

THE LOTUS

BLOCK 3 NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2023

BY ESA CHEN '25

CELEBRATING THE LEGACY OF PROFESSOR JOAN ERICSON

A LUMINARY IN JAPANESE AND ASIAN STUDIES

For over three decades, the hallways and classrooms of Colorado College have echoed the profound influence of a singular name in Japanese and Asian Studies: Professor Joan Ericson. Students also call her Joan Sensei (which means “teacher” in Japanese). Since her arrival in 1996, she has meticulously shaped the college’s approach to Asian Studies, carving a distinctive niche in Colorado College’s academic landscape.

Raised in Japan, Prof. Ericson’s intimate bond with Japanese language, culture, and literature has not only marked her personal journey but also forms the backbone of Colorado College’s transformative journey in Asian Studies. She is celebrated for both her vast knowledge and her visionary approach to the inception of the Japanese program and a comprehensive Asian Studies Program. Now, as Professor Ericson steps into retirement, it is a moment of reflection for Colorado College, as we reminisce on the profound impact she has had on the institution’s academic fabric.



THE EVOLUTION OF ASIAN STUDIES WITH PROFESSOR ERICSON AT THE HELM

During its nascent phase at Colorado College, the academic focus predominantly lay on Western culture and history, with no dedicated program for Asian Studies. The turning point came with a generous donation from Edith Gaylord Harper (also known as Edith Kinney Gaylord). Inspired by her contribution and seeing the need for a deeper exploration of Asia’s vast cultural, historical, and socio-political landscape, Prof. Ericson, in collaboration with Prof. Hong Jiang of the Chinese department, initiated the Asian Studies program. The journey wasn’t without challenges; Prof. Ericson and Prof. Jiang were pioneers in this domain at Colorado College, meaning they often had to chart their own course without the benefit of an existing framework or precedents. Whether it was grappling

with a limited pool of experts on Asian topics, addressing logistical constraints, or making decisions on course offerings, they were frequently in uncharted territory. When they envisioned initiatives like study abroad programs, they took it upon themselves to contact potential partners, organize all logistics, and even petition the college for necessary funding. Prof. Ericson’s leadership and collaborative spirit turned the challenges they faced into opportunities, and her proactive approach and commitment laid the foundation for the program’s eventual success.

With Prof. Ericson’s vision as its guiding star, the Asian Studies program has flourished, evolving from a modest entity to a thriving academic community. Beyond just expanding the course listings, Prof. Ericson built a communal ecosystem where faculty members from

various departments converged on their different expertise, leading to a comprehensive and holistic program. Her innovative initiatives, like the First-Year Experience (FYE) course with a language component, not only enriched the curriculum but also drew students to the major. She encouraged students to venture out, study abroad, and immerse themselves in the culture and language. Many returned with renewed vigor, keen on delving deeper into their studies.

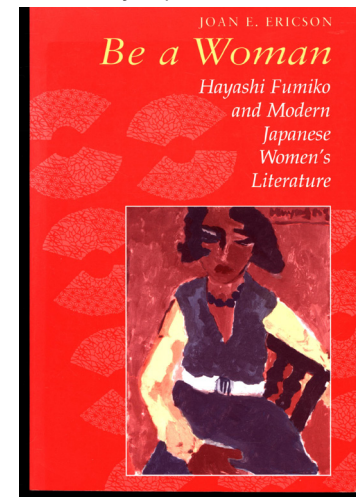
LITERARY INSIGHTS AND ENGAGEMENTS

Navigating Japan’s literary history, from the Tokugawa period (1603 - 1867) to the contemporary era, Prof. Ericson has unveiled the intricate dance between societal norms, gender dynamics, and the literary canvas of Japan. With an interest in the development of women’s literature, Prof. Ericson delved deep into the

multifaceted landscape. Her publication *“Be a Woman: Hayashi Fumiko and Modern Japanese Women’s Literature”* stands out in her collection of work. In it, she highlights the nuanced intersection of gender and genre in literature, challenging the stereotypical conceptions surrounding women writers like Hayashi Fumiko. Inspired by Hayashi Fumiko’s children’s literature, Prof. Ericson’s interests extend beyond modern literary classics, but also to children’s literature—a focus she intends to pursue in her research post-retirement.

