

Asia Media International

Loyola Marymount University
Fall 2014 - Spring 2015

In Review



Who Cares About Asia?



Alexis Cruz
Qatar



Alessandra Daly Johnson
United Arab Emirates



Yvonne Epps
Vietnam



Robert Dylan Fields
Asian Film Reviews



Shuting Li
China



Ryan Lippert
North Korea



Haig Ter-Ghevondian
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Lexie Tucker
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Amber Vernetti
Australia

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Dear Readers,

When Asia Media International (AMI) began its run at Loyola Marymount University (LMU) in November 2011, I was the only freshman on staff. At meetings, I'd often sit in the corner and listen patiently to what the editors and other writers had to say. They were older, wiser, and more talented than me, so I believed that if I paid attention, I might learn something. This was informative, albeit in my youthful restlessness this unaccustomed reserve felt, I admit, a little boring.

As each year went by, however, I discovered that this technique served me very well. It allowed me to see how incredible the students who decide to put their all into AMI really are. The amount of dedication these writers have shown (i.e., giving up their precious free time to write articles about the media in Asian countries for nothing but the satisfaction of learning new things and exposing others to the world well beyond our university on the Playa del Rey bluff) is both astounding and inspiring.

When I was promoted to managing editor my senior year, I was given the opportunity to get to know each and every one of the writers featured in this Year in Review issue. Some have been with us since their sophomore year, while others joined the last semester of their senior year. Regardless of how long they've been with us, they all have one thing in common - they have proven themselves to be knowledgeable not only about the countries they cover, but also of how the media shapes these Asian societies.

In an effort to show the world that LMU is a school that cares about the encouragement of learning and the education of the whole person, AMI strives to help students and our readers understand the importance of Asia in a world that is becoming more globalized every day. As the title on the front cover suggests, this magazine aims to answer one question: Who cares about Asia? We hope you'll see that the answer is a resounding **"WE DO!"**



Lexie Tucker
Managing Editor of
Asia Media International



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Learning About Students

The first edition of Asia Media International In Review is intended to introduce you to some of the most committed students on our gorgeous campus: young adults who dedicated themselves to understanding Asia. They know that this vast region of the world showcases many of the 21st century's fastest rising nations.

The rise of China and the rise of Islam probably worry a lot of Americans as much as anything else outside of the U.S. But our national ignorance about Asia is vast. Our schools offer no general, easily accessible courses on Asia, though the teaching of the Chinese language has started to receive attention. But even our best universities tend to emphasize the study of Asia almost entirely from worthwhile but narrow perspectives, when obviously what is needed is authoritative, appealing and up-to-date introductory overviews.

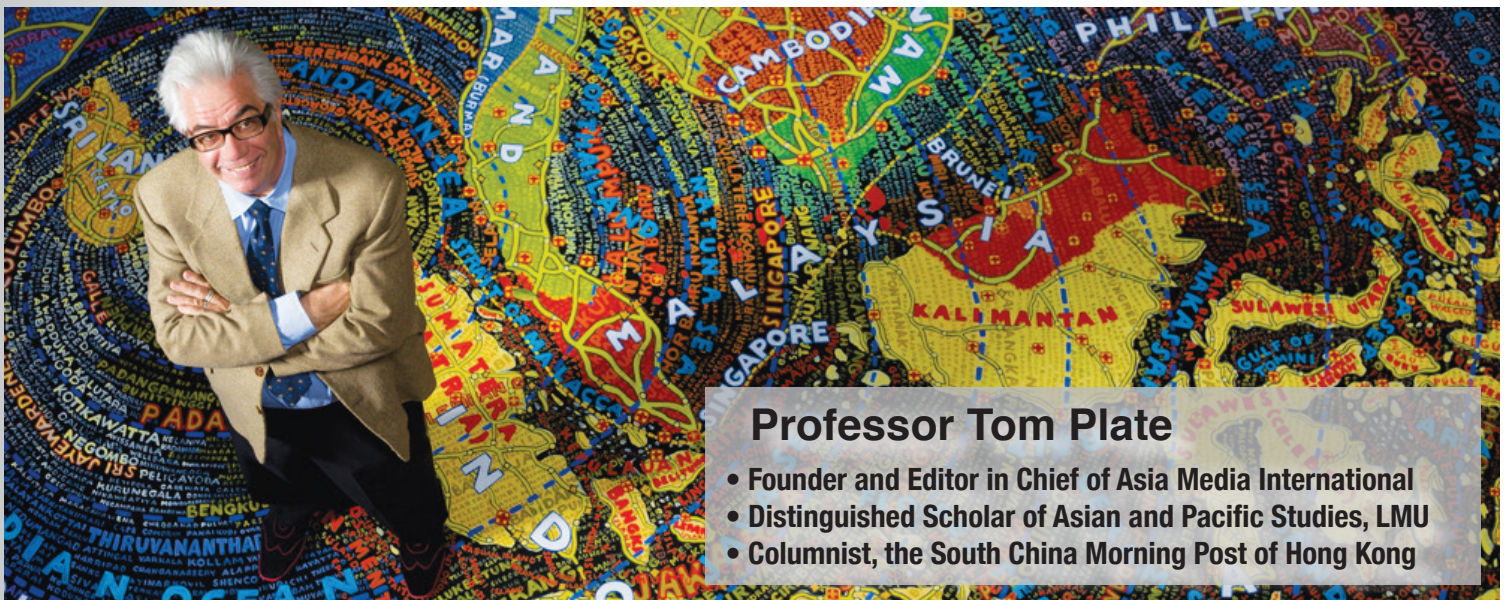
This deficiency is not the case here at Loyola Marymount University's Bellarmine College, which offers undergraduates a sweeping survey course in Asia ('Introduction to Asia Media'), as well as student staff positions at our Asia Media International Center. Its unusual website is driven primarily by the energies, intellect and dedication of students. With all the fierce enthusiasm and abundant

self-confidence of youth, they write and edit articles about it for website publication – and thus for all the world to see.

Their involvement in Asia Media addresses at least two needs of modern university pedagogy. Our editorial routine requires them to communicate complex material in clearly written English, as they learn about the region and absorb its sometimes-daunting complexities. Their range of interests is anything but narrow (from sexual Puritanism in China to the rage of K-Pop to media policy in Sri Lanka). The stories that appear on our website are chosen by the students. This means that you get a glimpse of today's student mind with its various topic propensities. Asia Media International is an unrivaled effort among American undergraduates to comment on Asia in their own way.

We elders can only watch and, when necessary, nudge. Our ambitious student staffers also carry a full rack of courses in a university whose academic standards are recognized as anything but easy. For myself, I can only say that the opportunity to work with these students has been a great honor. And they have produced something of which all of us can be proud: a magazine of the 21st century. This is no small achievement, in my view.

