

THE LOTUS

BLOCK 5 NEWSLETTER

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BY DANIEL WU '25

STOLEN ARTIFACTS RETURN HOME: INVITES AWARENESS, REFLECTION AND FURTHER ACTION

In August 2023, representatives of Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam accused the Denver Art Museum (DAM) of the possession of looted artifacts and asked for the return of said artifacts to their countries of origin. DAM has returned all 8 artifacts and returned the \$185,000 donation made by Emma C. Bunker, the deceased former DAM trustee and research consultant who was actively involved in the trading of stolen arts from Asia¹.

In 2020, a known associate of Emma Bunker's named Douglas Lutchford was convicted for smuggling artifacts from South Asia. With him, a trading network of South Asia relics was revealed, which included Doris Wiener and Nancy Wiener, benefactors of multiple prestigious museums across the nation including but not limited to, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Norton Simon Museum of Art. Even though Doris Wiener died in 2011, Nancy was brought to trial in New York in 2021 and admitted her atrocities/wrongdoings.

According to court transcripts, Wiener said: "For decades,

I conducted business in a market where buying and selling antiquities with vague or even no provenance was the norm," the gallery owner said, according to court transcripts. "Obfuscation and silence were accepted responses to questions concerning the source from which an object had been obtained. In short, it was a conspiracy of the willing."²

With the New York case coming into the light, Emma Bunker's case was illuminated and brought to the public's attention. A statement made by DAM on December 13, 2022, regarding to Emma Bunker emphasizes the future investigations on Bunker's legacy and donations, as well as progress in the returning of some artifacts.³ However, never in the statement is Emma Bunker is never directly connected to the misplaced antiquities in DAM in the statement. , in the meantime. Meanwhile, the last paragraph seems to be celebrating Bunker's legacy and contribution to DAM. Furthermore, in an article from the Art Newspaper published on August 7th, 2023, DAM has yet to provide any provenance documents about the stolen artifacts. and

even though Even though DAM issued a statement that the Department of Justice has received said documents and the artifacts are returned to their place of origin, many critics are still concerned that with those this information not being public, there still runs the risk of more incidents of smuggled antiquities being utilized as so⁴. Among all the altercations controversies about misplaced relics, the DAM incident is just one successful case among millions other failures in retrieving those objects. Countless more relics that were removed from their home countries remain being misplaced, misinterpreted, and mismanaged. The stealing of antiquities is now a well-recognized problem, but repatriation of these cultural treasures remains very difficult. The question remains about what can be done by students in the CC community to address this issue. Atrocities as such are intolerable, and yet what can we do as college students?

I had the honor to ask Professor Dr. Tamara Bentley, professor and co-chair of the Art Department, several questions on this incident and share her insights.

Below is the Q & A transcript with Prof. Bentley.

Q: What is your opinion on museums holding looted artifacts from other cultures, moreover, in galleries owned by smugglers presented to the public as the memorial of their contributions?

A: [...] I personally don't know where the naming of the Emma Bunker gallery currently stands. According to responsible museum practices, pieces with suspicious origins should not be accepted; once approached and confronted with evidence that particular pieces were looted, those pieces should be returned to their countries of origin. I wouldn't tell the museum how to name their various galleries, but the evidence in this case would seem to put a black mark on Emma Bunker's reputation.

Q: What is the best approach to obtain/retrieve stolen art?

A: The Department of Homeland Security has agents that investigate stolen cultural properties. I also think the home countries of stolen objects usually make known the need to have the object repatriated. It seems to me individuals could add to the pressure on museums to do the right thing by writing letters or contacting the media.

Q: Do you think museums that possess looted artifacts should articulate how the artifacts are acquired?

A: Yes, I think museums have an obligation to investigate each piece that is donated, making sure that it has an ownership history, and could not have been stolen. If confronted about certain objects in its collection, museums should be transparent with what they know of the object's history. If they know nothing of its history, then they should have been more diligent on the acquisition side.