Her research continues. After her retirement, even though she is no longer teaching, she is keen on delving into two major projects. The first revolves around the journey of a Japanese international student, Taizo Nakashima, at Colorado College in 1893. This student, originating from the Japanese countryside, learned English and was educated in a Christian school in Osaka before arriving at Colorado College. Prof. Ericson is intrigued by his unique trajectory, especially given that many during that time traveled to the U.S. for work rather than education. To reveal the untold stories of Taizo, Prof. Ericson would like to go to Japan again and visit his hometown to talk to the successors of his family in the neighborhood.

Her second project is a comparative study of Japanese children’s literature. She aims to juxtapose children’s



Professor Joan E. Ericson’s publication, 1997.

literature from the Tokugawa period, when education became increasingly prevalent, against post-1945 literature, which was the time when Japan was reconstructing its educational materials after the war. During the Tokugawa period, education became common due to city development and the establishment of temple schools. Consequently, there was a need for better materials for children's education, leading to the creation of some of the earliest manga and paving the way for children's literature. After WWII, there was a shift in Japanese educational content. Much of the available and existing literature was imbued with patriotic sentiments from the wartime era, which wasn't ideal for children's education. This necessitated the creation and sourcing of new educational materials tailored specifically for children.

THE ESSENCE OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING WITH PROFESSOR ERICSON

Outside the confines of lectures and textbooks, Prof. Ericson also championed immersive learning. She doesn't merely preach about immersive experiences; she embodies them. Her recollections of enriching trips with students to Japan highlight the breadth of her hands-on approach: from crafting traditional sweets in Fujiyoshida (Colorado Springs' sister city), to visiting Taro Tomisawa's farm in the mountains in order to gain an understanding of village life and food production. Through her passion and commitment, she not only taught students about Japanese culture but genuinely immersed them in it, forging

memories that will resonate for years to come.

Never one to be hemmed in by campus boundaries, Prof. Ericson relentlessly pursued opportunities to extend education for students beyond traditional settings. Her unwavering commitment saw the establishment of pivotal CC exchange programs with Japan. These programs, though confronted with initial challenges, enabled students to savor the diverse landscapes of Japan - from the dynamic cityscape of Tokyo to the historic architecture and traditional canals of Omi Hachiman.

At the core of Prof. Ericson's educational philosophy lies a fervent belief in tangible, immersive learning. She initiated a series of study abroad endeavors, starting with a summer course in Japan. As time passed, her vision broadened, leading to collaborations with esteemed institutions such as Waseda University and Kansai Gaidai University. Through her relentless efforts and secured funding, bachelor's degree candidates from diverse disciplines ventured to Japan, undertaking groundbreaking projects. From examining sports injuries among female soccer players across the U.S. and Japan, to pioneering phonetic studies aimed at aiding English speakers in mastering challenging *hiragana* pronunciations, her students' endeavors were varied and impactful.

Furthermore, her commitment to academic growth and cooperation has not solely been student focused. Prof. Ericson also orchestrated educational tours for faculty to esteemed universities

across Asia, spanning countries from China, to Korea, to Japan, and to Indonesia. These tours not only nurtured global academic relationships but also birthed reciprocal exchange programs. As a result, professors from these partner institutions enriched Colorado College with their expertise and vice versa.

Prof. Ericson believes that hands-on experience is crucial and emphasizes the importance of having an open mind to understand worlds beyond the US. She hopes that after participating in these projects, students will be inspired to further explore Japanese culture and language. Despite the challenges of independently organizing numerous programs and courses, she finds the process rewarding. In her words, "One idea sparks another, forming a chain of inspiration." Prof. Ericson derives an unparalleled sense of fulfillment from organizing these programs and bringing them to life. She is of the belief that



Professor Joan E. Ericson's giving a speech at her retirement party.

to achieve any goal, one must first set it and then diligently plan towards its realization.

