

Dear MAR/AAS Members and Colleagues,

We will be celebrating the 40th anniversary of our Mid-Atlantic Region/Association for Asian Studies at the annual meeting, October 21-23, 2011, at Princeton University. Our theme for the annual conference is **“Human Rights and Social Justice in Asia.”** I would like, on behalf of MAR/AAS, to invite you all to attend the conference and to present your research. While all of us, as Asianists, are interested in human rights and social justice in Asia, we are also now more focused internationally on issues of freedom of expression and assembly; social, cultural, political, religious, and economic rights; equal distribution of national wealth and power; gender equality and the persistent problem of human trafficking, especially of children, young men and women; the power of literature and art to effect change and the power of the internet and new technology to foster or to stifle legitimate dissent. While we hope to encourage papers on these and related topics, we also, as always, welcome scholarship on other issues related to Asia.

You may submit individual papers or full panels on the forms located on our website: <http://www.ucis.pitt.edu/asc/maraas/>. You may also e-mail or post your proposals to either of our Program Co-Chairs:

Dr. Charles Desnoyers
Department of History
La Salle University
1900 W. Olney Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19141
desnoyer@lasalle.edu

Dr. Maria Toyoda, Chair
Department of Political Science
Villanova University
Villanova, PA 19085
amaria.toyoda@villanova.edu

To ensure full consideration and a place on the conference schedule, please submit your proposal no later than May 17, 2011.

MAR/AAS dues are \$20 (\$10 for graduate students); conference participants must be dues-paying members. Teaching Asia Workshop participants and Princeton undergraduates may attend the conference free. Some travel assistance is available on a competitive basis for graduate students and international scholars. Those who wish to be considered for travel assistance must indicate this on their paper proposals. For more information, go to www.maraas.org.

Send Membership Dues to: Dr. David Kenley
History Department
Elizabethtown College
One Alpha Drive
Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, 17022
kenleyd@etown.edu · 717-361-1238

or an online membership form is available at www.maraas.org

As encouragement for you and your graduate students to participate I would like to quote bits of insight provided by our last two distinguished Presidents, Dr. Marlene Mayo and Dr. Siddharth Chandra:

Urging members and colleagues not to forget the value of meeting once a year face-to-face at the annual conference Dr. Mayo wrote:

During the past few months, I have been looking back over almost fifty years of teaching and research and reflecting upon the pleasures of attending meetings of the regional and national Association for Asian Studies. For me, direct contact has been indispensable even in the new era of the vast Internet. Meeting old friends, making new friends, attending panels, listening to younger and older scholars match wits and exchange ideas, catching up with the latest books and visual aids, engaging in cultural activities and adventures in new Asian cuisine have been great joys in my academic life

As I have learned through the years, the local and regional levels of the Association of Asian Studies are as vital and important as the national organization. The founders of MAR were innovative in envisioning the many things a regional conference could and should do: community outreach, pre-collegiate teaching workshops and K-12 student prizes, networking with isolated scholars, and encouraging a focus on Asia at regional institutions The late Dr. Marie Wanek, a specialist on India and an early MAR officer, played a leading role in reaching out to pre-collegiate teachers and their students. It is a great honor to remember her with the Annual Marie Wanek Prize. An annual award for Distinguished Asianist was also created for retired educators and scholars, as was a new graduate student prize, presidential roundtable, and complementary buffet on Sunday mornings.

Speaking on the need for our organizations (AAS and MAR/AAS) to pay more attention to Central, North, and West Asia, Dr. Chandra wrote:

The strength of Asian studies lies in its ability to serve both the narrow (nation- or sub-cultural) and the broad (transnational or cultural). Because of the very strong ties that Central, North, and West Asia have had and continue to have with East, South, and Southeast Asia, it is critical that we shed the blinders imposed on us by the AAS logo and study the interconnections across these different regions of Asia The interplay between East, South, and Southeast Asia has played a formative role in the cultural, economic, and political development of a number of major nation states of Southeast Asia. If we are to educate students about Asia, therefore, we must first develop a healthy and open perspective on what Asia really is. . . .

As Asia grows in economic and political significance on the global stage, so does the need to educate young Americans about this important region. As education professionals who have invested our careers in learning, writing, and teaching about Asia, this task falls largely to our community. While the rise of Asia poses many challenges of a curricular and organizational nature to our educational institutions, especially in view of the meager or declining resources

available to us, it also presents an unprecedented opportunity in the form of a dramatic increase among our students in learning about Asia. To take advantage of this opportunity, it is important that we maintain and build the vitality of the Mid-Atlantic Region branch of the Association for Asian Studies.

The local arrangements chair at Princeton University is:

Dr. David Leheny,
Department of East Asian Studies
211 Jones Hall
Princeton University
Princeton, NJ 08544
dleheny@princeton.edu

Lodging will be available at the Hyatt Regency Princeton and the Nassau Inn; for more information visit our website at <http://www.ucis.pitt.edu/asc/maraas/>, and for information on other hotels in the area see: <http://www.visitprinceton.org/visitor/wheretostay/>

Finally, remembering, once again, my favorite Washington D.C. bus-side jingle: “It’s easier to see eye-to-eye if we meet face-to-face,” I hope to see you at Princeton in October.

Yours,

Eleanor Kerkham,
President, MAR/AAS