Q: Why do you think museums refuse to proactively return those stolen artifacts?

A: Museums usually want to impress their public with the breadth and quality of their collections. Sometimes they find it hard to give back extraordinary pieces. One example would be the Elgin marbles at the British Museum, which Greece has asked to have returned, and has even built a museum to house, in anticipation of their return. Another would be the sculptural Nefertiti head currently on display at the Neues Museum in Berlin. The Egyptian government has long asked for the object's return, but so far it remains in Berlin.

Q: What does it mean to the academic community that rely on the study of artifacts when western civilization holds artifacts from outside of their culture and in that way monopolizes the interpretation of those cultures?

A: It sends the wrong message if western museums offer an understanding of non-western cultures on the basis of looted artifacts. That is effectively stating: "We have a right to steal objects to paint a picture of this culture for you, the museum goes. You will enjoy learning about this culture, even if it diminishes that country to have pieces of their history illegally taken." One senses that in such case encyclopedic holdings are triumphing over well-meaning and egalitarian cultural relationships.

Q: What can we do, as college students, to make a change that could influence situations like these now and in the future?

A: College students can write about and bring awareness to these cases, as you are doing. Students also have the right to peacefully protest to support the claims of the countries of origin.

1. Tabachnik, Sam. "Three Southeast Asian Countries Say the Denver Art Museum Still Holds Their Stolen Heritage." The Denver Post, The Denver Post, 13 Aug. 2023, www.denverpost.com/2023/08/14/cambodia-thailand-vietnam-stolen-antiquities-denver-art-museum/.

2. "Three Cambodian Relics Stored at Denver Art Museum Returned - Khmer Times." Khmer Times - Insight into Cambodia, 20 Sept. 2023, www.khmertimeskh.com/501363777/three-cambodian-relics-stored-at-denver-art-museum-returned/.

3. "Denver Art Museum Statement Regarding Emma Bunker." Denver Art Museum Statement Regarding Emma Bunker | Denver Art Museum, 13 Dec. 2023, www.denverartmuseum.org/en/press/release/denver-art-museum-statement-regardingemma-bunker.

4. D'Arcy, David. "Denver Art Museum Cut Ties with a Disgraced Donor-but Critics Say That's Not Enough." The Art Newspaper - International Art News and Events, The Art Newspaper - International art news and events, 7 Aug. 2023, www.theartnewspaper.com/2023/08/07/denver-art-museum-cut-ties-emma-bunker-cambodian-loot-douglas-lutchford.

BY DANIEL WU '25 & ESA CHEN '25

CC STUDENTS SHARE TIPS FOR TRAVEL TO CHINA AND TAIWAN

DANIEL'S CHINESE CUISINE TOUR:

Personally, one of the saddest things about being in Colorado Springs is that there is not much variety of authentic ethnic food. There are two Chinese restaurants in the area that have sustained me during my time here, but even so, the limited number of dishes they provide is only the tip of the iceberg of Chinese cuisine. Luckily for the CC students who are going on the CC to Asia trip to China in Blocks 7 and 8, they are going to have the opportunity to not only get a taste but also indulge in China's diverse and magnificent food culture. For those who are not going on the trip, if you want to be

introduced to a comparatively authentic Chinese food experience, I will be presenting the two local restaurants I mentioned earlier.

Contrary to the beliefs created by Americanized Chinese fast food, there are numerous styles of cooking across China and each of them have their own unique, signature flavor. As of now, there are four major cuisine styles, and among all the locations visited by the CC in Asia students, three of them offer food in one of the major styles called Jiangzhe Cuisine 江浙菜

系. Generally speaking, Jiangzhe Cuisine tends to be delicate, well-seasoned, flavorful, and with good texture. It varies slightly from place to place, with some cities offering sweeter oriented and others offering sourer oriented flavors. In this article, I will be listing restaurants in Shanghai that I believe will perfectly complement the upcoming CC in Asia itinerary during Blocks 7 and 8. I've organized my recommendations into categories of *comfort*, *local-must-have*, and *other regional food*.