A LEGACY BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Throughout her tenure, Prof. Ericson has remained committed to her students, guiding them not just in academic pursuits but also in their personal journeys. Her endeavors have left an indelible mark, creating ripples that extend far beyond the confines of Colorado College. Her teachings, dedication, and mentorship will resonate for generations to come.

To Prof. Ericson, every educational endeavor, every student project, and every international collaboration is a meticulously crafted link in a vast chain of learning. Each experience begets another, continuously evolving and expanding in scope. Her pride in these programs isn't just about the numbers or accolades but the profound sense of achievement she feels in witnessing the meticulous planning of each initiative come to glorious fruition. In her world, the journey is just as significant as the destination, and she has ensured that her students and colleagues travel that journey in its most enlightening, fulfilling, rewarding, and comprehensive manner.

As she embarks on her retirement, the Colorado College community extends its heartfelt gratitude. Professor Joan Ericson's legacy is a testament to her enduring passion, commitment, and vision. As she turns her page to the next chapter, her contributions will continue to inspire, educate, and shape minds at Colorado College and beyond.

BY HONGLI ZENG '24

CALL FOR STUDENT PAPERS

FOR SCHOLARS OF ASIAN STUDIES, THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO SHARE YOUR WORK!

A consortium of over 140 North American colleges, ASIANetwork strives to strengthen the role of Asian Studies within the framework of liberal arts education to help prepare succeeding generations of undergraduates for a world in which Asian societies play prominent roles in an ever more interdependent world.

ASIANetwork is inviting undergraduate students from member institutions to submit papers for the Marianna McJimsey Award, which recognizes undergraduate student research dealing with Asia.

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roles in an ever more interdependent world.

The deadline for submission is January 15, 2024. The winner and one or two runners-up receive invitations and funding to present their work at the Annual Conference, and the winning paper is published in ASIANetwork Exchange. For more information, see <https://m.asianetwork.org/programs/mcjimsey-award/> and talk to previous participant Hongli Zeng '24 at h_zeng@coloradocollege.edu.

THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION IS MONDAY JANUARY 15, 2024

BY UTSHAA BASU '25

CC WELCOMES NEW CPC FROM JAPAN

MEET NOZOMI HASHIMOTO AND LEARN ABOUT HER ROLES AT CC



NAME

Nozomi Hashimoto

HOBBIES

cooking, visiting museums,
outdoor activities

OFFICE HOURS

by appointment, Armstrong 343

FAVORITE FOODS

eggs, pumpkin, yogurt

Nozomi Hashimoto, the 2023-24 Japanese Cultural Program Coordinator (CPC) was born and raised in Tokyo, Japan. Before coming to CC, she earned her bachelor's degree in language education with a minor in psychology, and specialized in education for her master's degree at International Christian University. Her supervisor at the university suggested the CPC position when Nozomi was looking for a job teaching Japanese language abroad. Interestingly, Nozomi shares that International Christian University boasts a famous CC alumnus, William Merrell Vories (Hitotsuyanagi), who designed the aforementioned university campus!

This job is her first time in the United States, but Nozomi has been adjusting smoothly. She wants to use her longer breaks to explore places in the US, including Florida and Chicago. She is also extremely outdoorsy, and excited to try all the opportunities available to her in Colorado!

In the past two months as the Japanese CPC, Nozomi has organized a host of events. She organizes the blockly "Language Tables" that the Japanese program hosts to teaching Japanese culture through food, while engaging in language practice. In Block 1, Nozomi organized a hand-rolled sushi event: a participatory event in which students can learn how to make a connection with Japanese culture, as opposed to just eating

the food. In Block 2 she held an event for the Japanese Moon Festival, which she wanted to distinguish from and emphasize as a tradition different from the Chinese Moon festival. For the event, Nozomi made some Japanese style- parfaits.

