



Association for
Asian Studies

I UNIVERSITY OF
ILLINOIS
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

AAS 2025
FILM EXPO

ALL FILM SCREENINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC*

*Conference registration is not required.

SCHEDULE BY DATE

Thursday, March 13, 2025

SCREENING TIME	FILM TITLE	LENGTH	Q&A	COUNTRY/ REGION OF FOCUS	PAGE
11:25am	<i>Tiananmen Mission</i>	125 min	In person	China	4
1:45pm	<i>Taiwan Undaunted: In Search of the Nation that Cannot Call Itself a Nation</i>	105 min	In person	Taiwan	4
3:45pm	<i>Witness to Revolution: One Doctor's Story of the Xinhai Revolution</i>	57 min	In person	USA	5

Friday, March 14, 2025

SCREENING TIME	FILM TITLE	LENGTH	Q&A	COUNTRY/ REGION OF FOCUS	PAGE
8:30am	<i>Singing in the Wilderness</i>	90 min	In person	China	5
10:15am	<i>Hot Stuff (Barang Panas)</i>	82 min	In person	Indonesia/Southeast Asia	6
11:55am	<i>A Gregarious Species</i>	9 min	In person	India/ Pakistan	7
12:15pm	<i>The Vietnam Action</i>	23 min	In person	Vietnam	7
12:55pm	<i>Bombay Has No More Crocodiles!</i>	38 min		Mumbai/ India	8
1:35pm	<i>Rice Barn</i>	15 min		Cambodia	8
1:50pm	<i>Life on Tonle Sap</i>	15 min		Cambodia	9
2:10pm	<i>Turning the Bhumi: The Uprising of Peasants in the Northern Thai, 1974-1976</i>	53 min	In person	Thailand	9
3:20pm	<i>Shadowing</i> 쉐도잉	8 min		USA/ Korea	10
3:30pm	<i>Echoes of Home</i>	43 min	In person	USA/ Canada	10
4:30pm	<i>Hug Me Tight: A Robot Story</i>	61 min		South Korea	11

Saturday, March 15, 2025

SCREENING TIME	FILM TITLE	LENGTH	Q&A	COUNTRY/ REGION OF FOCUS	PAGE
8:30am	<i>Carving the Divine - Buddhist Sculptors of Japan</i>	98 min		Japan	11
10:05am	<i>Epiphany</i>	11 min	In person	Foshan Guangdo, China	12
10:30am	<i>We Have a Show</i>	27 min		USA	12
11:00am	<i>Nizhal Yaathrikan</i>	28 min		India	13
11:45am	<i>My Sarangi, Your Sarangi</i>	32 min		Nepal	13
12:20pm	<i>Limits of History</i>	40 min	In person	USA, India, Europe	14
1:15pm	<i>1923 Kanto Massacre</i>	116 min	In person	Japan and Korea	14
3:30pm	<i>How to Have an American Baby</i>	114 min	In person	China and America	15
5:40pm	<i>Suzzanna: The Queen of Black Magic</i>	87 min		Indonesia	15

The Film Expo is curated and managed by the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies.

Special thanks to Yuchia Chang, Naoko Gunji, Tim Liao, Rini Bhattacharya Mehta, Myoung-Sun Song, Bing Wang, and Matthew S. Winters for serving as 2025 film reviewers.

Film titles, in the film directory following this page, are listed in the order of screening schedule and include director/producer, year of release, country/region of production, duration, country/region featured, film description, and distribution contact/website.

Tiananmen Mission

Thursday, March 13, 11:25am



Directed and produced by Lillian Zheng

2024. USA. 125 minutes

Country/Region Featured: China

In-person Q&A with filmmaker Lillian Zheng (The Middle Land)

Tiananmen Mission is a historical film about the true China and its people through 1989 Tiananmen Student Movement. It promotes courage, dignity and freedom, through a young man—one of the student leaders during the 1989 student movement in Tiananmen Square. Zhan Jiang, a 17-year-old, survived three bullets during the massacre, and had been in hiding for 16 years when we recorded his story. His personal account about the massacre and China is one of the most authentic Chinese narratives, and his moving journey to freedom is a great inspirational history for generations.

Distributed by The Middle Land | www.themiddleland.com

Contact: Lillian Zheng, middleland@protonmail.com

<https://jointalents.com/tiananmen-mission>



Also available for virtual on-demand viewing. Register at Film Expo desk.

Taiwan Undaunted: In Search of the Nation that Cannot Call Itself a Nation

Thursday, March 13, 1:45pm



Directed by Neal E Robbins and produced by Carl Homer

2023. Taiwan/UK. 105 minutes.

Country/Region Featured: Taiwan

In-person Q&A with Writer/Director Neal E. Robbins

This film explores the multifaceted aspects of Taiwanese identity and the nation's ongoing struggle for recognition from multiple perspectives. It examines the tension between economic interests and environmental concerns, indigenous rights, the impact of China's influence on political polarization, and Taiwan's relations with China.

