A Note of Welcome from the Director
by Jeffrey J. Kripal

As Director of Asian Studies, I would like to welcome you to this, our second annual newsletter. Much has happened in Asian Studies this last year, and it has been my distinct pleasure and honor to witness much of it.

The essays that follow flesh out different chapters of the grand story, but here I might simply mention a few of the highlights: Steve Lewis, Ben Lee, and Rich Smith continue their remarkable work with the Transnational China Project and its acclaimed web-site; Nanxiu Qian hosted a major conference on gender, politics, and literature in early modern China; Suchan Chae played an important role in nuclear diplomacy with North Korea this last winter and spring; Gautami Shah continues to develop and nurture our popular Hindi offerings; we were able to purchase $15,000 worth of Sanskrit philosophical and religious texts from India with a personal library grant from the University under my own discretion, just as we were witnessing the appearance of Thomas McEvilley’s massive *The Shape of Ancient Thought* on the ancient interactions of Indian and Greek philosophical thought; Sarah Thal completed an important new book on the historical transformations of Japanese Shinto; Anne Klein and David Gray worked further toward digitalizing ancient Tibetan texts; and Lilly Chen worked closely with local high school Chinese instructors to further the cause of Chinese language instruction in our Houston, Clear Lake, and Fort Bend Independent School Districts. Also, I am pleased to announce that thanks to the joint effort of Asian Studies faculty members Hajime Nakatani and Nanxiu Qian, and with the kind assistance of Humanities Librarian Anna Youssefi, we have been able to purchase the entire 1800 volume *Xuimu siku quanshu* (roughly, “Continuation of the Complete Collection of the Four Treasuries”), a major compendium of Chinese classical literature. This acquisition, which supplements the massive eighteenth century compilation known as *Siku quanshu* (“The Complete Collection of the Four Treasuries”) that we were able to purchase six years ago, makes Rice’s collection of Chinese classical texts the most ample and easily accessible one in the entire South.

Last, but by no means least, Rich Smith has been working steadily on his remarkable *magnum opus* on the *Yijing* and its global reception history, portions of which he shared with our Asian Studies reading group this last September. All in all, it has been a quite remarkable and remarkably productive year, as the present newsletter, I hope, makes perfectly clear.

Before I close these opening remarks, I would like to acknowledge the true “force” behind Asian Studies at Rice University: Dee Garza. I am deeply indebted to Dee for handling all the day-to-day administrative details and constant e-mail correspondence that makes a program like this one really work. From organizing events for our faculty and majors (ah, the Thai food!) to addressing the paper work required by the Registrar, Dee quite literally does it all. As if that were not enough, she also happens to be a wonderful human being and friend behind whose sense of humor and charm it has been my joy to work for Asian Studies here at Rice University.

A special word of thanks goes to the Gee Family for making possible the publication and distribution of this newsletter.

Coordinator Dee Garza dons traditional garb in the Forbidden City during a Rice/NCTA study tour sponsored by the Freeman Foundation.
Why Asian Studies?
by Dee Garza, Asian Studies Coordinator

During my four years working in the Asian Studies Program, I have often wondered what leads a Rice student to decide to major in Asian Studies. This past November, I asked Alex Naegele (Martel ’04) and Eve Bower (Lovett ’04) about this.

Here is what Alex had to say:

Q: What made you decide that Asian Studies would be your major?
A: I entered Rice entirely devoted to technical fields like physics. I spent the first two years doing that, and found I really didn’t like it. I began looking for a liberal arts major, and Asian Studies really fascinated me. From a very young age I had an interest in China—Chinese culture, Chinese martial arts, and so on. I started hanging around with a lot of people who were Asian or Asian American. While in high school, I traveled to China with a group and had a fabulous experience. At age 16, I studied the Chinese language for a time in an informal setting. As a sophomore at Rice, when I wanted to study Chinese here, I hired a comparative literature professor from Taiwan who teaches at Stanford to cram a semester’s worth of study of Chinese into my Christmas break. I was then able to enter Chinese here at the 102 level. It was then that I began taking all sorts of great Asian Studies classes—and they are great classes, by the way. I don’t think there are enough people on this campus that realize that. And here I am, two and a half years later and about to complete my degree.

Q: Is there something you can point to in Asian Studies that will lead you to your next step?
A: I have an interest in international relations or international business. Language is extremely important in both of these fields. Now in my third year of Chinese, I’m very happy with the Chinese department at Rice, as well as with all of the amazing classes that have prepared me for these fields; history, culture, Steve Lewis’ class on Transnational China. All of these Asian Studies classes were a great preparation for a broad introduction to international business or international relations in the coming twenty to thirty years.

Q: So are you planning to be in business, politics, diplomacy?
A: Any of the above—something international and something probably dealing with China.