Her recent concern is the name of the student residence where she lives on campus. Officially called Elf House, the residence is more commonly referred to as the "Asian Languages House." The house accommodates students interested in Chinese and Japanese languages and cultures, for which CC has respective language programs. Nozomi finds the designation "Asian Languages House" to be inaccurate since the name seems to suggest all of Asia as a single "collective" culture despite the variety of cultures present in such a large region, and the house is represented primarily by Japanese and Chinese languages. She is curious as to how the larger student population in the college views this issue, considering the small number of minority cultures present at CC.

Nozomi teaches her Japanese adjunct classes, for all levels, on Monday and Thursday each week, throughout the year (from 3:30 PM to 5:00 PM). She looks forward to learning more about the culture here from the students. Although she is here to teach Japanese, Nozomi often feels like the students are teaching her more.

ALTHOUGH BLOCK 3 IS ALMOST OVER, HERE ARE THE ASIAN STUDIES COURSES AVAILABLE FOR BLOCKS 4-8:

BLOCK 4

COURSES IN ASIAN STUDIES:

PA208/DS229 **Asian Dance Forms I: Balinese Dance**
PA250/CN250 **Calligraphy and Painting**
PA250/JA250 **Languages and Cultures of Japan**
PA250/HY254/RM200 **History of Gender and Sexuality in South Asia**
PA250/MU295/AN221 **Music in Culture: Indonesia**
PA250/RE200/FG206 **Holy Men, Manly Men**

BLOCK 5

COURSES IN ASIAN STUDIES:

PA170/RE170 **Buddhism**
PA208/DS229 **Asian Dance Forms I: Balinese Dance**
PA250/RE200/AN208 **Colonialism and Religion**
PA250/JA250 **Telling the Tale of Heike: From Medieval Minstrels to Modern Screens**

LANGUAGE COURSES:

PA201/CN201 **Intermediate Chinese I**
PA404.2/CN401.2 **Chinese Language and Culture**
PA206/CN206 **Chinese Skills Maintenance**
PA114/CN104 **Chinese Skills Maintenance**
PA221/JA201 **Intermediate Japanese I**
PA303/JA302 **Advanced Japanese Language**
PA106/JA104 **Japanese Skills Maintenance**
PA216/JA206 **Japanese Skills Maintenance**

BLOCK 6

COURSES IN ASIAN STUDIES:

PA290 **Studying Asia**
PA250/HY200 **Modern Southeast Asia**
PA250/RM200/EN296 **Intro to Asian American Literature**
PA250/PY178 **From Pearl Harbor to Honolulu**
PA261/RE261/FG206 **Women and Goddesses in Hinduism**
PA250/HY200/RM200 **Caste: Histories and Theories of Exclusion, Stigma, and Discrimination**

BLOCK 7

COURSES IN ASIAN STUDIES:

PA263/PH286 **Classical Chinese Philosophy**
PA250/RE200 **The Minority Question in Asia**
PA250/JA250 **Text and the City: Japanese Fiction from Meiji to the Allied Occupation**
PA350/HY304 **Print & Popular Culture in 20th Century East Asia**

BLOCK 8

COURSES IN ASIAN STUDIES:

PA160/RE160 **Hinduism**
PA230/HY226 **20th Century Japan**
PA250/MU222 **Music and Dance in Bali**
PA255/AH255 **The Art of Japan**
PA281/RE281 **Religious Poetry in Asia**
PA350/CN350 **Advanced Topics in Chinese Literature and Culture**

LANGUAGE COURSES:

PA202/CN202 **Intermediate Chinese II**

LANGUAGE COURSES:

PA101/CN101 **Elementary Chinese (ABROAD)**
PA201/CN201 **Intermediate Chinese Language I (ABROAD)**
PA304/CN302 **Advanced Chinese Language II**
PA102/JA101 **Elementary Japanese**

LANGUAGE COURSES:

PA202/CN202 **Intermediate Chinese II**
PA222/JA202 **Intermediate Japanese II**

BY HONGLI ZENG '24

GAYLORD PRIZE RECIPIENT'S SUMMER RESEARCH IN CHINA



Cover illustration for *A Profound Friendship* (深厚的友谊) published in 1965 in Shanghai.