**Thank you,
Professor Tom Plate**



Professor Tom Plate

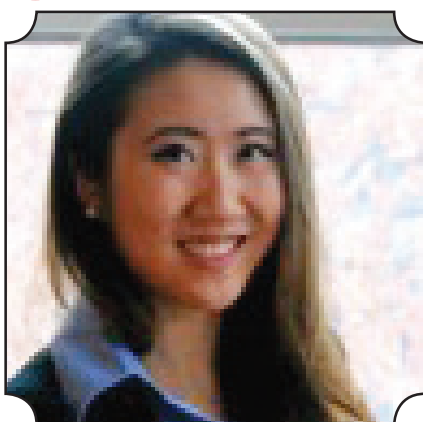
- Founder and Editor in Chief of Asia Media International
- Distinguished Scholar of Asian and Pacific Studies, LMU
- Columnist, the South China Morning Post of Hong Kong



Headliners

Asia Media International

Jeremiah Fajardo has been a singularly loyal and imaginative AMI staffer since our beginnings in 2011. Known warmly among student peers for his quiet manner, gentle humor, unrelenting sartorial splendor, and his open love affair with anime, Japanese culture, and other avant-garde forms of media expression, Jeremiah graduated from LMU but never left AMI, thankfully. He is currently the Division Manager of Programming for the SPJA, the non-profit that holds Anime Expo, North America's largest Japanese pop-culture convention. AMI staffers would also describe him as a gem with many sparkling angles, depending on the light in which they view him. And so we were very happy to designate him as AMI's first Associate Publisher last year. Thank you Jeremiah LMU '14 for making us proud.



Lani Luo has completed two challenging and exhausting years in a Chicago classroom under the famed Teach for America program. And guess what? She signed up for a third! Known for her striking leadership qualities and deft humanistic style in any multi-cultural setting - not to mention her Gloria Steinem-style feminist convictions (and better not mess with them!) - she became AMI's first columnist, charting for our followers the stunning rise of Weibo and China's awesome social media as an index of that society's deep contents and discontents. She then served with distinction as AMI's managing editor, along with then-classmate Selena Swatek '13, now finishing up at LMU Law School. We are so grateful to Lani '13 for making us proud!

Joy Deits has put her years at LMU as a Graphic Design major to very good use. She started as an Asia Media staffer, and has continued honing her skills as an artist ever since in design, illustration, and photography to name a few. She worked under LMU's legendary Dr. Robin Wong, director of the the Asia and Pacific Studies program, and spent a summer with her and her students in China. Our 2012 graduate is the design director of this special issue. When she's not designing, she spends her free time marketing her adorable pug Jake. Joy has been with AMI since 2011 and her loyalty is admirable.



Brian Chris Canave worked his way through his undergraduate career at LMU while taking a fruitful turn in just about every position there was to be had at our online magazine (asiamedia.lmu.edu). Staff writer. Promotional manager. Chief cheerleader. AMI strategic planner. An inspired story-teller as well as a serious student of the media and its politics, Brian recently accepted promotion to the newly created position of Assistant Publisher, working closely with Associate Publisher Fajardo. In that role, Brian will have the opportunity to help shape AMI's future with his characteristic down-to-earth specificity. And so may he always be part of AMI's inner DNA and very many thanks to Brian LMU '14 for making us proud!



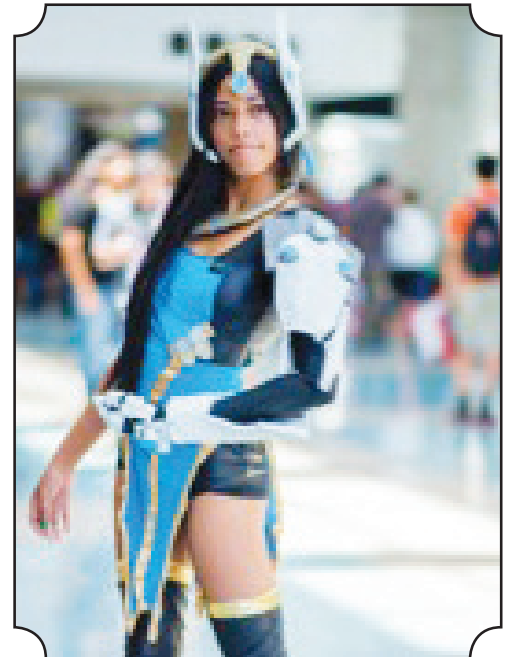
Headliners



Elizabeth Nai is a future environmentalist or dramatist, though neither she nor anyone else is quite sure yet which way it will go! This highly cultured Honolulu native pours fine literary taste and even-keeled editorial judgment into all of her writings, which have clustered around the twin topics of political tragedy and media zaniness of Thailand. She also has a gifted photographic eye, as her staff portraits (along with those of co-paparazzi Jeremiah Fajardo) demonstrate vividly. Mild of manner but firm of insight, Liz has been one of AMI's most popular staffers and one of its most loyal. We are so grateful to Elizabeth '14.



Yvonne Vanna Epps devoted a good part of her distinguished LMU career to Asia Media International, for much of the time occupying the comfortable office couch in University Hall 3319 in either purposeful academic activity or purposeful restful repose. Her peppy writings on Vietnam invariably sparkled with ingenuity, one of them garnering the LMU Writing Award for First Place in Journalism-News, as adjudicated by the stern but famously competent professor-judges in our English Department. Yvonne shone not only as a writer at LMU but also as a performer, evolving into something of a center-stage career cosplayer, taking center stage every July at the annual Anime Expo in Los Angeles, and taking people's breath away with her personally sewn replicas of various high-profile anime media figures. For being such an integral part of the AMI experience, and for her unending creativity, we are so grateful to Yvonne '15.



Erisa Takeda is now in Paris for a star turn in political science and French language training, European-style. The popular junior, who will return to LMU in January, recently completed an internship at Japan's prestigious foreign policy journal, *GAIKO*, and lavished praise on the Editor and his hard-working staff for the high quality of the mentoring they offered. In response, KIICHIRO NAKAMURA, the Editor, wrote us from Tokyo: "Erisa was so intelligent that she make significant contributions to our magazine in the field of research and editorial work. She also gave us useful information on actual US opinion about Japanese politics/diplomacy." Quality international internships almost always work – for the givers as well as the receivers. Grats to Erisa LMU '17 for making us proud!



Mary Grace Costa and **Kelcey Lorenzo**, both graduating in 2017, will return to AMI from internships aboard in January as its new managing editors. Good luck, media ladies, in carrying on what is becoming an LMU institution and tradition. We look forward to your making us all proud!



Alexis Cruz

Al Jazeera - Weapon in a Media War

March 13, 2015

Qatar provides the headquarters for the international media powerhouse Al Jazeera. While the network claims to be independent, Mohamed Fahmy, one of their journalists who is currently incarcerated in Egypt, claims that they have failed to support him in court because of differing politics between Qatar and Egypt.

After three journalists were imprisoned, the network launched a media campaign that included the hashtag #FreeAJStaff to build support for their journalists and for freedom of the press. However, in an opinion piece, Fahmy, an Egyptian-Canadian journalist, states that he and his colleagues were used as pawns for “political score settling” in a media war between Egypt and Qatar.