Q: Was there anyone that particularly inspired you?
A: I have to point to Steve Lewis’ class on Transnational China. It was particularly influential because I’m especially interested in that kind of work. It provided a very good foundation for how business gets done in the 21st Century and the way globalization will affect cultures, not just in China but everywhere. I even put my final essay for that class on my personal web-site (www.owl-net.rice.edu/~alexn) because it’s where my interests lie.

Q: Have you studied abroad while at Rice?
A: I’ve been abroad since I’ve been at Rice, but not for credit—one summer I attended the Beijing Culture and Language University to study Chinese for a month of intense supplementary study. It’s a magnet for people interested in the same areas—international relations, business, development. I met good people with my interests. I’m going back this Christmas for another month. Studying in China is a great way to spend Christmas break.

Q: What is the next step?
A: I’m looking into international JD/MBA programs at the University of Houston. I plan to study abroad as part of that, too.
Q: So you feel good about your choice, then?
A: If I had to do it over, I would switch to Asian Studies earlier!

And here is what Eve had to say:

Q: Eve, how did you get interested in Asian Studies at Rice?
A: During my senior year in high school I came to campus to visit during Owl Weekend as a prospective student. I was tagging along with a girl from Hanszen (College). Hanszen had a big dinner, so I went along. At our table for eight was seated Dr. (Richard J.) Smith, who is an associate at the college and was its Master in the past. I was fascinated by everything he had to say. Also, I noticed the interest he took in each of the rest of us at the table. I shared with him that I was to speak at a human rights festival and showed him the newspaper from that festival. He seemed interested. I knew then that I wanted to take his classes.

Q: So you decided on the major then?
A: No. When I came to Rice I fully intended to double major in Political Science and Economics because of my interest in international development and economics. As part of my admissions packet I got an offer to do research with one professor for two years. I asked Dr. Smith if he wanted to do this with me, and he accepted. We met weekly as I did my research on current issues in China as part of the Century Scholars Program. Since I wanted to read all these newspaper articles and interview so many people, it became clear to me that I needed to be fluent in Chinese. I realized that if I was going to do this, I needed to spend some time studying in China in addition to studying here at Rice. I studied in China at Beijing Foreign Studies University during my whole sophomore year. It was there that I decided Asian Studies would be my major. Asian Studies doesn’t have any classes that I wouldn’t take anyway, though. It’s flexible, and all the classes are interesting.

I’m fascinated by it. What strikes me most as a unique, attractive feature of Asian Studies is the amazing talent, dedication, and passion of the faculty and staff. The Asian Studies faculty should be Rice’s selling point. It doesn’t come across in the literature. You see engineering, music, and the rest, but I firmly believe that Asian Studies is where it’s at. For example, there was the poetry class I had with Dr. (Nanxiu) Qian. Two of us were established Asian Studies majors, but the others were in English, pre-med, and music. Dr. Qian’s passion for the subject and for all of China was contagious. We just loved her because she made these poems about trees and civil service examinations relevant to our lives today. People who had a minor interest in China fell in love with Chinese poetry. I think that’s amazing! We still keep in touch and get together for reunion dinners.

Q: What will you do with what you have learned?
A: I want to start a non-profit organization that is aimed at rural Chinese people, especially women. I interned in non-profits when I was studying in China—it was one of three internships I had that year. I want to explore micro-finance and to study law. I’ll spend spring 2004 in China, getting to know a specific rural area better. I’ll be putting together a plan for the non-profit. Then in the fall of 2004 I’ll be in New York as part of AmeriCorps, doing the same kind of project but in an established non-profit group. I plan to take what I learn in New York City and bring it back to China in order to apply it there.

For more information on the Asian Studies Program, please visit our website: http://asia.rice.edu. To see how you can be more involved in the Asian Studies program at Rice University, contact Dee Garza, Program Coordinator, at 713-348-5843 or email her at asia@rice.edu.

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It was a memorable evening. The audience was beaming, even those who did not understand Hindi. Friends were laughing. First-semester Hindi students were tickled pink that they understood more Hindi than they had ever imagined they would fourteen weeks ago. Third-semester Hindi students were counting the days when they too would be up there. And the fifth-semester Hindi students were in something of a daze, not believing they had actually done it! Such was the atmosphere the evening of December 4, 2003. This evening witnessed the culmination of five semester courses in Hindi at Rice as students from the course, “South Asian Poetry, Literature and Popular Culture,” the first fifth-semester Hindi course ever offered at Rice, hosted a dinner theater, during which they performed an original play that they themselves had written.

For a brief moment, the first two and a half years of Hindi here at Rice flashed in front of my eyes. We had come a long way from the fall of 2001, when the first elementary Hindi class was offered. Our hopes of establishing a quality Hindi program, rooted in strong academics and one that fosters intellectual curiosity, was at last a reality. The Hindi program at Rice now offers an interrelated sequence of five courses that embrace a theme-oriented approach right from the beginning elementary level. Through creative writing assignments, audio-visual materials, including contemporary Hindi films and songs, and computer-aided exercises, the first two courses, Elementary Hindi I & II, are geared towards steadily increasing overall proficiency in Hindi. At the end of the year long elementary course, successful students are able to engage in meaningful conversations, enjoy light readings, and experience the exhilarating effects of creative written self-expression in Hindi, all with a better understanding of its parent and related cultures.

