

# Newsletter

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## UVM Alumnus on Chinese TV Reality Show



Ethen Backus, a UVM alumnus, was on "You Are the One," a popular reality show by Jiangsu Province TV in China. It was televised on the Chinese National Day, October 1, 2016, and was watched by millions of people in China. The show has 24 single young women who interact with a single man brought on to the stage and decide whether a good match can be made.

Ethan and Miss Tang have found

each other attractive and suitable. They have decided to date and go steady with each other as a result



of their interactions during the show. Their successful match has won them a free vacation trip to Maldives. They will win more

prizes by the show sponsors if they eventually get married.

Ethan now manages a trading company in Chongqing, China, and he says that the factor that got him on is his Chinese language skills.

The show is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MM2ndXdYnDY&app=desktop> He comes in at about 18 minutes. □

## Japanese Major Alumnae Alisa Holm

Alisa Holm, a Japanese Major alumnae and a Peter Seybolt Award recipient (class of 2015), was accepted into the Global Art Practice graduate program at Tokyo University of the Arts, one of the premier art universities in Japan, beginning in April of 2016. Alisa's Honor's College thesis, "The Forest in the Depths of Her Eyes" Sayoko's Silence and Art-Making as a

Reparative Force in Medoruma Shun's *Me no oku no mori*" (Advisor, Kyle Ikeda) was successfully defended in December 2015. Because of her outstanding academic performance and achievement, she was also inducted into Phi Beta Kappa, the oldest and most prestigious academic honor society in the United States. □



Ms. Corson, senior lecturer of Japanese, and Alisa Holm (on the right) at the Phi Beta Kappa induction ceremony.



14 students participating in the 2016 Study Abroad Program in China at the Stone Forest, a geological park and also a natural heritage near Kunming, China.



Thomas Noel, his wife, Haiyan, and their son, Hunter, who is 6 now, in a picture taken in 2014. Mr. Noel has been a visiting instructor, offering Chinese literature courses while teaching CHIN 051/052.



The Chinese-English Language Partner Program at their monthly gathering for language exchange practice.



Ten Japanese language students (Class of 2016) were awarded membership in the Japanese National Honor Society-College Chapter in May 2016.

## I Am Back to UVM to Teach and Learn



I graduated from UVM with a BA ten years ago. I am currently finishing a PhD in Chinese Literature with the Department of East Asian Languages & Literature at the University of Wisconsin – Madison, and I came back to UVM and joined the Department of Asian Languages and Literatures as a visiting faculty member in the fall semester of 2015 when Professor Yin was on leave for the year.

My research focuses on medieval Chinese poetry and narrative, ancient Chinese history and historiography,

and translation studies. My current projects range from the development of a scholarly monograph examining *Shanshui shi* 山水诗 or “mountains and waters poetry” dating from the Wei-Jin 魏晋 (265-420 CE) Era to the Tang 唐 Dynasty, to articles that include a study of Wang Wei’s 王维 (ca. 669-761) parting poetry which attempts to reassess his intellectual allegiances, a reconsideration of the poetic “self-elegy” in Six Dynasties verse that explores stylized imitations of *wange* 挽歌 (funeral dirges), and a comparative examination of ambassadors to foreign states in the Sima Qian’s 司马迁 (145- ca. 86 BCE) *Shiji* 史记 (Grand Scribe’s Records).

I’ve spent my adult life studying Chinese language and literature, and more than half a decade living, studying, and teaching in Mainland China. Whether it comes from my wife, a member of Nahki people living in

China’s southwestern periphery, our soon to be six year old son who clearly takes after her, or from a text written many centuries in the past, I am constantly reminded of how little I understand of Chinese language culture, and how far I have to go before I comprehend the reasons behind this ignorance. One of the Tang Dynasty’s greatest minds, Han Yu 韩愈 (768-824), once famously wrote that teachers are “those who pass on the Way, offer instruction, and resolve doubts.” While I certainly plan providing instruction while helping my colleagues transmit the “Way,” I am glad that the students and faculty at UVM and the surrounding community of Chinese language teachers and learners in Vermont have provided me with help in resolving my own doubts. I’m still looking forward to learning from you all.

--Thomas Noel  
UVM Class of 2006

## I Would Not Be Where I Am Today

I began studying Japanese on a whim. I had always had an interest in Japan, so when I saw there was an opening in my schedule to take a class I decided to enroll. Looking back now, that was one of the decisions I’ve ever made.