Comfort Food Restaurants

Traveling to another country that is so different from what one is familiar with is undoubtedly a stressful thing. The language barrier, different landscapes, and of course, food that looks, smells, and tastes so differently can contribute to this. The first couple of days after visitors arrive can be quite hard. Hence, knowing restaurants that serve food that will be familiar is very important. Below are the comfort food restaurants located near the accommodations of students in the CC in Asia trip.

帕蓝·暹罗料理 (Palan Siam Cuisine)

This is the top-rated Thai restaurant in Shanghai. It is in a mall about a 13-minute drive from the hotel (with the DiDi app, the Chinese equivalent to Uber, one can get a ride there and it is safe because these apps record the entire ride). If you are going there for dinner, I would suggest that you head over around 5 to 6 p.m. The line is usually long but if you dodge the rush hour you should be in soon. Recommended dishes are **Mango Sticky Rice (芒果糯米饭)** and **Yellow Curry Beef (黄咖喱牛肉)**.



一绪寿喜烧 (Yixu Sukiyaki)

This is a Japanese style sukiyaki buffet located in the mall right below the hotel used during the first week in Shanghai. Customers will have 2 hours max to eat before the next customer comes in to take the table. They provide different price levels one can select from including a bundle with all-you-can-eat wagyu.



Wow Lucky

This is a Korean style restaurant that is about 20-minute walking distance from the. It is a very popular chain restaurant that only exists in Shanghai and popular among the younger generations. It is absolute meat-lover's favorite.



Local Food Restaurants

德兴馆 (De-Xing Restaurant)

If have the chance to go see the Oriental Pearl Tower, they should add De-Xing Restaurant to the list as well. This is a Michelin Guide restaurant, and allegedly where Shanghai cuisine (本帮菜) originated. It is slightly further from the accommodations, but right across the river from the Oriental Pearl Tower so this could be a good place to grab food if one wants to see the tower. Make sure to go to the one on Guangdong Road 广东路 because that is the main one.



大富贵 (DaFuGui)

DaFuGui is another restaurant that sits in downtown Shanghai. If De-Xing is where most tourists' must-dine, DaFuGui is where many older generations of local Shanghai residents go to eat out. The food is not as delicate but equally delicious. The sides in DaFuGui are good but their bites HunTun 馄饨, XiaoLongBao 小笼包 etc.) are the best ones. The best shop is the one on Zhonghua Road 中华路.



Other Regional Restaurants

The next three restaurants on my list are lesser known by tourists. The decoration of the restaurants will not be as flamboyant but rather simple, yet the food they serve will be more authentic, hence why their customers are mostly locals. So, it is possible that the first time one tries them, they won't be an immediate favorite, but they might grow on you as you become more familiar with Chinese ingredients and flavors. Also, in these restaurants, one can always ask what kind of vegetables they have if they're lost, and the restaurant will share what they have available. The safe choice is always any veggie with garlic.

我家餐厅 (WoJia Restaurant)

Like its name, this restaurant serves dishes that would be made in typical Shanghai households. It sits in the historic part of Shanghai. Their *WoJiaJiChi* 我家鸡翅, *CongYouBanMian* 葱油拌面 and fried shrimps are recommended.



兰心餐厅 (LanXin Restaurant)

This is a small restaurant and has limited seats so make sure you go early! Recommended dishes are *HongShaoRou* 红烧肉, *BaoJiangZhuGan* 爆浆猪肝, *YouBaoXia* 油爆虾.

These are just a tip of the iceberg of the restaurants in Shanghai students visiting should go try out. For more recommendations I definitely recommend downloading the *XiaoHong Shu* 小红书 APP and search for *BenBangCai* 本帮菜 if you are looking for local food. The *GaoDe* Map 高德地图 is a good way to figure out how to get to places. Shanghai has a very pervasive subway system and is a great city for walking. I don't generally recommend calling a *DiDi* (an Uber-like in China) or a taxi because they are often costly and time consuming.