With a view towards generating socially relevant and meaningful discussions in the target language, the third-semester course, Intermediate/Advanced Hindi I, integrates the use of graded texts and Hindi films focusing on socio-cultural aspects of the parent culture. In Intermediate/Advanced Hindi II, the fourth-semester course, the use of graded textual and film material relevant to contemporary global issues aims at fostering meaningful discussions and literary expressions about the same. In the process, students are introduced to selected Hindi literature by Premchand, Manto and Chughtai, to name a few. This year, the fifth—and currently final—semester course within the Hindi program, “South Asian Poetry, Literature and Popular Culture,” involved a historical trace of South Asian poetry, literature and popular culture, ranging from, but not limited to, the epic works of Valmiki (Ramayan) and Vedvyasa (Mahabharat) to Kabir’s dohas, Meerabai’s bhajans, Ghalib’s ghazals, Ruswa’s Umrao Jaan and the writings of Premchand, all of it, of course, in Hindi.

We have come a long way, but we are not yet there. We now face the sweet problem of success. With unusually high retention rates, the usual academic excellence of our students, and a sustained student interest, we now have a sizeable cohort of students who are eager to continue their South Asia related studies in Hindi. Towards that end, I am presently working on two related projects for future course offerings.

The first is a capstone course for sixth-semester Hindi students. Having a qualified body of students and recognizing that language courses, unlike other disciplines, are not bound by any one subject matter, I envision a course that will expose our students to outstanding scholars and practitioners of Indian music, theater, literature, social activism, journalism, and film making. The idea is to bring in short-term visitors who will lead a module of the class dedicated to their respective interests. While there would be no rigid constraint, instructors and themes could be chosen such that Hindi would be the natural medium. Through such a course, I hope to create an academic situation where students will experience the intellectual “high” that comes with the empowerment of expression and thinking in another language. It would be an ideal Foreign Language Across the Curriculum (FLAC) course.

Secondly, in keeping with my understanding that language pedagogy should seamlessly link in with other academic interests on campus, the second project is one.
Visitors to Japan often marvel at the many temples and shrines throughout the land. Perched on mountainsides, tucked between buildings, hidden in the woods, or marking the boundaries between fields, these sacred sites seem to have existed for ages eternal—and many of the priests who tend them would argue that they have.

According to Assistant Professor of History Sarah Thal, however, these sites of the gods reflect not a stable Japanese tradition but the dramatic changes of Japan over time. In her recently completed book, *Rearranging the Landscape of the Gods: The Politics of a Pilgrimage Site in Japan, 1573-1912*, currently in production at University of Chicago Press, Thal examines one of the most popular shrines in Japan: the shrine to Konpira on Mt. Zōzu, on the island of Shikoku. Using priests’ diaries, worshippers’ letters, newspaper accounts, woodblock prints, votive plaques, and shrine records, she shows not only how the buildings and rituals of the shrine have changed over the centuries, but how even the very gods of the mountain have altered over the years.

One of the most dramatic such shifts in worship occurred in 1868 when the priest of Mt. Zōzu cast away his Buddhist robes to become a Shinto priest, simultaneously redefining the Buddhist deity Konpira (enshrined on the mountain since 1588) as the Shinto “Great Kami Kotohira” instead. The year 1868 was a time of upheaval not only in Shikoku but throughout Japan. During the first days of January, an alliance of samurai, lords, and aristocratic courtiers seized control of the imperial palace, announced the end to more than two centuries of rule by the Tokugawa shoguns, and declared that a new era had started: the Emperor Meiji would assume direct control over the country. While in the short run this “Meiji Restoration” simply transferred the reins of government from one set of men to another, in the long run it opened the way for the establishment of a new form of government altogether. The new Meiji leaders would declare all subsequent innovations—whether the centralization of rule, the building of railroads and post offices, the promulgation of a constitution, or eventually the invasion of Korea and Taiwan—in the name of the emperor.

Accordingly, the new leaders also promoted a religion that would support the centrality of the imperial line. The majority of Buddhist gods, they declared, were originally Japanese deities (*kami*), disguised for more than a millennium by imported Buddhist rites and names. As soon as the new men rose to power, therefore, they encouraged worship of longstanding gods not as Buddhist deities but as indigenous *kami*, using names found in the ancient imperial texts. As priests such as Konpira’s converted their gods to the newly defined “Way of the Kami (Shinto),” the Meiji rulers began organizing the new Shinto shrines into an official hierarchy funded and regulated by the state. In so doing, they ensured that priests who sought higher status, greater income, and increased advantages for themselves and their shrines would follow the policies of the still fledgling government, simultaneously creating a powerful religion—Shinto—that would enhance the authority of the imperial regime.