Egypt jailed the journalists because Qatar supported the Muslim Brotherhood. After the military ousted the Muslim Brotherhood, they labeled the group as a terrorist organization. The military government banned Al Jazeera stations, including the Arabic station.

Egypt isn't the only country frustrated over Al Jazeera's seemingly pro-Muslim Brotherhood stance. In 2014, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates withdrew their ambassadors in Qatar after becoming increasingly frustrated with Al Jazeera's Arabic channel for airing sermons by a Muslim Brotherhood

preacher who routinely derides their regimes. Qatar still refused to stop supporting the Muslim Brotherhood.

Al Jazeera follows Qatar's strict media guidelines, and media professionals in Qatar often practice self-censorship. It is still illegal to criticize the country and/or the government. Freedom House ranks the Qatari press status as “not free.”

Media ownership in Qatar is concentrated within the ruling family, and the government imposes high financial cost for obtaining media licenses along with citizenship requirements. The royal family retains tight control over the upper echelons of the Al Jazeera News Corporation and the decisions of the network, including the content of its Middle Eastern programming.

Al Jazeera is best known for offering coverage on global and regional news, occasionally providing uncritical reports on local issues. This news network was founded by ruling emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifia and its chairman is his cousin, Sheikh Hamad bin Thamer bin Thani Al Thani.

The Egyptian journalists have been released on bail, but Mohamed Fahmy is currently facing retrial even after renouncing his Egyptian citizenship. His strategy: make the judge understand the difference between the work of individual journalists and the decisions of their network.

Arrested for Trespassing, or Revealing?

May 31, 2015

It's difficult for Qatar to get good PR, and last week it became even more challenging when Qatari security officers arrested a BBC crew reporting on migrant workers. The Prime Minister's office had invited several media outlets, including the BBC, on an official tour of the new accommodations for migrant workers. The crew was arrested while attempting to obtain additional material outside of the tour.

The detained journalist, BBC Middle East correspondent Mark Lobel, said in a statement, "The working and housing conditions of migrant workers constructing new buildings in Qatar ahead of the World Cup have been heavily criticized and we wanted to see them for ourselves." While the crew was heading to film Nepalese workers, eight white cars surrounded their



Qatari authorities have made a series of conflicting allegations to justify the detention, all of which the team rejects. We are pressing the Qatari authorities for a full explanation and for the return of the confiscated equipment." However, Qatar denies having done anything wrong. The Government Communications office reported that Lobel and his colleagues were detained for breaking Qatari laws, including trespassing on private property.

Unfortunately, the detainment of journalists is occurring more frequently in Qatar. Earlier in May, German journalist Florian Bauer and his crew from German broadcaster

ARD were arrested while gathering information on migrant workers. Bauer and his colleagues were accused of not having permission to film and were held in custody for 14 hours. Their equipment and data were confiscated and the crew was banned

from leaving Qatar for five days.

FIFA, the world's soccer governing body is now investigating the incidents. In a statement, FIFA said, "Any instance relating to an apparent restriction of press freedom is of concern to FIFA and will be looked into with the seriousness it deserves." FIFA advocates media freedom, but added that foreign journalists must also respect the laws of the countries they visit.

"FIFA advocates media freedom, but added that foreign journalists must also respect the laws of the countries they visit."

vehicle and forced them to take a side road. Lobel and his crew were taken to the city's police station for interrogation.

During questioning, the crew learned that Qatari security officers had been monitoring them and they were taken to the local jail. They were released after two days, with no charges held against them. Their materials were confiscated, however. The BBC has been critical of this incident, stating, "The

Alessandra Daly Johnson

United Arab Emirates

Flipping the Bird Could Cost You

May 31, 2015

Be careful about what emojis you use in the United Arab Emirates. Earlier this May, a middle finger emoji was announced as part of a new Microsoft update, Windows 10, which will be released later this summer. While this offensive emoji could be mistaken for nothing but an upside-down popsicle, it is clearly a hand “flipping the bird.”

Following the revelation that Windows 10 would include this new emoji in the update, Emirati police and lawyers have issued a warning to their citizens: using this emoji could end up costing you 3 years in jail or a fine of Dhs 500,000 (a whopping \$136,123). An expatriate may even face deportation. However, Big Brother is not always watching, since prosecution will only occur if the recipient of this emoji files a complaint with the police.

In 2009, a British expatriate in the UAE was detained and had his passport confiscated for allegedly using the middle finger in an argument. Similarly, in 2014 an Egyptian man was fined about \$1,400 and deported after allegedly using this gesture in a fit of road rage. Distasteful gestures, such as the middle finger, break the UAE’s public decency laws.

This is not the first time that online activity has proven problematic for expatriates in the UAE. Earlier this year, an American man was detained, but eventually released, for

allegedly slandering his employers on Facebook.

Criminal defense lawyer Abdullah Yousef al Nasir told 7DAYS newspaper: “With the development of technology, people have started insulting others on social media services like WhatsApp or BlackBerry messenger. Some people insult or mock others thinking that nobody can prosecute them. But the UAE has issued a cyber-crimes law to punish anyone committing any crime like insulting someone using technology.”

Expatriates should not be fooled by UAE’s “tolerance” for more liberal activities. In order to stay out of legal trouble, expatriates must be educated about the laws and customs of the UAE. So, here’s a warning for anyone planning to visit the UAE anytime soon - don’t use Windows’ new emoji. Or, if you absolutely must include it in a text, send it to someone with a good sense of humor.

November 11, 2011 marked the very first issue of ASIA MEDIA.

Since then there have been 86 completely different issues.

Fifty Shades Gets Whipped by Censors

February 25, 2015

The highly anticipated film adaptation of the novel Fifty Shades of Grey was deemed inappropriate by the United Arab Emirates' National Media Council (NMC) this past week. While the infamous book series by E. L. James is available in stores in the UAE, the NMC has concluded that the 125-minute long movie would require 35 minutes' worth of footage cuts to be deemed appropriate for screening.

The regional distributor of Fifty Shades has since decided that it will not be releasing the movie, which was originally going to hit theaters on March 5. The UAE has joined other countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, and Cambodia who have also decided that they will not be screening the movie due to its pointedly sexual themes.

Fifty Shades is not the only movie to have been heavily edited or banned from Emirati theaters. The Wolf of Wall Street, nominated for an Academy Award for Best Picture, had about 45 minutes worth of footage cut before it was released in the UAE. However, the NMC denies that it was responsible for the edits that were made, and instead the film's distributor decided to take this measure in order to pass more conservative film censors. Viewers were left confused due to almost a quarter of the film being cut, which perhaps led some to believe that maybe a movie just shouldn't be released if a decent sized chunk of the footage must be edited out.



This past holiday season, the biblical film Exodus: Gods and Kings was considered too controversial. Juma Obeid Al-Leem of the NMC told Gulf News: "This movie is

"Maybe a movie just shouldn't be released if a decent sized chunk of the footage must be edited out."

under our review and we found that there are many mistakes not only about Islam but other religions too. So, we will not release it in the UAE." Paramount Pictures' Noah met a similar fate due to religious reasons. The Associated Press quoted Al-Leem stating, "There are scenes that contradict Islam and the Bible, so we decided not to show it."

