UVM Students to Debate in Arabic at Doha, Qatar

Last November, Mr. Darius K. Jonathan, instructor of Arabic, was invited by Qatar Debate, which was sponsored by Qatar Foundation, to participate in a workshop to train students of Arabic to debate in Arabic at International Debate Event to be held on April 20-24, 2013 in Doha, Qatar. Four UVM students, who have been trained by Mr. Jonathan and Professor of Forensics, Alfred Snider, director of the Lawrence Debate Union and the World Debate Institute at UVM, will soon be going to Doha, Qatar for the debate. The two students are grateful to Qatar Foundation, which has provided the fund to cover all their travel expenses to Qatar for this debate. We wish Mr. Jonathan and his two students a good journey to Qatar and hope that our students will perform well during the debate.

Recently, quite a few students of Arabic languages at UVM studied abroad. Shelby Deaton has just returned from her study abroad program in Tunisia and Jordan. Judith Marshall got a Critical Languages Scholarship and studied abroad in Tunisia. Jake Monaco is now in Morocco, studying Standard Arabic and Moroccan Colloquial Arabic. He has been there for almost a year. Ben Ives is in Cape Town, South Africa, studying Standard Arabic there and hopes to enroll into our third year Arabic in the fall semester of 2013 when he returns to UVM.

Chinese Talent Shows and Handwriting Contest

The Chinese Language Program had two Chinese language talent shows this semester. One was held by students taking CHIN 102, 202, and 296 on March 20. Another was held by students taking CHIN 002 and 052 on April 3. Students performed the skits they wrote themselves and then checked by their instructors. Fifteen 1st and 2nd year Chinese language students who were particularly good with their Chinese tones during the Show were chosen based on the votes taken from all Chinese instructors and were awarded.

The Chinese Language Program also held a Chinese handwriting contest, and most of the first and second year Chinese language students participated. Eight students got the First Prize, five got the Second Prize, and 11 students got the Third Prize.

To be a successful Chinese language learner, one has to develop the ear for the tones and be able to speak with right tones; at the same time, one has to develop the eye for the Chinese writing system and be able to recognize and write them one stroke after another in the correct order. The talent shows and the handwriting contest were held to encourage students to face the challenge of learning the Chinese tones and character writing with joy.
An Unforgettable Day in Kunming, China

“Walked blindfolded down a city street in China.” This is the event that I list in my personal profile on the social networking website for travelers, ouchsurfing.org, under the section titled “One amazing thing that I’ve seen or done.” The stunt was actually part of a birthday present (a truly excellent present I might add) given to me by some of my best friends with whom I lived while studying for the last two years in Kunming, China. As I was led through campus and down what should have been familiar city streets with only my senses of touch, hearing and smell to give me any point of reference, I quickly realized that there is so much more to “the China experience” than what I am able to capture with my camera.

I was dragged along by less attentive guides than one might hope for (I think it was their first time as well!) and recall tripping on the six-inch square tiles used to make up the sidewalks. They had come loose as a result of all the foot traffic, and the recent rain had filled in the spaces between causing water to splash up on my calves as each step shifted another tile. I cringed at the thought of all the phlegm spat and the many children I have seen peeing on that same sidewalk.

So, it was with great relief that I felt my foot touch down on solid pavement as we began to cross the street. The relief, however, was short lived as I was soon after shocked into terror by the howl of car horns and the screech of poorly maintained breaks on the many bikes and electric scooters that whizzed past. Clutching firmly my faithful guides (whom I had little faith in at this point,) I imagined what a site it must be for the Chinese to see three foreigners—one blindfolded—crossing the street arm in arm and all laughing like maniacs.

After stopping to take in a few deep breaths and still my fears, we pushed onwards until I lost all concept of where I was. Then, suddenly, I realized I knew exactly where I was as the sweet scent of steamed buns and some of my favorite street foods flooded my olfactory glands; this was soon after shocked into terror by the howl of car horns and the screech of poorly maintained breaks on the many bikes and electric scooters that whizzed past. Clutching firmly my faithful guides (whom I had little faith in at this point,) I imagined what a site it must be for the Chinese to see three foreigners—one blindfolded—crossing the street arm in arm and all laughing like maniacs.

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Finally, everything became quieter and I deduced that we must have left the street and entered into a residential complex. After what seemed like an hour of fumbling blindly through the city, I was rushed up five flights of concrete stairs, a door was opened, and my blindfold was removed. To my surprise, I was in my friend Hannah’s apartment, just a short ten-minute walk from where we started; and there to greet me were 15 of my closest friends.

This was one of the most memorable birthdays in my life, and as I recall it, I am reminded that one of the most important and meaningful things that one gains from living in such a foreign and unique place like China are the close friendships that develop between yourself and other foreigners who truly become like family, faithfully leading each other through the dark.

--Jesse Labow

2013 Student Research Conference at Davis Center

On April 23, Student Research Conference will be held on the 4th Floor at Davis Center.

At 11:00 am, Malcolm Valaitis, whose advisor is Prof. Yin, will present his Chinese-English translation project, “Encountering Buddhism: A Translation of Zoujin Fojiao.” At 11:15 am, Aaron Kane, whose advisor is Prof. Ikeda, will present his research, “Transforming Tradition: Seasonal Associations in Anime and Japanese Pop Culture.” Both presentations will be given at Jost Foundation Room, 422. At 2:00 pm, Rohan Jesudason, who has been working Prof. Yin, will present the result of his study, “An Analysis of PRC Claims towards Disputed Territories in the South China Sea,” at Mildred Livak Ballroom, 419.