Indeed, by building similar hierarchies throughout Japanese society, whether through the conferral of new aristocratic titles or the creation of new bureaucratic organizations, the Meiji leaders encouraged countless people to follow the dictates of a government that in the early years lacked the popular acceptance, the funding, or the military power to secure support in other ways. Moreover, through the creation of the state shrine system, they not only built greater acceptance of their authority but even obtained some of the funding they needed, as ambitious shrines offered money from their own reserves in hopes of obtaining higher ranks within the system. The sacred sites and their dedicated priests thus formed an integral part of Japan’s modern, and modernizing, success. The seemingly changeless landscape of the gods in fact can reveal some of the most dramatic political, economic, and cultural transformations of Japan.

**Hindi (continued from page 3)**

that is being developed jointly with Professor Betty Joseph of the English Department. In Spring 2005, we hope to add a FLAC component to Professor Joseph’s course Introduction to Third World Literature. Qualified students taking the course would then be able to earn extra credit for exploring original texts in Hindi. Five semesters after starting the Hindi program here at Rice, with so much accomplished there is still much to do.

(The Hindi dinner theater event was co-sponsored by the Asian Studies Program, the Center for the Study of Languages, and an anonymous donor. Our thanks to all for their generosity.)

Please visit us at http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~gshah/hindi.html
An Update on the Transnational China Project  
by Richard J. Smith

Rice’s Transnational China Project (TCP), headed by Dr. Steven Lewis of Asian Studies and the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, continues to play a pioneering role in acquiring, analyzing, and disseminating information about “cultural China”—that is, Taiwan, the People’s Republic, Hong Kong and overseas Chinese communities. Using advanced technologies and partnering with a number of leading academic institutions throughout the world—not only in the Americas, Europe, and Asia, but also in Russia, the former Soviet Republics, the Baltic States, the Middle East, and Africa—the TCP is internationally recognized as a cutting edge academic program, combining state-of-the-art collaborative research and innovative policy studies with multi-level curricular development, community service, and local, national, and world-wide educational outreach.

Dr. Lewis’s TCP-related activities have resulted in many important publications and policy documents over the past few years, including articles, book chapters and published reports for organizations such as the National Bureau of Asian Research, the Center for International Political Economy, and the Baker Institute itself. He is now regarded internationally as an expert on privatization in China’s energy sector, and on its increasingly important energy ties with other countries, including the United States. He has published articles and reports on these policy areas in *Survival*, the journal of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, and in numerous Baker Institute Energy Forum reports. Lewis has also given a number of presentations on specific policy issues for Japan’s METI, the UFJ Institute, the Petroleum Energy Center and the Institute for Energy Economics in Japan. Because of his expertise and the increasing importance of China in world energy markets, he has been called upon to work with other scholars at Rice and Stanford University’s Program on Energy and Sustainable Development to study energy project development and privatization in China, Brazil, Indonesia and Japan.

Furthermore, Dr. Lewis has used his expertise and research ties to organize workshops on multilateral energy cooperation on energy security issues in Beijing, Tokyo and Houston, working with high-level Japanese, American and Chinese government officials overseeing oil and fuel stockpiles, energy price planning and investment, and the privatization of state owned energy companies. As a reflection of his expertise and experience in these areas, he was summoned this year to testify on Chinese energy security issues before the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission on Capitol Hill.

Ambassador Edward Djerejian, Director of the Baker Institute, has nothing but praise for Dr. Lewis, and describes the Transnational China Project under Lewis’s guidance as “a unique contribution to the understanding of the emerging middle class in China through the prism of Chinese culture.” In 1999, Dr. Lewis and Ambassador Djerejian travelled to Beijing, where they signed a cooperative agreement between the Baker Institute and the Chinese Institute for International Studies, establishing the foundation for collaborative research programs on energy and U.S.-Chinese relations that have already yielded substantial results.

Meanwhile, the TCP continues to receive widespread acclaim for its award-winning bilingual website ([http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~tnchina/](http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~tnchina/)), as well as for its pioneering policy-oriented papers and publications, lecture programs, workshops and conferences. Just recently (December, 2003), TCP scholars Lewis, Richard Smith (History) and Benjamin Lee (Anthropology) participated in conferences and workshops in Shanghai and Hong Kong designed to solidify a cooperative research network with the Center for Contemporary Chinese Cultural Studies at Shanghai University, the Department of Cultural Studies at Lingnan University, the Center for Transcultural Studies in Chicago, and the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Hong Kong. This network, one of several cooperative ventures directly linked to the TCP, brings together the expertise and resources of scholars at these four universities and research centers with those at Rice University in order to explore the many ways that cultural values, commodities and cultural forms (including books, films, television programs, advertisements, etc.) circulate not only within Chinese cities but also within Asian cities more broadly.

