

NCTA NOTES #7, November 2008

NATIONAL CONSORTIUM FOR TEACHING ABOUT ASIA, Pittsburgh National Coordinating Site

www.ucis.pitt.edu/ncta



Pam Burrett in Mongolia. See below for full story

NCTA Pittsburgh Has A New Director & A New Status

This past summer brought a lot of changes to NCTA Pittsburgh. In July, Diana Wood stepped down as the director of the Pittsburgh Region NCTA. Brenda G. Jordan of Pitt's Asian Studies Center has taken over as Director (see her greeting below). Although Diana intended to retire, she is still on board with us as the Enrichment and Sustainability Coordinator. She has already led an overnight trip to Baltimore's Walters Art Museum, and has been coordinating the on-going World History seminar at Pitt being held in collaboration with the new History Center at Pitt. More events are in the works, and will be posted on our website www.ucis.pitt.edu/ncta.

Also, as many of you know, the University of Pittsburgh joined NCTA as a regional site in August of 2001 and has, for seven years, been coordinating seminars and programs in Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. This year the University of Pittsburgh became an NCTA National Coordinating Site, becoming one of seven Sites that coordinate this nationwide program.



Greetings from Brenda G. Jordan, the New Director of NCTA Pittsburgh.

Whenever I attend an NCTA seminar or other meeting, I am always impressed by the quality of *you*—our teachers in the field. Your dedication, perseverance, and striving toward excellence in the face of all the obstacles you encounter, every day, is an inspiration to me. NCTA teachers are part of a nationwide movement to incorporate Asia into the curriculum. Each of you, individually, is an important part of that movement, and you make the work of NCTA worth every minute.

I received my PhD from the University of Kansas in the history of Japanese art. I work on late 19th century Japan, with a special interest in modernization and modernity. I have also studied how painters were trained in Japan prior to the modern era, and co-authored and edited a book about this topic entitled *Copying the Master and Stealing His Secrets: Talent and Training in Japanese Painting*. As an art historian, I have taught a wide variety of courses, from the Arts of Asia and Arts of China, to The Language of Japanese Aesthetics and Tales of the Supernatural. (Yes, I do know a few things about ghosts.)

I joined the University of Pittsburgh History of Art and Architecture Department as an adjunct assistant professor in 2001, and began working for the Asian Studies Center the same fall. Until this summer, I was the Educational Outreach Assistant Director and Japan Studies Coordinator. While I continue to serve as the Japan Studies Coordinator, I'm now settling into my new position as Director of our National Coordinating Site, with much needed help and guidance from Diana Wood, Patrick Hughes, and our great team of seminar leaders.

On a personal note, my husband, Hiroshi Nara, is the Chair of East Asian Languages and Literatures here at Pitt, and we have an adopted Chinese daughter, Erika, who is eleven years old and in sixth grade. (My deep sympathies and appreciation for all teachers of middle school, by the way—the pre-teen mind, eh?) We live in a Depression era brick house in nearby Forest Hills, a few blocks from my (former schoolteacher) mother, and with a baby cockatiel called Fluffy and 14 guppies. I'm totally addicted to gardening and bird watching, and afternoon tea. Very much looking forward to working with all of you. Or we say it in Japan, "*doozo yoroshiku onegai itashimasu.*"



Japan Study Tour
Participants Get
Made-up as Geisha

Summer 2008 Japan Study Tour:

This summer's NCTA Study Tour was a three week trip through Japan that took place between June 24 and July 14. The 20 NCTA alumni, led by **Gretchen Jones**, **Sandy Kita** and **Diana Wood** travelled extensively in Japan. This trip was noteworthy for the number of *ryokan* and *minshuku* in which they stayed, both in the countryside and small cities. Along with that lodging came exquisite Japanese meals.

Probably most unusual was the tiny town of **Tsumago** where they all stayed in one *minshuku* with forest vegetables and fresh river fish on

the menu. One full morning was committed to the hike through beautiful forests (largely uphill for the first few hours) from **Tsumago** to **Magome**. This route replicates one of the major routes between **Edo** and **Kyoto** during the Tokugawa period. Other high points of the study tour were visits to Hiroshima, the Shinto fire festival in **Tomonoura**, and a **Hiroshima Carps** baseball game.



The Kyoto Colonel. Japan

2009 Study Tour to China

In the summer of 2009, **David Kenley** (Elizabethtown College), **Katherine Carlitz** and **Brenda Jordan** (University of Pittsburgh) will lead a Study Tour to China for NCTA alumni.

The details will be announced in early December when the applications will be available on our website

www.ucis.pitt.edu/ncta.

2009 NCTA Seminars to be offered in the following locations

- **University of Pittsburgh**, Bradford Campus, Led by Dr. Jody Burgert
- **Bucknell University**, Led by Mimi Rice
- **Elizabethtown College**, Led by Dr. David Kenley
- **University of Delaware**, Led by Dr. Rachael Hutchinson
- **University of Maryland**, Baltimore County, Led by Dr. Charles Springer



Chinese Children. 2007 China Study Tour.