These students started to work on their projects more than a year ago. They have used their Asian language skills to the fullest for their projects. Their presentations are just part of the honors theses. They will defend their theses before the spring semester ends.
Faculty Members’ Activities

Kyle Ikeda presented his paper “Challenges of Representing the Polylinguality of Okinawan Literature in Translation” at the Association for Japanese Literary Studies Conference in October of 2012. His article “Geographically-Proximate Postmemory: Sites of War and the Enabling of Vicarious Narration in Medoruma Shun’s Fiction” will appear in the coming issue of the International Journal of Okinawan Studies due out in April. He is currently finishing up revisions for his book manuscript, Okinawan War Memory: Transgenerational Trauma and the War Fiction of Medoruma Shun. This June, he will be giving a talk on Okinawan war memory for UVM’s Asian Studies Outreach Program.

Kazuko Carlson gave a talk during the information session on Japanese Business Culture on April 12. Her talk was based on her interviews with her former UVM students about their experiences in working in Japan. She also developed a new partnership with Saint Michael’s College (SMC) for the conversation partner program by working with her former Japanese-major student, Ms. Anna Walsh, who now teaches English at SMC.

Natsumi Ueno continues to develop course materials to suit her students’ needs. This year she adopted Japanese anime and drama into her upper level course curricula in order to teach varieties of speech styles in Japanese along with Japanese culture. She served as a judge in the 1st semiannual Vermont Japanese contest. She is currently establishing an online-based Japanese community in order to provide her students more opportunity to use Japanese for real communication outside of class.

Darius Jonathan was invited last November by Qatar Debate, which is a member of Qatar Foundation, to participate in a workshop to train his students to debate in Arabic at the International Debate Event. He will take four students with him to Doha, Qatar, for this event in late April this year.

Ying Hu spoke as a panelist on a panel on Chinese Language Learning, organized by the UVM Linguistic Club in Feb. She is now developing online workbook for CHIN002 and has finished trial quizzes to be tested out this semester. She will also attend the Conference on Chinese Language Instruction with other Chinese faculty members at Princeton University on in late April.

Diana Sun was invited by Vermont Department of Education to be a peer review panelist for another session in April to review an application packet, to interview the applicant and to assess the qualification of the applicant who is seeking a Vermont teaching license in the Chinese language. Her paper “the Challenges and Coping Strategies for Guest Instructors from China to Teach Beginners in the U.S.” has been accepted by the 11th International Conference on Chinese Pedagogy, which is to be held in Sichuan University of China in June of 2013.

John Yin presented his paper “Chinese Tonal Training with Rhythmic Verses” and conducted a workshop entitled “Teaching Strategies to Enhance Chinese Language Learning for Beginners” at 2012 ACTFL Convention/CLTA Annual Meeting last November at Philadelphia. He has continued to work as a member of the SAT Chinese Committee for ETS this academic year. He has also been busy with the review work as a member of the Editorial Board for the Journal of Chinese Language Teachers Association and for the Journal of Technology and Chinese Language Teaching respectively. Since last fall, he has also served on the organizing committee for the 11th International Conference on Chinese Language Pedagogy.

Mutsumi Corson is on sabbatical leave this semester. She is working on new teaching materials for learning kanji characters to be used for the new course Kanji is Key in the fall of 2013. She was invited to participate in the Standard Familiarization Workshop, sponsored by the Japan Foundation, for college program coordinators in the U.S. at Los Angeles in February.
Japanese Program Events & News

The Japanese Program invited Ms. Michiko Oishi for a **Japanese Haiku Workshop** on February 14th. She is a poet and an author of *Red Fish Alphabet* (Akasatana Akasakana) and *Deeping Snow*. She gave a lecture on Haiku and took students outside to compose Haiku.

This walk is called 吟行 (ginkoh). After returning to the classroom, students shared the Haiku with all the participants. They had a wonderful time.

**J-POP session** is back! Megumi Esselstrom, a certified music instructor, is leading the J-POP club. They meet every Thursday (6:00-7:00, A161, L/L). This semester, two students from Champlain College joined us and approximately fifteen students attend the session every week.

**Haruo Shirane**, Professor of Japanese Literature at Columbia University, came to UVM on April 8, 2013 to give a presentation about his new book *Japan and the Culture of the Four Seasons: Nature, Literature and the Arts*. Professor Shirane is a leading scholar of pre-modern Japanese literature in the world and has received numerous awards for his research and publications in the United States and Japan.

**Japanese House** participated in the Living learning program fair on February 28 and advertised the program to seek new recruits to the house for Academic year 2013-2014.

Chinese Program Events & Student News

**Chinese House**


Chinese House members are making sticky rice balls.

Chinese House members made sticky rice balls and other Chinese traditional dishes during the Festival. Three more cooking parties have been held at the Chinese House this semester. Its members learned to make home style Chinese food to appreciate Chinese culinary art.

Chinese House members watched the Mongolian Music and Dance Shows performed by Inner Mongolian University students at Ira Allen Chapel and thoroughly enjoyed the beauty of Chinese ethnic performing art and were inspired by their perseverance in achieving highly challenging skills through years of practice.

**More Student News**

Lillian Wu, a Chinese minor who graduated last year, is chosen as a Fulbright finalist by the US committee and her application is getting forwarded to the committee in Macau, who will make the final decision in late April.

In December 2012, eleven students came back to UVM from Yunnan University in Kunming, and another two were back from East China Normal University in Shanghai.

**The Temple of Heaven in Beijing**

This summer, 20 students will study abroad at Yunnan University in China.