At the Shanghai conference, titled “East Asian Cities: New Cultural and Ideological Formations,” TCP researcher Steven Lewis gave an extremely well-received multi-media presentation, “A Look at Advertisements in the New Public Spaces of Globalizing Cities,” in which he explained the preliminary results of the TCP’s research on the economic and political values revealed in the advertisements in the new subways of Asian cities.

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These surveys show that local governments as well as multi-national corporations are making competing appeals that predominantly target young, female urbanites, inviting them to identify with transnational middle-class lifestyles at the same time that they ask them to contribute to national and local development goals.

Future research by the TCP, supported by a grant from the Henry Luce Foundation and a generous donation to the Baker Institute from the Chao Family, will survey urban commuters in Chinese cities in order to determine if and how these competing appeals are resonating with the rapidly growing middle class. Will they change the ways that people identify with each other and with other cities in East Asia? And through the use of network ties developed at these conferences in Shanghai and Hong Kong, TCP scholars will look at advertisements in the public spaces of Korean and Japanese cities to see if they are contributing to a distinctly East Asian vision of modernity or capitalism.

The TCP has conducted surveys of subway advertisements in Beijing, Hong Kong, Kaohsiung, Shanghai, Singapore and Taipei beginning in 1998, with exploratory surveys in Fukuoka, Osaka, Seoul and Tokyo more recently. With funding from the Luce Foundation and the Chao Family, Rice University's Shisha van Horn and Christopher Pound of Classroom Technology Services will assist the TCP in testing a prototype digital image archive of some 3000 images in courses on contemporary Chinese culture in the Spring of 2004. Updated annually, this archive will eventually be used for collaborative research and teaching projects not only at Rice but also with faculty and students at other universities in North America, Asia and Europe.

According to Lewis, the task of explaining the many and varied ways that Chinese culture is changing “requires a broad research agenda built upon the insights, skills and methods of many disciplines.” Thus, for example, “in order to understand the impact that new [cultural] forms and messages of advertising—both commercial and political advertising—are having in China, we need the collaboration of scholars using both social scientific and traditional humanities methods.”

Small wonder, then, that the TCP’s website has been identified as a model site for collaborative research by Duke University and Vanderbilt University, as well as by the vast State University of New York (SUNY) system. Nor is it surprising that the TCP continues to play a leading role in Rice’s new Global and Transnational Studies initiative. This initiative, directed by a cross-divisional, interdisciplinary steering committee that includes Lewis, Lee, and Smith, seeks to give Rice students a systematic introduction to the methodological tools and multidisciplinary perspectives necessary for a better understanding of themselves, other cultures and various area and world systems, past and present.

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On the Art of Comparison: Thomas McEvilley’s The Shape of Ancient Thought
by Jeffrey J. Kripal

Last winter I was attending a function in Fondren Library, an event designed to showcase the recent publications of Rice faculty and staff. As I browsed the tables and casually examined the different books on display, I was pleasantly shocked to encounter an immense 700-page-plus tome entitled The Shape of Ancient Thought: Comparative Studies in Greek and Indian Philosophies (New York: Allworth Press, 2002). My shock was multi-layered. On the most obvious of levels, the size, scope, and sheer erudition of the book were in themselves shocking enough. The author, after all, works with Greek, Latin, Sanskrit, and Pali texts, even as he covers millennia of ancient Indo-European, Greek, Roman, Persian, Mesopotamian, Indian, and Chinese history and treats an immense swath of secondary scholarly literature in still more languages (modern European ones this time). What surprised me even
Late Qing China went through rapid socio-political changes while facing military, economic, and cultural challenges from both the West and Japan. Under these circumstances, Chinese artists and writers sought to adapt traditional forms to contemporary needs. From the 1898 Reform Movement to the 1911 Republican Revolution, Chinese tradition played an indispensable role in the transmission of new knowledge and ideas to the Chinese. In the process, the tradition was transformed. The emergence of new-style Chinese news media helped accelerate this process of transmission and transformation. Yet the ensuing New Culture Movement (c. 1915-1925) starkly dichotomized “tradition” and “modernity.” Stigmatizing the former as simply “Old” and valorizing the latter as vitally “New,” New Culture activists marginalized the Chinese tradition, deeming it not only incapable of conveying the “New” but also, and worse, an impediment to change. Modern historiography, Chinese and Western alike, has largely neglected the function of Chinese tradition in China’s modern transformation.

“Tradition and the Challenge of Modernity” attempted to provide a more balanced picture of the interplay between tradition and modernity in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century China. In particular, the participants took gender as an analytical category because modern historiography has portrayed China’s 1898 reform as a male-led campaign that attempted to transform a highly refined imperial system into a modern, constitutional nation-state amidst Western military and economic invasions and broad cultural impact. This symposium showed that Chinese women in fact participated in these reforms as active organizers and sophisticated thinkers with very different attitudes toward “tradition” than most of the male reformers. The women’s reform efforts, although obscured by modern historiography, played crucial roles in sustaining China’s culture as it faced what would become a very violent twentieth-century.

