



ANNUAL REPORT 2024–2025

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Impact





From the Director

Prasenjit Duara

Oscar Tang Family Distinguished Professor, Department of History

This has been a memorable year for portentous developments across the world, the nation and, not least, the university.

APSI has navigated these changes with care, while maintaining its core activities such as the [Speaker Series](#) and [AP Forum](#) which play a crucial role in fostering academic dialogue and research exchanges between visiting scholars and APSI affiliates.

Our MA program has continued to attract a growing number of applicants, showcasing the increasing capabilities of our students. We have consistently supported both students and faculty in their academic pursuits, including conducting research and attending conferences.

APSI has also fostered collaborations with various departments and institutes at Duke, supporting workshops like “New Directions in China–Africa Studies” and hosting the ever-popular film screenings, often followed by informed discussions with experts.

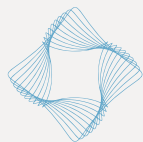
Internationally, APSI joined Nichibunken’s Consortium for Global Japanese Studies. We also successfully launched the Environmental Frontiers in Asia Network (EFAN) in partnership with Jeju National University, South Korea, and Duke Kunshan University (DKU).

The second EFAN event at Duke included participants from DKU, Jeju, and NUS in Singapore, focusing on the vital topic of environmental pedagogy.

One of our notable events featured Emily Feng, an award-winning China correspondent for NPR and Duke alumna, who discussed her acclaimed new book on contemporary China with Prof Eileen Chow.

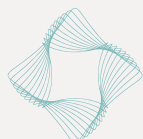
Finally, it is with a mixture of joy and sadness that we see our dearly valued postdoctoral associate, Dr. Jieun Cho, depart after two years of rich contributions to APSI. We wish her well as she begins her new chapter with a tenure-track career in Hong Kong.





Vision

APSI is the focal point of research and teaching on the Asia Pacific region at Duke University, fostering an active community of scholars of East and Southeast Asia.



Mission

APSI organizes and promotes research, teaching, programs, and events to engage scholars and practitioners dedicated to advancing Asian Studies across academic disciplines at Duke and professionally around the world.

How does APSI do it?

- Administering the Master of Arts and a graduate certificate program in East Asian Studies
- Supporting and offering courses focused on East Asia
- Hosting visiting scholars conducting research on East Asia at Duke
- Promoting student and faculty research related to the region through grants, fellowships and awards
- Organizing and co-sponsoring events including talks and conferences
- Maintaining global partnerships and exchanges in the region
- Elevating the study of languages, histories, contemporary societies, and cultures of East and Southeast Asia

By the numbers

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Each year, APSI works to engage our community in line with our mission and vision, including coordinating and supporting programmatic Asia-focused events and activities on campus. We bring guest speakers and visitors from other universities as well as public intellectuals and performers.



We sponsor film screenings that offer opportunities to meet with experts, including faculty who share essential context via a brief introduction or post-screening discussion as well as individuals involved in the making or production of the film.



Research clusters promote interdisciplinary and cross-cultural inquiry and collaboration among East and Southeast Asian studies faculty and students at Duke University and other Triangle area universities.



Events highlight

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On March 20, APSI hosted Duke alumna Emily Feng, an award-winning journalist, to meet students for a special workshop and give a public talk about her new book, *Let Only Red Flowers Bloom: Identity and Belonging in Xi Jinping's China*.

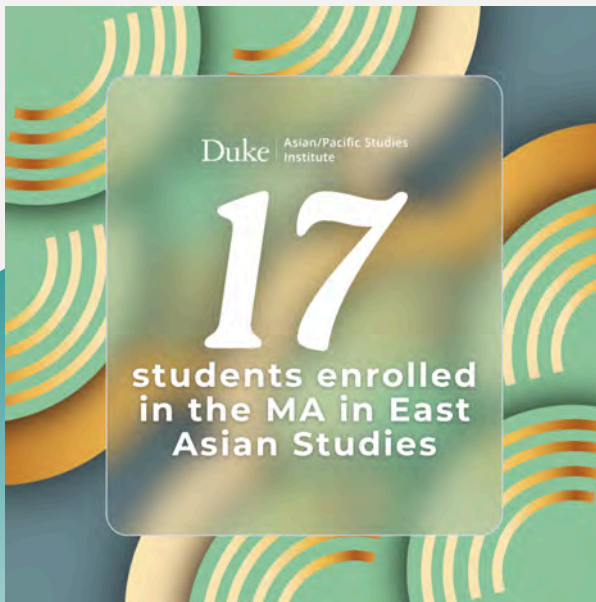


watch a recording of the conversation:

duke.is/8/3mmh

APSI Students

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APSI's core academic program, the MA in East Asian Studies, offers students rigorous interdisciplinary training in preparation for advanced careers in academia or professional fields that require regional specialization.