Additionally, 711 convenience stores in China always offer quick bites to grab and they are usually open 24/7. McDonald's in China also has its own special menu which I highly recommend trying when one either doesn't want to leave the hotel room or just wants something fast and easy.

P.S. The two Chinese restaurants in Colorado Springs are *Lanshing Cafe* and *Jade Dynasty*.

ESA'S TAIWAN TRAVEL GUIDE:

The capital of Taiwan, Taipei, is situated at the country's northern tip. The city sits in a basin between the Central and Yangming Mountains and is surrounded by the larger city, New Taipei City. Today, Taipei gracefully balances modernity and tradition, with one foot striding towards a futuristic utopia while the other remains firmly rooted in its rich cultural heritage. Scooters and bicycles roll the streets, while the aroma of street food fills the air. Surrounded by nature, tranquility is never more than a bus ride or hike away.

Situated in the city's oldest district, Wanhua, the Longshan Temple is the spiritual heart of Taipei. It's a place where generations of locals have come to seek good fortune, health, and even guidance on who to marry. Taiwan's political center is the Zhongzheng District where the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall which honors the memory of the former president of the Republic of China is situated. The Memorial Hall hosts a famous changing of the guard's ceremony. The district is also home to Liberty Square, the National Concert Hall, and the National Theater, which is one of the city's most important cultural sites and a renowned visitor-attracting area.



Hop on Taipei's Mass Rapid Transit system (MRT), which is equivalent to a subway. It allows you to explore anywhere in Taipei, including the National Palace Museum, renowned for housing one of the world's greatest collections of Chinese art and antiquities. You can also venture to the neighboring city, New Taipei City, and discover its many famous old streets



such as Jiufen Old Street and Tamsui Old Street. You can take the bus and MRT with the *EasyCard* (悠遊卡), which can be purchased at any train station, MRT station, and convenience stores including 7-11 and FamilyMart. It costs around 150 New Taiwan Dollars (\$5 US Dollars) to buy a new card. Afterward, you can check the balance and top up your card with cash or credit card at the cashier of the convenience store or the add-value machines in the stations. Simply swipe the *EasyCard*, and you can pass through the speed gate of the train station and MRT station or board the bus. However, it is essential to note that eating is not allowed on the MRT. If you prefer to explore the city without taking the MRT, there is an option to use the bicycle-sharing system called "YouBike." You can register an account for YouBike with the *EasyCard* using a website or by downloading an app. The app displays all the stations where you can swipe your card to take a bike or return it to another station.

There are plenty of riches to be found on Taipei's streets too. Enjoy the blooms and haggle for jewelry and home décor items at the *Jianguo Flower Market* or cruise the smaller boutiques, vendors, and restaurants on *Yongkang Street*. Taiwan's night markets stand out as a quintessential feature, offering a diverse array of Taiwanese cuisine and street food. The *Shilin Night Market* is one of the most famous ones. People enjoy great food, hunt down bargains, and play small games. I strongly recommend going to the *Raohe Night Market*, where there are delicious *Fuzhou Black Pepper Bun*, *Yu Pin Yuan Iced and Hot Tangyuan*, and stinky tofu. However, it's important to carry around 1500 New Taiwan Dollars (approximately 50 US dollars) in cash, as many night market

vendors exclusively accept cash. This amount is sufficient to treat two people to a satisfying and full dinner.