While at first glance the UAE may seem very much 'Westernized,' it appears that they're not as "Curious?" as the American Fifty Shades movie poster would like them to be.

Yvonne Epps

Of Progressive Leaps and Jagged Passes

April 26, 2015

Vietnam has come a long way since the start of the year. We've seen major progress with the acceptance of social media and, unfortunately, dips with press freedom. However, the road is still jagged and, if they don't watch their step, they might end up hurt.

The Economist reported that social media is now gradually becoming an influential platform for expression after a plan to chop down 6,700 trees across Hanoi was halted due to the protests of Facebook users. An initial campaign that planned to gather 6,700 followers, equal to the amount of trees on death row, exploded with support after 20,000 users gathered in the first 24 hours. While 500 trees were not saved, the plan was stopped by authorities and saplings were planted to replace the ones taken down. For once, internet activism is making a difference in Vietnam.

Trees aren't the only thing that are being saved. A sign that was seized from a noodle stall gained internet fame after it was reported on social media that it had finally been returned. The Bun Bo Gan stall's infamous sign dictated many humorous rules, such as forbidding people from complaining about the owner on the Internet and being able to pay in any type of paper, except of the toilet variety. The authorities initially seized the sign on the premise that customers coming to read it were blocking traffic and that it

was "offensive," but the online outcry coaxed them into giving it back.

This new attitude about social media is due to Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung's assertion that it shouldn't be banned because it gives party officials the opportunity to have an active dialogue with the people. However, the road ahead is still rough. The Economist points out that the country is still operating under tight censorship and restricted press freedom. Dang Hoang Giang of the consulting firm Centre for Community Support Development Studies believes that these responses don't necessarily mean that the politics of the party are more open.

We should not give up on Vietnam's ability to accept the importance of social media, but the government should continue to offer even more tolerance. The floodgates are open, but something more than a simple statement is needed to change the closed nature of politics and attitudes about press freedom.

Since its founding, LMU's student writers have written 1,136 original articles, covering most of the countries in Asia, including at times some about the Middle East.

Vietnam

A Step in the Right Direction for Social Media Freedom

January 27, 2015

Today's generation would find it hard to imagine life without social media - and it would seem that at least some people in the Vietnamese government have finally caught on.

According to TuoitreNews, Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung stated that authorities must provide, "official and accurate information in a timely manner on social media," on the basis that it is impossible to ban people from using social media. Nguyen released this statement as part of a meeting to review the government's performance and future plans for 2015. He also emphasized that the public's right to accurate information is guaranteed in doing so, and supports the use of social media as a news outlet.



Helen Clark of Asian Correspondent sees the statement as positive, and a sign that the government realizes the need to modernize in order to be successful. However, she emphasizes that this doesn't mean that the government is moving towards press freedom and free expression, as the statement concerns the information published by officials.

The Associated Press makes it clear that Vietnam has a high arrest rate for bloggers and Internet users that critique the government, so it's not yet time to cheer with gusto.

Whether the statement is sincere or not, the prime minister makes a good point. Citizens struggle with the validity of news sources due to the state controlled nature of journalism, forcing them to turn to the wealth of inaccurate information on the net. Despite the questionable agenda of the government, it is starting to rebuild bridges by

“Despite the questionable agenda of the government, it is starting to rebuild bridges by making a conscious effort to provide accurate information on a platform that citizens use, but it is too early to know whether this bridge will be complete or collapse.”

News like this is shocking given the country's track record of how it treats its press and social media users. It is unclear whether or not the prime minister is genuinely pursuing a more accessible social media platform for citizens, or something much more subversive.

making a conscious effort to provide accurate information on a platform that citizens use, but it is too early to know whether this bridge will be complete or collapse.



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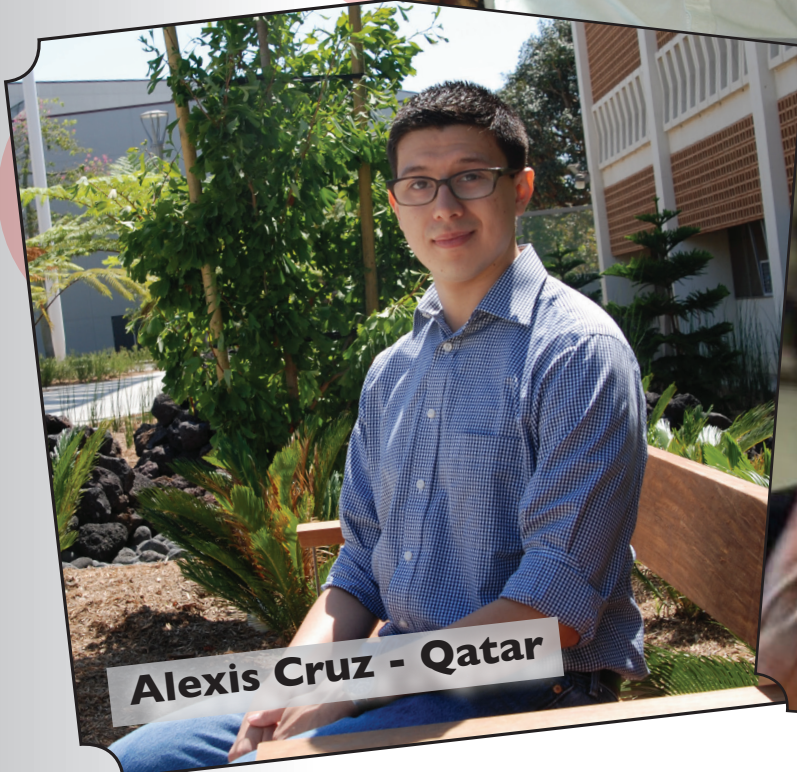


Amber Verneti - Australia



Haig Ter-Ghevondian
- Pakistan

Photo Credit:
- Jeremiah Fajardo
- Elizabeth Naai
- Joy Deits



Alexis Cruz - Qatar



Professor Tom Plate

Robert Dylan Fields

The Kingdom of Dreams & Madness

May 31, 2015

When most people hear the word “animation,” the first thing that comes to mind are often animated works from prominent figures such as Walt Disney. A lot of the time, however, they do not step back and consider what this word really means. Animation is derived from a Latin term that roughly translates as “the act of bringing to life.” Animation is thus more than just watching a bunch of drawn caricatures of people and animals moving about onscreen, but rather witnessing actual pieces of painstakingly hand-drawn or computer-generated art coming to life right before your eyes. I can say with certainty that no animation studio on Earth truly understands and appreciates the art form more than the masterminds of Studio Ghibli - Japan’s most influential animation studio and arguably the most influential animated filmmaking studio in history.