The curriculum introduces key methodological approaches and tools while providing flexibility for students keen to specialize in specific modes of inquiry.

“

I love the close advising relationship between faculty and students – [this is] one of the best among EAS graduate programs across the country, for sure.”



Kenan Gu, MA in East Asian Studies '25



Graduate students in any academic program at Duke may enhance their credential by completing course requirements and earning a graduate certificate in East Asian Studies.

Certificate students are vital members of our community.



Student Experiences

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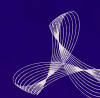
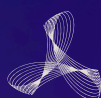
In February 2025, two APSI MA students, Daniel Zhang and Lilia Yan, traveled to Hawai'i with funding from APSI to present their papers at the 24th East-West Center International Graduate Student Conference (ICSC).

Their experience reflects the importance of forging connections—across disciplines, cultures, and oceans.



In summer 2024, Brandon Hays, a PhD student in ecology at the Nicholas School of the Environment, traveled to Thailand thanks to an APSI summer language grant.

Hays' long-term strategy is to engage with ecological researchers and practitioners working in the country.



On May 9, APSI hosted a special reception to celebrate the achievements of the students who will receive their Master of Arts in East Asian Studies or their graduate certificate in East Asian Studies in 2025.

Funding for students

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Throughout the academic year, APSI offers merit-based and competitive funding for students pursuing degree programs. This includes funding for first- and second-year MA students in the East Asian Studies program as well as undergraduate students via the Sirena WuDunn Memorial Scholarship.



Full-time Duke students are also eligible to apply for scholarships that will advance a substantive research project (such as an undergraduate or graduate thesis or PhD dissertation) or enhance their proficiency in an East or Southeast Asian language.

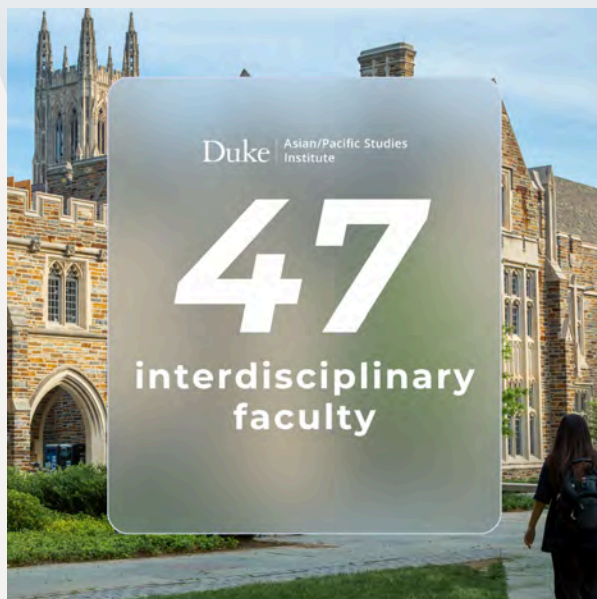
APSI also supports students who need financial assistance to cover travel and related expenses for formal presentations on East or Southeast Asian topics at conferences and professional meetings.



APSI Faculty

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APSI faculty are interdisciplinary scholars who are experts in the fields of anthropology, cultural studies, history, art history, language, law, literature, performing arts, political science, policy, religion, and sociology. They teach graduate and undergraduate courses, engage in collaborative research, and mentor students in APSI's MA in East Asian Studies program.

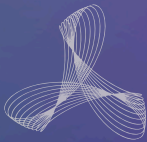


APSI annually offers grants to Duke faculty interested in organizing Asia-focused research clusters, developing new courses, advancing individual projects, presenting their findings, and hosting conferences at Duke.



During her time as APSI's postdoctoral associate in Asian climate and environmental studies, Dr. Jieun Cho developed and taught two EAS 590 special topics seminars.