Once you've explored Taipei's streets, you can buy a ticket and board the high-speed elevators of Taipei 101, one of the world's tallest skyscrapers, to go to the 89th floor to see the whole view of Taipei City. Another option to view the city and explore Taipei's natural beauty is to take a fifteen-minute walk from Taipei 101 to Elephant Mountain, the most accessible of the city's peaks. No high-speed lifts are there, but the 20-minute climb to the top is worth it, especially at sunset. For more great views, you can head to *Maokong Mountain*. The *Maokong gondola* service starts at the Taipei Zoo, one of the largest zoological collections in Asia. From the zoo, step aboard a gondola and glide over the forest canopy to *Maokong Mountain*. With villages and temples to explore, *Maokong* will make a fabulous day trip. As an important tea-growing area, it is also the place to learn the finer points of tea tasting and appreciation.

Whether it's the cultural treasures housed in the *National Palace Museum*, the blossoming boutiques on *Yongkang Street*, or the tranquil tea plantations in *Maokong*, Taipei promises an enriching and diverse travel experience. As you explore this vibrant city, you'll find a harmonious blend of history, nature, and modernity that makes Taipei an unforgettable destination.





A NEW GIBLI FILM?!

On December 12, 2023 students in the Block 4 elementary Japanese class and two Japanese adjunct courses went on a field trip to watch the latest Studio Ghibli animated film, *The Boy and the Heron* in theaters. The field trip was funded with the support of the Asian Studies Program. After watching the movie, some students offered their star ratings and shared their initial reactions to what is thought to be the final work by the celebrated director and Ghibli co-founder Miyazaki Hayao. *The Boy and the Heron* is currently generating buzz with an Oscar nomination for Best Animated Film this year. For readers who had a chance to see the film, do you agree with your classmate's reviews and the nomination?

“It is certainly one of the most Ghibli Films to ever Ghibli Film. What I mean is that it has everything one has come to expect from a great Ghibli film: beautiful animation, whimsical imagination, young spunky boy + magical girl main characters, emotion and tenderness, deep themes of nature, war, and family, etc. However, on any of these fronts, there are other Ghibli films that did them better. The uniqueness of this installment seemed to rely on the metaphor for Miyazaki's creative legacy, which was certainly timely if a bit on the nose by the end of the film. All-around another great film for Miyazaki's legendary lineup, as one has come to expect. Heck, if someone told me this was their favorite Ghibli film, I wouldn't question them. But I wouldn't agree with them, either.”

★★★★☆

“I thought the movie was unique, creative, and visually stunning. Compared to other Ghibli films, it seemed more complex, fast-paced, and symbolic. This film is likely one of my favorite Ghibli films. I would definitely recommend this film to people who enjoy Ghibli movies.”

★★★★☆

“It was very very pretty even though the plot was a little incoherent.”

★★★★☆

“I didn't understand it. Comparing with other Ghibli films, this film doesn't tell a story clearly. I appreciate the art work but can't recognize its value in plot.”

★★★★☆

“Wonderful art style and voice actors! I could understand a lot of the spoken Japanese despite my limited knowledge and was able to partially reconstruct and follow the sentence structure. The plot of the movie was really confusing to me, however. After knowing the entire plot of the movie, some of the initial confusion cleared up but I still have a lot of questions. Definitely not a movie for casuals but probably more oriented towards Ghibli fans that are willing to rewatch the movie. I like that some aspects are up for interpretation but the movie has too many plot holes and unexplained actions for my personal taste. An enjoyable experience overall but I do not feel the need to watch the movie again. Also what is it with this movie and evil birds with knives?! That trope is new to me.”

★★★★☆

“I enjoyed this movie a lot! I do wish it kept the original name in English: “How Do You Live?”, as I believe it gives more insight into the meaning of the movie. I also very much liked how it represented Dante's “The Divine Comedy”, and it gave a nod to it with the inscription of “Fecemi la divina potestate” on the Tower entrance, which is a part of the same inscription on the Gates of Hell in “The Divine Comedy”.”

★★★★★

“I loved every bit of it. It will be such a good movie to rewatch in the future.”

★★★★★

“I liked how open to interpretation the film was and how it presented a new story but you could still tell it was a Ghibli movie.”

★★★★★

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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 programing 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.