It is because of the leadership of filmmakers Hayao Miyazaki and Isao Takahata, along with producer Toshio Suzuki, that the world has not only been exposed to the level of ingenuity crafted in Japanese anime, but the level of potential that animation as a whole has as a medium for storytelling. This is made especially clear through Mami Sunada’s documentary *The Kingdom of Dreams and Madness*, which gives the viewer a grand tour of Studio Ghibli and its gifted animators hard at work. This documentary follows Miyazaki as it chronicles the making of both his and Takahata’s

The Wind Rises and *The Tale of the Princess Kaguya*.

Miyazaki is so warm and open throughout the film that the viewer almost feels that they are in the same room with the master animator. Above all else, Miyazaki truly shows the level of creativity that he exhibits in each of his animated works by simply gazing upon a scenery of rooftops in his hometown: “See that house with all the ivy on it? From that rooftop, what if you leapt onto the next rooftop, dashed over that blue and green wall, jumped and climbed up the pipe, ran across the roof and jumped onto the next? You can in animation. If you can walk the cable you can see the other side. When you look from above, so many things reveal themselves to you. Maybe race along the concrete wall. Suddenly, there in your humdrum town is a magical movie. Isn’t it fun to see things that way? Feels like you can go somewhere far beyond. Maybe you can.”

This excerpt is punctuated by clips from many of his feature films, each perfectly matched with the master’s vivid imagination. This scene made it clear to me how much of a genius Miyazaki truly is. *The Kingdom of Dreams and Madness* is a bittersweet film that celebrates the life and contributions of Miyazaki and Ghibli, along with the mourning of what might very well be the studio’s final days.

The Tale of the Princess Kaguya

February 28, 2015

Last year marked a milestone for the history of animation, as the legendary Hayao Miyazaki of Studio Ghibli (*My Neighbor Totoro*, *Spirited Away*) retired from filmmaking after the release of his final film, *The Wind Rises*. However, this year marks yet another milestone as master animator and Ghibli co-founder Isao Takahata (*Grave of the Fireflies*, *Only Yesterday*) brings us *The Tale of the Princess Kaguya*- a wonderful work of art based on one of Japan's most cherished folktales.

This 10th century tale delves into the heart of Japanese mythology, telling the story of an old bamboo cutter who finds a mysterious baby girl born from a bamboo shoot. He and his elderly wife choose to raise the child as their own. To their surprise, the newly adopted child ages at an accelerated rate. This, along with finding gold and beautiful handwoven kimonos within the same bamboo shoot, leads the couple to realize that she is a divine being destined for greatness.

Obsessed with raising their daughter to be a princess and the potential opportunities it could bring them, the bamboo cutter and his wife take her to the capital to have her groomed into a proper lady of the court. The daughter learns the ways of a lady as quickly as she ages, and the high priest names her Kaguya-Hime, "the shining princess," for having "radiant beauty and a form as graceful as slender bamboo." Kaguya quickly grows into a beautiful young woman and attracts five noble suitors. Even the Emperor himself is captivated by her presence. Yet Kaguya knows that her nature as a goddess incarnate means her time on Earth is limited, which leads her to despair.



The story's simplicity combined with Takahata's masterful contextualization of his characters' emotions help truly bring this story to life. Where this movie completely drew me in was its visual beauty. Ghibli's flawless hand-drawn 2D animation is accompanied by gorgeous charcoal and watercolor art, giving the impression that you're watching an ancient Japanese painting come to life. I've never seen animated visuals as beautiful as this.

These factors are combined with perfectly cast voice acting – especially from Aki

“Ghibli’s flawless hand-drawn 2D animation is accompanied by gorgeous charcoal and watercolor art, giving the impression that you’re watching an ancient Japanese painting come to life.”

Asakura, who makes the audience fall as madly in love with Kaguya as her suitors – as well as a captivating orchestral score from legendary composer Joe Hisaishi. This all blends together into what's undoubtedly one of the greatest animated productions of all time. Despite losing the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature to Disney's *Big Hero 6*, *The Tale of the Princess Kaguya* is a wonderful work of art from start to finish that will absolutely touch your heart.

Shuting Li

Stuffing the Duck

March 13, 2015

China's school system is recognized as the most rigorous in the world. In an education survey run by the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Shanghai teens scored the highest in the international education ranking. After 12 years of dedication, all seniors in China need to participate in the *gaokao* (college entrance exam). Their score will not only determine which school they will go to, but what their future will be like.

The entrance exam is described as a stampede of, “thousands of soldiers and tens of thousands of horses across a single log bridge.” In other words, the world of college admissions is extremely competitive. However, domestic universities in China are known for what is deemed “narrow admissions, wide exit.” This is in contrast to American colleges who have “easy admission, tough exit.” The education system in China is normally described as “stuffing the duck”; this means that students learn by passively accepting what they’ve been taught. Jack Ma, the founder of Alibaba and the 2nd richest billionaire in China, claims that China’s biggest problem is lack of innovation, and encourages students to mess around, have fun, and experiment with what they have learned outside of the classroom.

Zhang Ming, a professor at People’s University in Beijing, recently published a book titled *Is Chinese Education Sick?* In it, Zhang argues his viewpoints on Chinese universities and says that they implement a system of rules, regulations, measurements, assessments, and are more of a bureaucratized administration

than an integrating learning center. In one of his chapters, titled “University Professors Who Have No Culture,” he argues that professors have expertise in limited areas of research rather than in broader subjects. Zhang also criticized a number of Chinese universities that are obsessed with making their school *yiliu* (first rate). Chinese people are led to believe that if they attend big name schools, they are guaranteed to fare better in the job market after graduation.

Although Chinese students study extremely hard in order to get into universities, once they get there, they stop working. Video games have become the primary “educational content” for male students. In Chinese college dorm life, you will rarely see students reading or discussing philosophy. Instead, they will be focused on online games. Many of them play religiously for four years, often sleeping in and missing class due to all-nighters spent on the internet.

Girls binge-watch Korean dramas and other shows. Chinese universities are described as some of the easiest times of an individual’s life – all you have to do is eat, sleep, play, and fall in love. Male students earn a degree in “Too Much Gaming” with a minor in “Awkwardness” After all, when your only friend is a computer, you forget how to socialize with others. Female students, on the other hand, earn their degrees in “Korean Dramas” with a minor in “Daydreaming of Romance.” If Chinese citizens cannot trust their own education system, how can China expect to keep up with the rest of the world in the innovated 21st century?

Beauty is in the Eye of the Beholder

January 27, 2015

In a country of 1.4 billion with an extreme gender imbalance of 117.6 boys to every 100 girls, competition for love is fierce. But what do Chinese men see when they think of a traditionally beautiful woman?

The primary factor is white skin. The lighter your skin, the better your socioeconomic status. In China, being dark or having sun-kissed skin indicates that you work in the fields, are a peasant, construction worker, or other working class person. Although 70 percent of Chinese citizens are farmers, “China is a country that is now obsessed with wealth, power, social ascension, opportunity, and beauty.” Being



enlarge their eyes with vivid colors to make them look more Caucasian. In contrast, the Western fashion industry loves to hire Chinese models that look like real Chinese women for their exotic appearances. The most popular plastic surgery operations in China include changing a single eyelid to double eyelids. Chinese men consider big eyes to be the most attractive facial feature.