Adel Fougnyes and Pam Burrett in Mongolia

NCTA Teachers Help Mongolian Debaters, Experience Martial Law in Ulan Bator:

This past summer two NCTA Pittsburgh alums-- **Adel Fougnyes** and **Pam Burrett**—spent three weeks in Mongolia. They worked with thirty Mongolian students in the capital city of Ulan Bator to prepare them for participation in an international debating tournament. In conjunction with Pitt’s **Mongolia Field Studies Program**, NCTA sent these two teachers to Mongolia. Their time in Mongolia got a bit more interesting than they expected when the capital city was roiled by political rioting and the government declared a state of martial law. Yet our valiant NCTA teachers persevered! This winter Adel and Pam will join a visiting scholar to present a program on the role of Mongolia within a world history context.

Adel's Reflections on Mongolia:

“Nothing can really prepare you to be a part of a country's changing and dynamic political process, but when we found ourselves in the middle of national turmoil, we confined ourselves to our lodgings and waited for the next event. A four day crackdown followed that did bring our teaching to a halt for one day.

For me, Mongolia is best experienced out on the steppes, watching the herds, visiting with individual families, seeing how young and old have passed the centuries as part of a life cycle that melds man and animal into one working, respectful, harmonious gestalt. As an outside observer, I cannot but wonder how long the ancient, nomadic lifestyle can continue to exist with the demands and pace of the 21st century. Mongolia is a changing country. What must happen next is for Mongolia to develop and use its resources to provide a safe and healthy life for all of its citizens.

I am thrilled that I was given the opportunity to experience an ancient and complex culture. Lessons are learned if the mind is free, open, and interested. Mongolia is fascinating, provocative, and worthy of our attention and study.”

Pam's Reflections on Mongolia:

“Even though our schedule was interrupted by a national state of emergency due to civil unrest in the capital, this adventure stimulated our curiosity about just how this vast empire of the great Genghis Kahn ties into the history of its current neighbors, Russia and China. Our visit permitted travel to the Gobi desert, staying in *ger* and dining on mutton and *aireg*. Visiting Mongolia for three weeks has stimulated us to plug this mysterious far land into our conversation, our writing and most importantly, into the curriculum. Join us [this winter] to learn more about how to fit the Khans into YOUR class.”



Golden Buddha. Mongolia

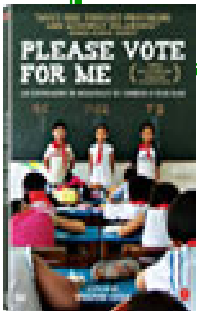
2008-09 Enrichment and Sustainability

The Pittsburgh region's alumni have participated in numerous study opportunities during the summer of 2008. This is a wonderful record. For 2009 you should check the Enrichment page on our website for all the links for various study programs both in the US and abroad at www.ucis.pitt.edu/ncta/enrichment.html

- NCTA Study Tour to Japan
Pitt (3), Maryland (11), World Affairs Council- Philadelphia (1), Elizabethtown U. (4) and Bucknell U. (1)
- Fullbright Memorial Fund to Japan
Stetts (Bucknell)
- U. Colorado Summer Seminar
Sivillo (Pitt), Moyer and Selfridge (World Affairs Council-Philadelphia)
- Japan in the 21st Century, U. Penn and World Affairs Council- Philadelphia
Streitz, Kahn, Kane, Pagan, Van Pham, Mohammed (all World Affairs Council-Philadelphia)
- College Board program in China for AP World History teachers
McNulty (Pitt)

New in the Asian Studies Center Teacher Resource Library

The Asian Studies Center's Teacher Resource Library continues to augment its collection with books, videos and curriculum materials. Here are a few noteworthy additions to the collection.



Please Vote For Me (2007, 58 min.) In this documentary by Weijun Chen, a third-grade school teacher in Wuhan,

China decides to conduct an experiment in democracy by holding elections for the position of "class monitor." Three students vie for this position, revealing the best and worst aspects of electoral politics, including character assassination, pandering, inspiring rhetoric and dirty dealings. Particularly interesting is the intense role that the parents play in the lives of these children.

Wings of Defeat (2007, 89 min.)

Recently reviewed in *Education About Asia* (Fall 2008, p. 67),

This powerful film explores the training and motivation of the kamikaze. The director located four survivors and interviewed them extensively and emotionally. *Wings of Defeat* does not dwell solely on the kamikaze.

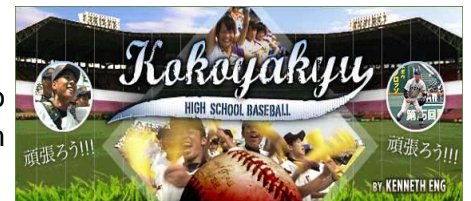
The film gives a synopsis of the Pacific War, but focuses mainly on its final eight months. The lives of the pilots do not dominate the film, but instead become a story within a story.



Kokoyakyu: High School Baseball (2006, 54 min.)

The film focuses on two schools among the 4,000 striving to make it to the National Championships in Japan. NCTA Pittsburgh alum **Bill Cardiff** (Norwin H.S.) had this to say about the film:

"The film did a tremendous job illustrating the nature of the Confucian ethic that is so pervasive throughout Asian societies. The strong sense of duty, respect, and reciprocal obligation from players to coach, coach to players, players to fans, fans to players, winning team to losing team is impressive... I found that the film revealed ex-



actly how Confucian ethics have cultivated a culture of 'shame' in the Asian world as opposed to the culture of 'guilt' that is pervasive in the Western world."