The picture above depicts the scene where, after years of separation, two close friends finally reunited during combat. The caption reads: "I held the hand of a Korean People's Army soldier dearly: 'Thank you for your backup!' That soldier said in firm determination: 'Chinese and Korean people are the comrade-in-arms going through life and death together. American imperialism is the common enemy of ours. Let us fight together and strike the American devils more fiercely!'"

In the past summer I traveled to Chengdu, China, my home, to conduct field research with funding from the Asian Studies Program's Gaylord Prize for Independent Study Research. The project examines representations of the Korean War in *lian huan hua* (连环画), a particular form of Chinese comic books widely produced and circulated in socialist China. In close collaboration with Professor John Williams of the History Department and Asian Studies Program, I collected and translated these materials, which will also be used for teaching purposes at Colorado College.

Despite being one of the opening episodes of the global Cold War, The Korean War (1950-1954) remains a "forgotten war" in the United States, where its historical significance is often overshadowed by the more heated narrative of the American entanglement in Cuba and Vietnam. On the other hand, it was and still is remembered in China as the cornerstone of its nationhood, for it brought about the very critical geopolitical security of the newly born republic. Among the various literary and artistic forms circulating in the early decades of the nation, *lian huan hua* played a crucial role in shaping the depiction of the Korean War to Chinese readers. In my research, I attempted to explore the ways in which the Korean War was textually narrated, visually portrayed, and collectively remembered through *lian huan hua*, with a brief investigation into the origin and afterlife of *lian huan hua* in 20th century China.

My research involved compiling a list of *lian huan hua* on the Korean War and gathering secondary literature on relevant topics. I also conducted interviews with people

who were or are actively involved with reading, collecting, and selling these comic books. Given their popularity for their capacity to evoke nostalgia among collectors in today's China, I was able to connect with and talk to some collectors and business owners of *lian huan hua*.

Another highlight of the research was my trip to Shanghai located in eastern China. In this hotspot of China's cultural, intellectual, and political activities for much of the 20th century, I talked to scholars specializing in the history of popular culture in Shanghai, and visited local archives and libraries, where I acquired many precious materials for my research.

One of the *lian huan hua* works I translated over the summer is *A Profound Friendship* (深厚的友谊), depicting the shared revolutionary cause of a Chinese and a Korean boy in Manchuria during Japanese occupation in the 1930s. Their profound transnational friendship developed under Japanese colonialism then brought them together again on the Korean battlefield in the early 1950s, but this time, positioning them against "American imperialism."

Overall, my independent summer research funded by Asian Studies' Gaylord Prize was a rewarding experience for my academic practice and intellectual growth. Those who are interested in looking more closely into materials like the ones above may want to consider registering for the Block 7 class in the upcoming Spring semester: "HY304 Advanced Topics in History: Print and Popular Culture in 20th Century East Asia" taught by Professor John Williams of the History Department and Asian Studies Program.

Call for Contributors Contribute to *The Lotus*!

The Lotus is a student-run publication of the Asian Studies Program at Colorado College. Our goal is to help the community gain new perspectives on Asia and the Asian diaspora, as well as share information related to Asian Studies programming and activities on our campus.

We are also excited to make *The Lotus* a platform for showcasing the works and talents of our student body. We are now accepting contributions from our fellow students related to the study, appreciation, and celebration of Asian and Asian diasporic cultures, identities, and experiences.

We will consider the following contributions for publication in our future issues:

- Your travel stories and experiences of work and study abroad in Asia!
- Your creative works, including creative writing (poems, short stories, essays) and artwork (photographs, illustrations) related to or about the cultures, identities, and experiences of Asia and the Asian diaspora!
- Your reviews of books, films, television, and music related to Asia and the Asian diaspora!

Send your contributions for consideration to thelotuscc@gmail.com with the subject "**Student Contribution.**" Please include your name, year, and a short (no more than 100 words) bio about yourself along with your submission. We encourage contributions from all student backgrounds and perspectives!

Selected contributions will be featured in our student newsletter, and selected contributors will receive a small gift of appreciation.