As a Chinese girl that has been studying abroad for eight years, I always feel self-conscious of my body when I go back to China to visit my relatives. The first thing they comment on is how many kilos I’ve gained, how chubby I look, and how tanned I got in California. Their favorite question to ask is, “How much do you weigh?” If you exceed

“The Chinese media embraces the mantra of, ‘There are no ugly women, just lazy ones.’”

white simply reveals wealth, and being dark means you live a poor life. Because of this, Chinese women love to carry umbrellas paired with elegant dresses and matching heels even without a raindrop in sight. Taiwanese celebrity Big S claims, “A girls’ skin tone should be as white as a magnesium light.”

The Chinese have also developed an obsession with large, round eyes inspired by characters found in Japanese animation. Chinese girls are known for their small, almond-shaped eyes. Since we always want what we can’t have, Chinese fashion magazines only hire models who wear big, false eyelashes, as well as contact lenses that

100 jin (50 kilograms, 110 pounds), you are considered overweight. There are no clothes for you to buy and no man will want you. Therefore, shopping in China might be nearly impossible for a medium-sized American girl.

The Chinese media embrace the mantra of, “There are no ugly women, just lazy ones.” The world has changed so much, and I don’t like the idea that Asians don’t look Asian anymore. We get plastic surgery and use tons of makeup to look as white as possible. Why can’t we be grateful for all kinds of beauty and body shapes in China? It’s time we go back to appreciating natural beauty!

Ryan Lippert

A Slice of Justice

March 13, 2015

At an event where a peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula was being discussed on March 4, U.S. ambassador to South Korea Mark Lippert was attacked by a knife-wielding activist. His attacker allegedly demanded the reunification of the two Koreas and expressed opposition towards the annual U.S.-South Korean military drills.

The assailant, Kim Ki-Jong, was arrested shortly after the attack and authorities are currently trying to decide whether he should be charged with attempted murder. This is not the first time his methods of expressing his political views have gotten him into trouble. In 2010, he threw blocks of concrete at a Japanese diplomat, stating that the division of the Korean Peninsula was Japan's fault.

He spent a couple of years in prison, as well as three years on probation. Shortly after he served his sentence, Kim allegedly went to North Korea and planted trees while he was there. He also built a small altar to honor the memory of Kim Jong-Il shortly after his death in 2011.

It is currently assumed that Kim acted alone in this incident. Kim denies all accusations that he harbors any pro-North Korean sentiment. In South Korea, the National Security Law, which makes acts that jeopardize state security illegal, has been used

to prosecute alleged supporters of North Korea.

Experts argue that due to North Korea's alleged efforts to influence public opinion in the South, the reclusive country is somewhat responsible for Kim's actions.

Whether Kim was working for North Korea or not, the Hermit Kingdom's state-run media has praised the attack against Lippert. Some Western media outlets state that the North called the attack a "knife shower of justice" or "a knife baptism of justice," although no such statement exists in the original KCNA article. Whether this is a simple translation error remains to be seen.

Ambassador Lippert is no longer in the hospital and is expected to make a full recovery.

On rare occasions, asiamedia.lmu.edu will publish a professional article on Asia, including from its founder and editor-in-chief, Tom Plate, who has been writing syndicated columns since 1996.

99 Red Balloons

March 29, 2015

In the midst of heightened tensions due to annual military drills between the U.S. and South Korea, the North Korean government has announced that they will not hesitate to respond to certain future transgressions by the South with overwhelming force. What exactly are these transgressions, you ask? Dropping pieces of paper and DVDs from balloons.

That's right. The Hermit Kingdom's leaders have made it clear that if South Korean activists go through with their plans to distribute "The Interview" and other prohibited media to North Korean citizens via balloon airdrop, there will be definite consequences since it is considered an act of war perpetrated by the South Korean government.

North Korean authorities have made it known through their state-run media that they intend to not only shoot these balloons, but also carry out "double and treble merciless retaliatory strikes" if their actions are questioned. They have stated that if these airdrops take place, South Korean civilians who live near the Korean demilitarized zone (DMZ) should keep their distance so they are not killed or injured by the North's response to "the reckless acts of the confrontational villains."

Some may like to think that the North Korean government is simply trying to protect its citizens from seeing such average comedies as "The Interview" and, instead, encourage them to watch more critically acclaimed films. However, this is probably not the case. "The Interview" is about the fictional assassination



of Kim Jong-un, and both the movie and the pamphlets in the balloons may teach North Koreans exactly what their government does not want them to know.

"Only in a state where the government has absolute control over the media would sending prohibited media content via balloons be treated the same way other countries treat foreign invasions or bombings."

Only in a state where the government has absolute control over the media would sending prohibited media content via balloons be treated the same way other countries treat foreign invasions or bombings.

Readers send comments about the Asia Media site from places as far away as Brunei to the United Arab Emirates. We try to publish every one, whether knock or praise.

Haig Ter-Ghevondian

Not Just a Pretty Face - Speaking Out Against the Media Image of Pakistani Women

March 13, 2015

According to an interview in director Jennifer Lee's "Feminist: Stories from Women's Liberation," a woman named Dr. Fatima Jinnah fought alongside male soldiers during the war of independence in Pakistan in 1947. After the war ended, she became a national legend. Today she represents everything honored on International Women's Day: the bravery, courage, and brilliance of women everywhere.

Women in Pakistani media today, however, are only considered empowered when they are seen as sex symbols. When they are not, they are portrayed as weak and oppressed. Rafia Zakaria of The Dawn News wrote, "They get their media moment only when they are shot and killed; and in these days ... with the war on terror, this happens often."

In response to this media portrayal of weak women, the National Students Federation (NSF) of Pakistan launched a Men Against Patriarchy Campaign through social media to fight against the image of weak women. The NSF spread its campaign with the hashtag #MenAgainstPatriarchy through sites like Twitter and Facebook with images of students holding signs apologizing for the way women are portrayed as sexual objects or helpless victims of harassment.

Others are showing their support for women's rights in different ways. Playwrights Aisha Zia and Evie Manning also encourage the idea of the free woman in their play No Guts, No Heart, No Glory - a story about the lives of young, Muslim female boxers of Pakistani descent. In an interview with Zia and Manning, Sarfraz Manzoor, writer for The Independent, discusses the current media portrayal of both Pakistani women and Muslim women, and how Zia and Manning hope their play can help break that trend.

The campaign to honor the brave women who follow their dreams as opposed to the media-driven idea of the weak and helpless women in Pakistan is noble. We hope that the movement will gain momentum both inside and outside of the region.

Staffers have many interests. Eriko Lee Katayama '13, our Special Projects Researcher, entered the Miss Asia America 2014 contest and won first place! Her project is South Korean media portrayals of North Korea.

The Rocky Road to Acceptance

January 27, 2015

In a nation where homosexuality is shunned, journalists rise up to defend the rights and dignity of gay, lesbian, and transgender people against verbal and sometimes physical assault from invasive media sources. Here's the kicker: this nation is Pakistan.