The symposium began with an enthusiastic welcome from Professor Werner Kelber, Director of the Center for the Study of Cultures. Professor Kelber especially emphasized the symposium’s focus on gender, observing that, “in addition to the rise of the sciences, and the deliberate acquisition of knowledge about culture outside the Western orbit, the change in the status of women has been the third defining feature of what constitutes modernity.” Professor Richard J. Smith, Director of Asian Studies and a leading historian of the Qing China, chaired the symposium. His introductory speech laid out the historical backdrop and summarized the previous study of this period. He pointed out that recent research by the scholars represented in this symposium provided a very different picture of the 1898 reform period than that which is often found in modern historiography. Here rather we begin to see a period of extraordinary intellectual vitality and diversity in which art and literature were hardly in decline but rather served as both an expression and agent of change.

Six panelists then presented papers at the symposium, including, in addition to Professors Fong and Qian, Professor Joan Judge of the University of California Saint Barbara, Professor Richard John Lynn from the University of Toronto, Professor Haun Saussy from Stanford University, and Professor Ellen Widmer from Wesleyan University. Professor Susan Mann from the University of California at Davis served as the commentator on all six presentations.

Happily, the papers presented at the symposium were considered to be of sufficient interest to senior scholars in the field that they will soon appear in a special issue of the journal, Nan Nü: Men, Women, and Gender in Early and Imperial China, now in press for spring of 2004. Brill will also publish the essays in book form, also scheduled for 2004. Moreover, the participants enthusiastically agreed that it would be both important and timely to hold a follow-up conference that would sharpen the focus of issues discussed at the symposium while broadening the parameters of investigation of these crucial but still surprisingly understudied decades in late Qing China. Our follow-up conference, titled “Beyond Tradition and Modernity: Gender, Genre, and the Negotiation of Knowledge in Late Qing China,” involves twenty-six scholars worldwide. It will be again sponsored by the Center for the Study of Cultures and the Asian Studies Program and will be held in early March of 2005. The conference will further dismantle the binary constructs of tradition/modernity and China/the West in favor of a more nuanced approach to historical and cultural analysis. It will have two special features.

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First, the participants will bring to light new literary, artistic, and historical sources and archives. Second, the participants will focus on three important and interrelated issues that defined the important changes taking place in this era: the construction of new gender roles, the profusion of literary and artistic genres, and the negotiation of knowledge—themes that have been ignored or understudied in the existing literature. The papers will provide a fresh perspective on social, intellectual, and cultural life in the late Qing period, expanding the boundaries of modern Chinese historiography by moving beyond the political, military, and economic themes that have dominated scholarship on this period.

A workshop for area high school teachers of Chinese language and culture was held Saturday November 15, 2003 at Rice University. This was the second year that the workshop had been organized. My co-presenter was Dr. Chao-Mei Shen, also a faculty member of Rice’s Chinese Language Program (CLP).

The teaching of Chinese in high schools is a new development that has gradually taken shape only in recent years. As newcomers in the field, these language teachers often have to cope with a shortage of training and professional opportunities that teachers of more established foreign languages (such as Spanish, French and German) can usually take for granted. The workshop idea took shape readily, as it was already part of a plan that I had been incubating for some time, namely, to organize the area teachers into a more permanent networking entity, a teachers’ association as it were, so that a regular channel could be established for the dissemination of educational services. The plan grew out of my long-time observation and experience of Chinese language instruction in the greater Houston area. I had given numerous informal workshops in the past, when weekend schools were the only public venue for Chinese language learning and when practically none of the teachers were trained language teachers. I had, moreover, written for these same teachers instructional materials in the form of textbooks. It was clear to me that both the teachers and the parents looked toward Rice for information and guidance. As the world stage evolves, so too does the academic atmosphere, or so one hopes, at least. The last decade has seen the growth of learners of Chinese and the eventual inclusion of teaching Chinese in the Texas public school system. With China’s dramatic entrance into the global political and economic arenas, one can only predict that the need for what we have been doing will increase.

Currently the following high schools in Houston area offer Chinese language programs: Bellaire, Westside, Clear Lake, Clear Creek, Clear Brook, Clements, Dulles, Furr, and Lamar. Bellaire has the longest history, some twenty years. Furr and Lamar were only added formally this year. No school has more than one teacher, and some go back and forth between two schools. Currently there are about 800 students taking different levels of Chinese throughout the Houston area. Each teacher is solely responsible for the Chinese program in her or his respective school and must face and solve any problems more or less alone. One can easily appreciate, then, the teachers’ expressed desire to participate in the kind of forum that we provide at Rice. The networking and moral support resources present here for such teachers are simply priceless.

