen (RSEA AM '13) has just been made a Litigation Partner at Jenner & Block, Chicago.

Nick Drake (AM '16) is starting a new position as Assistant Director, Graduate School Admissions at Yale University.



Gunn Chaiyaptranun (AM' 24) received the 2024 Noma-Reischauer Prize in Japanese Studies on December 12, 2024, for his paper, “Mingei Modern: Crafting a New Mode of Living in Shōwa Japan.”

(Yukio Lippit (left) and Gunn Chaiyaptranun (right), Noma-Reischauer Prize ceremony, 12 December 2024)

Jeonghun Choi (AM '21) is currently a visiting researcher at the Historiographical Institute at the University of Tokyo.

Dingru Huang (AM '14, PhD '22) received the UNITAS YOUTH Novel Newcomer Award for her novel “Turkey” in April 2024.

Juhee Kang (AM '17, PhD '24) started a new position as Development Assistant at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

JT Keller (AM '18, MUP '23) is starting a new position as Director of Urban Design and Planning at Utile

In Young Park (AM '15) joined Lyndian’s Catalyst Development team as a R&D Engineer Intern.

Jonas Ruegg (AM '16, PhD '22) published a chapter “Islands of the Kuroshio Frontier” in *Oceanic Japan: The Archipelago in Pacific and Global History*. This chapter is a precursor of his upcoming book expected in 2025.

Rebecca Victor (AM '17) obtained a new certification: OSHA Course Certificate from Nontraditional Employment for Women.

Please send us your updates and news to share: rsea@fas.harvard.edu!