The country is known for having the highest Muslim population in South Asia as well as the second lowest tolerance for homosexuality in the world. Yet, it's also home to brave journalists who speak out against those in popular media who chastise transgenders in Pakistan.

Transgender people, or "hijra" ("one who has left their tribe"), were stigmatized for



Supreme Court. By the end of the case, the unlikely hero was successful in his endeavor. This was a major step toward granting hijras respect in Pakistani society.

"People don't consider them as human beings. They don't like to eat with them, drink with them or shake their hands," Khaki said. "But they are full citizens of Pakistan like everyone else."

Since the verdict, life has gotten better for hijras. It's easier for them to apply for jobs and campaign for political office. But the discrimination in popular media has not stopped.

On a show called "Khufia," host Uzma Tahir barges into private homes with police, bullying and humiliating hijras on live TV, while badgering them to confess their "crime" of being a so-called deviant.

Writers for Pakistani national newspapers like Gul Bukhari of The Nation and Beena Sarwar of The News International condemn these shows and the networks for their indiscretion and ignorance.

With the power of the written word defending the dignity of hijras, a people who are certainly questionable within the context of Sharia Law, there may be hope that they can finally live in peace and coexistence with everyone else in their own nation.

"With the power of the written word defending the dignity of hijras...there may be hope that they can finally live in peace and coexistence with everyone else in their own nation."

years by news networks like Abb Takk and even the authorities to the point of sexual harassment and assault.

The most notable case occurred in 2009 in Taxila, where local police allegedly attacked and raped a group of transgender wedding dancers.

In the same year, Dr. Muhammad Aslam Khaki, a legal expert in Islamic law, championed the right for hijras to be recognized as a "third gender" in the Pakistan

Lexie Tucker

Rest in Tweet

February 10, 2015

Most people are lucky enough to enjoy their “15 seconds” of Twitter fame while they are still among the living. Unfortunately, recently-deceased Japanese journalist Kenji Goto will not have this luxury.

A 4-year-old tweet from Sept. 7, 2010 has spread across major social networking sites like wildfire, showing the world exactly what kind of talent has been destroyed by the terrorist group ISIS.

The tweet reads: “Closing my eyes and holding still. It’s the end if I get mad or scream. It’s close to a prayer. Hate is not for humans. Judgment lies with God. That’s what I learned from my Arabic brothers and sisters.” As of February 8, the post has been re-tweeted over 41,811 times.

People from around the world were moved by Goto’s message of tolerance and shared it via social media. According to USA Today, 15-year-old high school student Yuki Watabe retweeted the original message and included one of his own: “He was such a wonderful person. He had a strong sense of doing the right thing.”

Last month, ISIS released a video showing Goto with his friend and fellow journalist Haruna Yukawa. The Japanese and Jordanian governments attempted to negotiate terms and conditions for their release, but to no avail. Goto was decapitated in a video released on various social media

accounts believed to be owned and operated by ISIS. The last time Goto tweeted was in October, which was right around the time he traveled to Syria in an attempt to rescue Yukawa. **Goto’s friend, Toshi Maeda,** verified that the Twitter account is real, and that @kenjigotoip is indeed Goto’s handle. Maeda recently commented on Goto’s strong belief in the power of citizen journalism, and stated that, “He was like a brother to me. He was an inspiration. He was a friend and a colleague.”

Some LMU students start with AMI as freshman and career with the magazine through graduation. One outstanding student who did that became the magazine’s managing editor in her senior year: Lexie Tucker. Our current Associate publisher – Jeremiah Fajardo ‘14 – started with the magazine as a sophomore.

Committing Journalistic Seppuku

May 31, 2015

In a piece from The Japan Times, Columbia University's Gerald Curtis states that, "the [Japanese] government doesn't have to muzzle the press if the press takes it upon itself to do the muzzling." Shigeaki Koga, a former government bureaucrat, wants to take off this media muzzle and bite back.

In April 2015, Asia Media International reported on Koga, a well-known media critic of Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo, who endured "fierce bashing" from the PM's office for controversial remarks. He has now spoken out against the Japanese government's censorship in an op-ed feature in The New York Times.

According to his piece "The Threat to Press Freedom in Japan," Koga revealed that after appearing on a local news station a few days after he was called in for questioning, an "executive member of the L.D.P. reportedly told some journalists, 'I heard that there was a TV station which allowed Mr. Koga to appear on a program. What a courageous TV station, I should say!'" Many have perceived this as a threat to Koga, as well as the stations that allow him to voice his concerns.

It doesn't help that these stations are doing nothing to fight this blatant violation of press freedom. According to Koga, TV Asahi scolded those who had produced the program in which he criticized the government. "[I]nstead of invoking the anti-interference provisions of the broadcasting laws to resist questioning by the L.D.P...executives complied with the party's summons," he wrote.



The Economist mentions that an LDP official stated Prime Minister Abe would never revoke a broadcasting license because that would be political suicide. Be that as it may, it appears the government is taking baby steps toward deterring reporters who get a little too ambitious. For example, a new law could send journalists to prison for accepting leaked information, discouraging any desire to become the next Snowden or Assange.

“This shikata ga nai (‘it can’t be helped’) attitude is detrimental to the idea that journalists in democratic countries are the watchdogs of the people.”

This shikata ga nai (“it can’t be helped”) attitude is detrimental to the idea that journalists in democratic countries are the watchdogs of the people. No matter how difficult the battle may be, there is no real honor in surrender.

Asia Media's budget comes from donor contributions, which range from major public figures and private institutions and to recent AM staffers. With their support, AMI is able to do so much more, resulting in recognition by other major news sites such as Google News.



Amber Vernetti

Crouching Tiger, Hacking Panda

November 19, 2014

In preparation for the 2014 Group of 20 (G20) Summit held in Brisbane, the capital of Queensland in Australia, Chinese hackers allegedly broke into Australian media corporations to collect information about the Summit's possible discussion topics. This group, referred to as Deep Panda, hacks into systems with its focus on the interests of the Chinese government.

Co-founder of the U.S. computer security organization CrowdStrike, Dmitri Alperovitch explained what Deep Panda's motives were: "[They're looking for] questions they can expect from Australian reporters, what type of coverage, positive or negative, they can expect to see." The group is essentially trying to understand Australia's media atmosphere for when China's president, Xi Jinping, arrives for the summit.

Deep Panda became popular by hacking into American think tanks for knowledge regarding the U.S.'s role in Iraq. CrowdStrike is also on the lookout for a similar Chinese hacking group, Vixen Panda, which Alperovitch claims is associated with China's People's Liberation Army's security branch, the Third Department. This group is comparable to the U.S.'s National Security Agency (NSA) or Australia's Signals Directorate and has its sights set on Australia.

CrowdStrike's tracking systems and their legality have been questioned, despite the fact that the company includes former FBI agents and McAfee employees. The company claims they use sensors that are "deployed on Windows and Mac servers, desktops, and laptops," while performing "real-time detection and recording of all adversary activities taking place on the system."