The actual title of the workshop was “Technology-Enhanced Language Teaching”. The two presentations were (a) Technology-Enhanced Language Teaching I: Use of Online Tools for Developing the Three Basic Skills by Chao-mei Shen, and (b) Technology-Enhanced Language Teaching II: Salient Characteristics of the Language and Student Errors by Lilly Lee Chen. The implementations of the two projects received help from the personnel of Rice Language Resource Center, and my own project was funded by a Brown Grant titled “Visualize the Invisible: Web-Technologies and Teaching of the Structure of Chinese.” We focused on just two full presentations in order to avoid what the Chinese would characterize as zou ma kan hua (literally, “to look at the flowers while passing on horseback,” that is, to give a hurried glance). It is our hope that all of our participants saw more than a hurried glance and thus could take something of real substance (and scent) back to their local classrooms.

The workshop was attended by teachers from the Independent School Districts of Houston, Clear Creek, and Fort Bend, all of whom received professional development credits through the School of Continuing Studies. The Center for the Study of Languages (CSL) offered financial help, and lunch was furnished by the Cultural Division of Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO). Both Director Andrew Lian of CSL and Director Yuri Chih of TECO were present. So was Dr. Marshall McArthur, who provided much needed help on site.

To Lend a Hand
by Lilly Lee Chen

Division (continued from page 7)
Asian Studies at Rice spans a wide spectrum of academic disciplines and cultural foci. With each newsletter we would like to feature different faculty members and their research interests. This year we would like to put a special spotlight on Professor Suchan Chae of the Economics Department and the Asian Studies Program here at Rice.

Professor Chae earned a B.S. and M.S. in mathematics in his native South Korea before coming to the University of Pennsylvania, where he earned his Ph.D. in economics in 1985. Since then he has been at Rice University, teaching and writing in the areas of bargaining theory, general equilibrium theory, industrial organization, development economics, international economics, and public economics. He has also held visiting positions in universities and research institutes in several countries, including Cornell University, Brookings Institution, University of British Columbia in Canada, and Instituto de Analisis Economico in Spain. In South Korea, moreover, he has been a visitor at the Korea Development Institute, the Korea Information Society Development Institute, and the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy.

During the Asian economic crisis in the late 90s, Professor Chae advised Korean policy makers and wrote many columns in both Korean and other international newspapers regarding solutions to the crisis. During the recent North Korea nuclear crisis, he again advised the Korean policy makers and participated in the nuclear diplomacy in an effort to facilitate a dialogue between key players, particularly during the early months of 2003. Professor Chae’s work in Asian Studies thus extends well beyond the boundaries of the classroom and the campus into the very heart of contemporary politics, economic strategy, and international relations.

Asian Studies Program will be sponsoring an event around the book this coming spring. Until then, however, it must do to say simply that the book throws up a serious challenge—an overwhelming one really—to anyone who would suppose that ancient “Western” and “Eastern” cultures operated independently from one another, or that culture, any culture, can be adequately understood without taking into account its profound interactions with and transformations by the symbolisms, medical understandings, contemplative practices, and mystical doctrines of other cultures and times. McEvilley moves through any number of themes, from philosophical monism, skepticism, empiricism, Stoicism, nondualism, and dialectical thought, to reincarnationism, Neoplatonism, Tantra, and the occult physiological identification of brain fluid, spinal fluid, and semen (often expressed in the form of a “spinal serpent” connecting the brain and the urethra in both ancient Greece and India), to make his larger meta-case that the “shape of ancient culture” was of a form that required many teachers and authors, many centuries, and many cultures to, well, take shape. “East” and “West,” it turns out, have been an intimate part of one another for millennia now, sharing in the same “shape of ancient thought.”

Featuring Our Faculty: Suchan Chae
by Jeffrey J. Kripal

Comparison (continued from page 6)

more, however, was the facts that this was a book that dealt explicitly with two of my favorite fields (comparative studies and Indology), and that it had been written by a Rice colleague whom I did not know and had not even met.

Thomas McEvilley is a Distinguished Lecturer of Art History in the Department of Art History. Thomas has been at Rice for over twenty years now, teaching a broad range of courses that have become legends in their own right among many Rice students. I happen to know this because I asked my students about the author I had “met” in the library that winter day, and they were quick to praise his courses as some of the richest and most interesting they had ever taken. This spring, for example, he is teaching a course on art and fertility across a broad span of cultures.

It is quite impossible to summarize, much less assess, a 700 page book in 700 words. This is one reason the
During the past year, Professors Anne Klein and David Gray have been working on a special program for the digitization of research and teaching materials in the Tibetan language here at Rice. First and foremost, they have been working on the the Bonpo Digital Text Project in conjunction with the University of Virginia. Their portion of the project has entailed reading through an extensive array of texts from the “Great Perfection” or Dzogchen (rDzogs-chen) tradition of meditation and philosophical investigation from the Tibetan Bon and rNying-ma Buddhist traditions. In particular, this semester Professor Gray has read over and created tables of contents catalogues for several 8th century texts associated with some of the greatest figures of that period, such as Vimalamitra and Vairocana.