After graduation I was accepted as a participant in the JET Program. They placed me in rural Akita prefecture, far from any metropolitan centers. There I worked as an elementary school English teacher for fifth and sixth graders. It was a difficult transition period in the beginning as none of my co-workers spoke English and I was entrusted with many new responsibilities. However, the challenges presented

opportunities to advance my language ability and gain new professional skills. Thanks to the necessity of Japanese in my daily life, I passed the Japanese Language Proficiency Test N1 level in July of 2016.

My time teaching was fantastic, but at the end of three years I decided to advance my career in a different direction. I now work for a tourism-based area revitalization company in my adopted home of Odate City. My day-to-day tasks include translation work, product development, and foreign outreach.

Without the fantastic UVM Japanese program I would not be where I am today professionally or personally. I



highly encourage anyone interested in learning about foreign cultures, encountering new perspectives, or challenging themselves to grow to sign up for a class with the Japanese program!

--Colin Flinn  
UVM Class of 2013

## Faculty Members' Activities

**Kazuko Carlson** offered a new course titled Asian Languages Teaching Practicum in Spring 2016 with Ms. Hu, lecturer of Chinese and Dr. Manetta, associate professor of anthropology, as a result of being awarded with the Engaged Practices Innovation Grant. She and Ms. Hu will make a presentation on their course experiences at the Global Education Forum in Philadelphia in October. She also won 2016-2017 Japanese Teaching Material Purchase Grant from the Japan

Foundation. She will be working with the Japanese House program students to offer a variety of cultural activities this academic year, including Ancient Food of East and West, a joint event with the Department of Classics, in November.

**Mutsumi Corson** has been offering kanji character courses (Kanji is Key I & II) since Fall 2013. She continues improving the courses and is pleased to get positive feedback from students. She hosts

the Japanese Book Club every Wednesday. She had a weekly meeting with a student about the Hyakunin Isshu (A Hundred Poems) in Spring 2016. The student is currently in Japan and taking a course of the Hyakunin Isshu in Japanese. Corson enjoys teaching students in the Japanese Program as they inspire her with new ideas in teaching. To explore the educational exchange opportunities for UVM students, she visited Rikkyo University in Tokyo with Ms. Natsumi Ueno in June 2016.



On May 21, 2016, Japanese language graduates and faculty members at the reception party after the Commencement in front of the department building at 479 Main Street.

**Kyle Ikeda** was in Okinawa during sabbatical for Spring 2016 gathering information for and working on a translation of a short story by Medoruma Shun. His article "Writing and Remembering the Battle of Okinawa: War Memory and Literature" appears in the *Routledge Handbook of Modern Japanese Literature* (2016). Professor Ikeda is also writing the 'Afterword' for Takuma Sminkey's (visiting professor at UVM for 2015-2016) translation of Medoruma Shun's novel *In the Woods of Memory* (Me no oku no mori) scheduled to come out in June 2017. Professor Ikeda is the faculty advisor for the UVM Taiko Club, which was granted club

status in May, and the UVM Anime Club.

**Diana Sun** presented a paper entitled "Teaching Elementary Chinese in an American Cultural Context" at the 13<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Chinese Pedagogy, held at Inner Mongolia University in China on July 9-11, 2015. During her sabbatical leave in the academic year of 2014-2015, she wrote four sets of listening and speaking exercises for CHIN001, CHIN002, CHIN051 and CHIN052. As the faculty director of the Chinese House at Global Village, she led Chinese House members and other Chinese language students in a series of events,

including learning Taiji fan boxing, making dumplings to celebrate the Chinese New Year, experiencing the art and techniques of Chinese calligraphy, playing traditional Chinese games, listening to Chinese music played with traditional musical instruments, and learning to sing Chinese songs.

**Natsumi Ueno** is teaching JAPN 001, JAPN 101, and JAPN 295 this semester. She is also serving as a faculty adviser for the a cappella group, Zest, this academic year. Over the summer of 2016, she taught at Princeton in Ishikawa, a Japanese language program organized and managed by Princeton University in Japan. She



Visiting Professor Takuma Sminkey (Okinawa International University) gave a lecture on learning Japanese in March 2016 to students in the Japanese program before returning to Okinawa.

is currently interested in pronunciation education. She attended conferences and workshops on Japanese pedagogy in both Japan and the US to explore more effective ways to teach pronunciation skills.