Deep Panda's efforts were focused on gaining information about last weekend's G20 Summit which discussed international economic issues and consequent problem-solving techniques. The G20 was established in 1999 and is composed of the European Union and an additional 19 nations with several guest countries.

From the beginning, the staff's gender composition has averaged at about 50-50. LMU's international students are finding a home at Asia Media, adding to its cosmopolitanism.

Australia

Unfriending Extremist Groups

February 25, 2015

At a conference in Washington D.C. last week, Australian Attorney General George Brandis announced an \$18 million program that will fight pro-terrorist websites by closely observing social media sites that promote terrorist ideals. Following the theme of the summit, “countering violent extremism,” this program, dubbed Combating Terrorist Propaganda in Australia, aims to reduce the influence of extremist groups on the Internet.

The meeting at the White House included more than 80 countries and international establishments, and focused on eliminating extremism targeted towards the corruption of young minds. This is especially important at a time when groups like ISIS and Boko Haram have amassed great power and influence in Africa and Middle Eastern nations.

In an effort to combat terrorist groups’ presence online, Senator Brandis said, “We are monitoring social media for the purpose of identifying, and where appropriate taking down terrorist propaganda just as we monitor



Laurie Patton, representing the Internet Society of Australia, is ready to collaborate with parliament to figure out strategies, but wants them to be well-planned and thought out. “We acknowledge the government’s concerns on national security, but we are concerned that they are rushing into activities that haven’t fully been thought through,” she commented.

Another initiative that was introduced to parliament was the concept of telecommunication companies withholding customer metadata information for two years for security purposes. Senator Brandis also pointed to the fact that groups like ISIS have a high success rate for drafting members from foreign countries.

Foreign minister Julie Bishop believes that there were 90 Australians among 16,000 “foreign fighters” participating in the conflict in Syria and Iraq. Bishop said, “We believe that over 20 Australians have been killed in the conflict in Syria and Iraq. They are not martyrs. They are just cannon fodder for an evil cause.”

Prime Minister Tony Abbott’s address to parliament concerning national security last Monday lacked solid details, but he was firm on one point: dual citizens involved in extremist groups will lose their Australian citizenship and other privileges, such as welfare.

“Prime Minister Tony Abbott’s address to parliament... lacked solid details, but he was firm on one point: dual citizens involved in extremist groups will lose their Australian citizenship and other privileges, such as welfare.”

social media for the purpose of identifying and taking down pedophilia.” He also added, “We must move beyond the notion that some people still have that the Internet and social media are a lawless space. They are not.”

Get to Know the Writers

Interview Questions

Why are you interested in Asia?

Yvonne: Growing up in a half Filipino household, my sights were always gazing out towards the Pacific. The rich culture that each country has to offer was always a stark contrast to the small snippets you see in Southern California, but those cultures were always swept under the rug in light of Western cultures.

Haig: Originally, my interest in Asia stemmed from my mixed martial arts background. My styles come from Japan, Thailand, India, and China among others. But, for me, I felt like I owed it to those same people to learn about their culture and why they created their respective styles.

Why did you choose to cover your country?

Lexie: Ever since middle school, I've loved Japanese animation and comics. I started learning how to speak Japanese in 6th grade by taking language classes every Saturday and have been learning ever since.

Shuting: China has some of the strangest dichotomies in the world. It has the world's richest and poorest people existing at the same time. It has 5,000 years of living history, and is always fascinating to learn about. From feudalism to communism, there is a lot to discover. With its emerging Western values and the steps it has taken towards inevitable globalization, China has transformed greatly in the 21st century.

What do you find most interesting about your country?

Amber: The most interesting thing about learning about Australia (any country for that matter) is how similar and completely different it is compared to the United States.

Alessandra: I thought UAE would be interesting because it sells itself as being very westernized, yet still has a very conservative culture.

What draws you to a particular story?

Ryan: I tend to be drawn to stories that either highlight different aspects of the nature of life in North Korea and occasionally, if relevant, inter-Korean relations. Of course, if something important is going on in that region, that takes priority, but if I can tie either of the two things I just mentioned into an article about an important development in the region, that is always a plus.

Dylan: When I write a review I usually try to get on top of movies that are recently released for a limited screening in American theaters. I'm trying to promote East Asian cinema by spreading the word about movies and shows that are good, so I wouldn't want to waste my time or the reader's' time by ranting on a bad movie or TV show.

Why did you join AMI?

Amber: During fall semester of my junior year, I began searching for ways to get involved in journalism on campus. In my very first journalism course, then-AMI editors Jeremiah and Stephanie spoke to my class about being a staff writer and I was instantly intrigued and sold.

Shuting: I joined Asia Media because of Professor Tom Plate's Asia Media class. I love the intimate and cooperating atmosphere among the staff, and the fact that we truly help each other and care about each other's well-being. I am a very good writer in Chinese, but I still need to polish my skills in English.

Who / what is your inspiration when writing?

Lexie: My inspiration is my love of teaching others. Being able to write something that helps people gain a new understanding of the world around them makes me feel like my writing has a purpose.

Haig: Coming from a people who have protested for a century for recognition of the Armenian Genocide, all groups that deserve a voice but need a few megaphones inspire my writing.

Do you feel that your major has influenced the topics you choose to cover?

Alexis: Yes, especially political science which studies power. I'm interested in stories that feature some sort of power dynamics between different groups.

Yvonne: Since I'm an English major, stories about humanities, society, culture, and technology stand out to me more than the political ones. It's not that I don't care about the politics, but my skill set allows me to cross examine sources and see where the rhetoric is leading us as an audience.

AMI Favorite Cuisine Poll:

Korean BBQ



Alexis



Alessandra



Yvonne



Ryan



Lexie



Haig

Curry



Amber

Sushi



Dylan

Dim Sum



Shuting



Asia Media International

In Review

Loyola Marymount University
Fall 2014 - Spring 2015

Asia Media International seeks to shine a spotlight on Asia as it assumes an increasingly powerful role in the world. AMI does this through multiple avenues; our biweekly publication, creative and informative videos, research projects, panels, speaker series, and conferences are all a part of our mission to educate and equip people with knowledge of this ever-growing region of the world.

AMI highlights current events, political and societal trends, and pop culture in Asian countries through the lens of their distinct media systems. In addition to high-quality, detailed, and easy-to-digest articles, AMI also publishes columns written by students based on specific topics such as Chinese social media. The publication challenges audiences, student

editors, and writers to critically examine the region's happenings in contrast to the Western world many live in.

As society progresses and becomes more globalized, AMI seeks to engage Loyola Marymount University's (LMU) community to help deepen their overall institutional understanding of Asia and their relationships. AMI enhances LMU's **Bellarmino College of Liberal Arts** programs, such as the **Asian Pacific Studies, Political Science, and English** departments, by allowing students to develop research, writing, editing, and event planning skills. Lastly, AMI will serve as a real-world media lab for editor-in-chief, **Professor Tom Plate**, and students volunteering for the organization.



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