For readers accustomed to research in Western materials, it may be difficult to appreciate what an enormous step forward this is. Tibetan texts are neither indexed nor presented with visually discernable chapter divisions; many do not even have anything approaching a table of contents. Moreover, the literature itself is so vast that there are huge collections of texts, such as the Dzogchen materials on which we focus, that are literally uncharted territory. While traditional Tibetan scholars would often have memorized core elements of such works, or even entire works themselves, Western scholars often do not even know the issues on which a particular body of materials focus. In these ways, this project makes crucially significant bodies of knowledge from the ancient world accessible in the modern one. Since the catalogues Professors Klein and Gray are producing are digital and will be available on-line, they will be searchable, easy to use, and will be accessible to scholars around the world via the Internet.

While the eventual aim of the project is to produce digital, on-line editions of selected texts, at this point they are preparing digital catalogues of a broad range of texts that will soon be published on web-sites at Rice University and the University of Virginia. For all the reasons just mentioned, these will be valuable aids for scholars trying to negotiate this immense body of literature. They particularly hope that these on-line texts will provide starting points for Rice graduate students, who, as they develop their Tibetan language skills, can explore what is available in these texts in order to help them develop a focus for their doctoral research projects.

Professors Klein and Gray have also been working toward the digitalization of Tibetan language instruction at the beginner level. Here they have been greatly aided by Tenzin Metok Sither, a visiting student from the International University, Bremen (Germany), and native Tibetan speaker. Tenzin graciously agreed to aid Professors Klein and Gray in producing digital sound recordings of the text and vocabulary that they use in their first year Tibetan class, the dam chos yid bzhin nor bu thar pa rin po che’i rgyan, “The Ornament of Precious Liberation, A Wish-fulfilling Jewel of the Holy Dharma,” a twelfth-century text composed by Gampopa, a student of the famous Tibetan saint Milarepa. When they have completed this project by the end of this semester, they will have audio files for the text that will be read over the entire first academic year. These will be placed on a class web site in MP3 format, which is easily downloaded and used by the students. This should greatly facilitate the learning experience, helping students develop not only visual but also aural and oral proficiency with the language.

Tibetan literature is increasingly recognized as key to furthering our understanding of the ancient worlds of central Asia, for in the 8th century Tibet was a great military presence in Asia. In the following centuries, though its military influence declined, its cultural influence was profoundly felt from the Russian Caucasus region in the West to Beijing in the East. Since the Tibetan diaspora, now fifty years old, communities of Tibetans and centers for Tibetan studies, as well as practice communities based in Tibetan Buddhism, have spread to cities and Universities of every continent, and most major cities in the Americas and Europe have some Tibetan cultural presence. It is our hope that digital learning tools such as this and also the more advanced learning materials available on the University of Virginia web-site will greatly enhance the study of Tibetan language, literature, and culture both here at Rice and around the globe.

Asian Studies major Naturaleza Moore (Martel ’04) celebrates her twenty-first birthday planting rice in Nishi-Arita as part of a “Japan in Today’s World” field trip.
The Asian Studies Faculty

Suchan Chae, Associate Professor of Economics (Department of Economics)
Lilly Chen, Senior Lecturer of Chinese Language, Culture and Literature (Center for the Study of Languages)
David Cook, Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies (Department of Religious Studies)
David Gray, the Woodrow Wilson Post-Doctoral Fellow in the Humanities (Department of Religious Studies)
Anne Klein, Professor of Religious Studies (Department of Religious Studies)
Jeffrey J. Kripal, Lynette S. Autry Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Director of Asian Studies (Department of Religious Studies)
Benjamin Lee, Professor of Anthropology (Department of Anthropology)
Hyung-Jin Lee, Lecturer of Korean Language, Culture and Literature (Center for the Study of Languages)
Steven Lewis, Senior Researcher for Asian Politics and Economics, Program Director of the Transnational China Project, Lecturer (Asian Studies Program)
Marshall McArthur, Lecturer of Chinese Language, Culture and Literature (Center for the Study of Languages)
Thomas McEvilley, Distinguished Lecturer of Art History (Department of Art History)
Douglas Mitchell, Lecturer of Sanskrit and Playwright in Residence (Department of Linguistics)
Hajime Nakatani, Acting Assistant Professor of East Asian Art History (Department of Art History)
Nam Van Nguyen, Lecturer of Vietnamese Language and Culture (Hanszen College)
William B. Parsons, Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Chair of Religious Studies (Department of Religious Studies)
Nanxiu Qian, Associate Professor of Chinese Literature (Department of Linguistics)
Hiroko Sato, Senior Lecturer of Japanese Language and Culture (Center for the Study of Languages)
Gautami Shah, Senior Lecturer of Hindi Language, South Asian Culture and Literature (Center for the Study of Languages)
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Kerry Ward, Assistant Professor of World History (Department of History)
Rina Williams, Lecturer of South Asian Politics (Jones College)
Meng Yeh, Lecturer of Chinese Language, Culture and Literature (Center for the Study of Languages)
Jianying Zha, Visiting Scholar

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