**Ying Hu** took part in UVM's Hybrid Course Initiative program, and then she designed and taught a hybrid course on Conversational Chinese over the summer of 2016. This semester, besides teaching CHIN 001, 051, 201, and 251, she is also taking care of the Chinese-English

Language Partner Program. In October, Ying and Kazuko will be presenting their practice in the Asian Language Teaching Practicum course at the Global Education Forum in Philadelphia.

**John Yin** was on sabbatical leave in the academic year 2015-2016, working on his textbook project. In April 2016, he signed a contract with a prestigious university press to have the set of Chinese language textbooks published. On October 18, 2015, invited as a keynote speaker, he made a presentation

entitled "Two Major Issues and Their Solutions in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language" at the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Chinese Teaching Conference of Confucius Institutes & Confucius Classrooms in North America at Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. He contributed an encyclopedic article on "Chinese Characters" to *The Routledge Encyclopedia of the Chinese Language*, which was published in Feb. 2016. 2016 is the second year for him to serve as the Executive Director of the Chinese Language Teachers Association, USA. □



James Whalen, a Chinese language student played a role of an American pilot (on the left) in a Chinese TV series *Flying Tiger* when he was studying at Yunnan University in China in Fall 2015.

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## Program Events & News

### Calligraphy Demonstration and Hands-on Experiences in Three Languages



Towards the end of the spring semester in 2016, a joint workshop on Arabic, Chinese, and Japanese calligraphy was held. Students who were good at calligraphy in one of the three languages demonstrated their talents. Other participating students had hands-on experiences to write in Arabic, Chinese, or Japanese.

### Chinese Program Extracurricular Activities

The Chinese-English Language Partner Program helps students find their Chinese or



English speaking partners. To apply to get a partner or be a partner, go to the webpage: <http://www.uvm.edu/~chinese/?Page=CELPP.htm>.

Mid-Autumn Festival Music & Poems Night was held on September 15. "Flowers and Moonlight by the Spring River," a classical Chinese music piece



was played by Ms. Ying Hu and Mr. Xiao Ran, an international

student from China. Students also recited the poem Jìng Yè Sì (Thoughts in the Silent Night) by Li Bai (701-762), learned the moon festival legend, and tasted moon cakes.

The Chinese House has its educational cooking events on three times in the fall semester. House members learn to cook Chinese pancakes, scrambled eggs



with tomatoes, noodles and dumplings. Other activities include learning to write Chinese characters with a brush pen, doing Taiji fan boxing, and learning to sing a Chinese popular song. □

### Japanese Program Extracurricular Activities

Japanese language students had a class dinner at Gaku Ramen, a



new Japanese ramen noodle shop, in downtown Burlington.

A Japanese calligraphy workshop was conducted by Mrs. Carlson in Summer 2016.



Prof. Takuma Sminkey, a visiting professor from Okinawa International University, contributed greatly to the

**Tea Time with Takuma**  
Let's have fun talking in Japanese! 楽しく日本語で話しましょう!

**Who is Takuma?**  
He, my name is Takuma, and I'm an American Japanese (i.e. a former American who has been Japanese) citizen and he has lived in Japan for almost twenty five years. I'm a professor at the Department of Arabic and Japanese Language and Culture at Okinawa International University, where I teach Spanish, Arabic, translation, and English. Oh the way, I also teach some Japanese-English translation.

**What, the meeting at UVM as a Visiting Professor doing research on Japanese Translation? Well, sure. It's nice to work with UVM students to help them improve their Japanese. I thought we could get together once a week to speak in Japanese, and have a chance to improve. There are many possibilities, and I'd like to see what you think. I'm sure we'll have a good time. I'll be there if you're interested. I'll be there if you're interested. I'll be there if you're interested. I'll be there if you're interested.**

**Possible Activities — All in Japanese!**

Free talking	Fun Activities	Learning
—Introduction	—Karaoke	—How to translate Japanese (English into Japanese)
—Conversation club	—Gossip and phone	—Living in a Japanese house
—Free discussion (on specific topics)	—Games and debate	—Working as a translator

Japanese Program while he was here at UVM, September 2015-March 2016. He hosted Tea

Time with Takuma, Japanese conversation hour, every Friday.

The Japanese program sponsors Taiko Workshops with



Burlington Taiko's Stuart Paton. Interested students can learn to do Taiko performances. See UVM Japanese Taiko Club performing at the L/L Annual Ice Cream Social: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qLyQvXsOoS4&feature=youtu.be>

Prof. Ikeda, faculty advisor of the Taiko Club, and a student performed Quichi Daiko: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1bew8LEU5w> □