In Spring 2025, Dr. Cho's course, "Encountering Animals," examined the intersections of animal life, social justice, and environmental ethics in a multispecies world by investigating the evolving relationships between animals, humans, and their environments. Although the coursework focused on Asia, several students completed final projects based on their own experiences with animals closer to home.



Critical Animal Studies



Students in "Critical Animal Studies," a special East Asian Studies seminar taught by Dr. Jieun Cho in Spring 2025, produced a collection of essays exploring the significance of and roles played by non-human animals in today's socioecological crises.

visit the project page:

duke.is/2025-EncounteringAnimals

APSI and the Environment

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Supporting Duke's Climate Commitment, APSI is working to support a growing network of scholars, professionals, and community organizers dedicated to understanding environmental and climate issues, especially their effects on people and places in Asia.



July 2024: The Jeju Workshop

Cosponsored and coorganized by Duke's Asian/Pacific Studies Institute (APSI) and Jeju National University's (JNU) Research Center on the Commons and Sustainable Society, the inaugural workshop on Jeju Island represented a major step toward achieving the network's ambitious goals.



May 2025: The Durham Workshop

The underlying theme of the second workshop was pedagogy—defining the term in the broader sense of how we might teach, learn, and collaborate, in and beyond classrooms and communities, while highlighting the substantive ways Asia contributes to addressing environmental futures globally.

learn about the network:
sites.duke.edu/efan

Film screenings

Several times each semester, APSI sponsors (and co-sponsors) film screenings relevant to Asian studies—including popular cinematic movies and documentaries from the region—enabling members of our community to engage with faculty and subject matter experts as well as one another.

On November 4, a panel of APSI faculty engaged members of the Duke and Triangle communities in a thoughtful and thought-provoking conversation about the 2024 documentary, *Invisible Nation*.

watch the discussion:
duke.is/m/xyqp



Members of the APSI faculty typically introduce the films which periodically feature Q&A with individuals involved in making the film or professionals who provide additional context and insight. Screenings are frequently the product of collaborative efforts involving multiple campus departments and units.



All Static and Noise

Jewher Ilham & Janice Englehart,
producers



The Last Breath of Sam Yan

Netiwit Chotiphatphaisal &
Settanant Thanakitkoses,
producers



Faces of Seoul

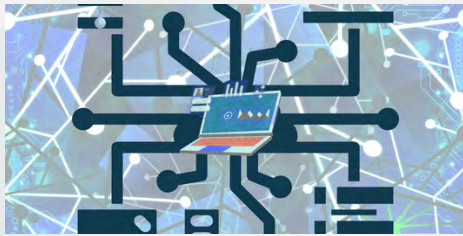
Gina Kim,
director

This year, seven of our 16 film screenings included an opportunity to speak with the director or producers. Several of these conversations were held in the speaker's native tongue, facilitated by English translation, offering audience members the chance to utilize their language skills in a real-world setting.

Impact on and beyond campus

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Supported by APSI, Duke scholars impact students and communities both on and off campus. Explore some instances of their activities and collaborations that transcend boundaries.



ACLS has published a resource guide of open databases for China scholars. Duke Chinese Studies Librarian Luo Zhou is one of the co-editors of the guide which includes two digital collections housed at Duke.



Dr. Jieun Cho, APSI's postdoctoral associate, organized a mentoring workshop for MA students in the East Asian Studies and Critical Asian & Middle Eastern Humanities programs. Mentors shared insight about their academic paths and personal experiences.



Duke and UNC scholars worked with the NC Museum of Art and the Rubenstein Library on an exhibition that invites visitors to consider the original purpose of Japan's material culture of war and see its connections to history, art, daily life, and politics.



In a thought-provoking talk, Shiho Satsuka (Anthropology, University of Toronto) explored how matsutake mushrooms inspire new social relations, environmental practices, and planetary philosophies.



APSI became a full international member of the Consortium for Global Japanese Studies, an initiative of the International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken), an inter-university research institute based in Kyoto.



Anne Allison received the prestigious John Whitney Hall prize from the Northeast Asia Council of the Association for Asian Studies, given annually for an outstanding English language book on Japan.

Contact Us

 apsi@duke.edu

 asianpacific.duke.edu



A digital version
of this report
is online at:

duke.is/24-25AAR