Distributed by: TaiwanPlus | www.taiwanplus.com

Contact: Neal E. Robbins, neal@nealerobbins.com

<https://localsecrets.com/taiwan-undaunted-the-documentary/>



Also available for virtual on-demand viewing. Register at Film Expo desk.

Witness to Revolution: One Doctor's Story of the Xinhai Revolution

Thursday, March 13, 3:45pm



**Directed by Kara White and produced by Adam White
2024. USA. 57 minutes.**

Country/Region Featured: USA

**In-person Q&A with Scholar Joseph Ho (Albion College),
Director/Writer/Producer Kara White, Producer/Cinematographer
Adam White, and Producer Peggy Klein**

Witness to Revolution details the life of Dr. Edgar T. Shields, a medical missionary from the Midwest. While healing people in 1911 China, he becomes caught in the epic Xinhai Revolution.

Distributed by: PBS - WIPB | <https://ballstatepbs.org/>

Contact: Kara White, kara@hemlockfilms.com

<https://www.hemlockfilms.com/witness-to-revolution>



FRIDAY, MARCH 14, 2025

Singing in the Wilderness

Friday, March 14, 8:30 AM



Directed and produced by CHEN Dongnan

2021. China. 90 minutes.

Country/Region Featured: China

In-person Q&A with CathayPlay Founder Cliff Xiao

After hiding in the mountains for a century, a Miao ethnic Christian choir is discovered by a propaganda official and becomes a national sensation. Two young Miaos and all the villagers must reconcile their faith, identity, and love with the real world of China.

Distributed by: CATHAYPLAY INTERNATIONAL PTE. LTD.

www.cathayplay.com

Contact: Gloria LIU, gloria@cathayplay.com

<https://www.cathayplay.com/en/singing-in-the-wilderness>



Hot Stuff (Barang Panas)

Friday, March 14, 10:15 AM



Directed by: Dandhy Laksono and Produced by Benaya Norobu/EIB, Sunspirit for Justice and Peace, JATAM 2024. Indonesia. 82 minutes.

Country/Region Featured: Indonesia/Southeast Asia

In-person Q&A with director Dandhy Laksono and co-producer Cypri Jehan Paju Dale (on behalf of Sunspirit for Justice and Peace)

Hot Stuff ("Barang Panas") is a documentary film depicting social and environmental issues related to geothermal project in the larger context of energy transition in Indonesia. Located strategically on the Ring of Fire, Indonesia has roughly 40% of the world's known geothermal reserves (at 29 GW). It is currently second in the world for installed capacity, after the US, but this accounts for only about 7% of its geothermal potential. Aiming to utilizing this potential in accordance with the global commitment for green energy transition, Indonesia is in the process of exploiting its geothermal deposits. Produced by Ekspedisi Indonesia Baru and Sunspirit for Justice and Peace, the film documents the dynamics of Indonesia's geothermal sites from Sumatra, Java, Bali and Flores and interrogates the claim of "environmentally friendly" to geothermal energy.

Distributed by: Koperasi Ekspedisi Indonesia Baru and Sunspirit for Justice and Peace
<https://sunspiritforjusticeandpeace.org> | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5h6fdnE-2A&t=114s>
 Contact: Cypri Jehan Paju Dale, cjdale2@wisc.edu



Also available for virtual on-demand viewing.
 Register at Film Expo desk.

A Gregarious Species

Friday, March 14, 11:55 PM



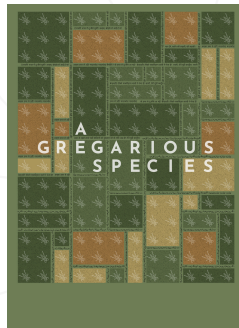
A film by: Natasha Raheja
2023. India/Pakistan/USA. 9 minutes.
Country/Region Featured: India/Pakistan
In-person Q&A with Scholar/Filmmaker Natasha Raheja (Cornell University)

What do bugs and borders have to do with each other? Bringing together mobile phone videos of transboundary gregarious locust swarms, political rallies, and scientific webinars, this found-footage, experimental video raises questions about the selective porosity of borders amidst environmental crisis, farmer insecurity, and nationalism in South Asia.

Self-distributed by the filmmaker.

<https://anthropology.cornell.edu/natasha-raheja>

Contact: Natasha Raheja, nraheja@cornell.edu



Also available for virtual on-demand viewing.
Register at Film Expo desk.

The Vietnam Action

Friday, March 14, 12:15 PM



Directed and Produced by: Chenghao Wen / Uranus Yau
2024. Vietnam / United States. 23 minutes.
Country/Region Featured: Vietnam
In-person Q&A with Director Chenghao Wen

The Vietnam Action is a documentary about the improvised live art performances at the 2023 Dughhinh International Live Arts Festival, which was held in the summer of 2023 on both sides of the Beilun River, the border river between China and Vietnam.

Distributed by: Shiyu Chen, Santo Streets Studio
clone7.wordpress.com



Also available for virtual on-demand viewing.
Register at Film Expo desk.

Bombay Has No More Crocodiles!

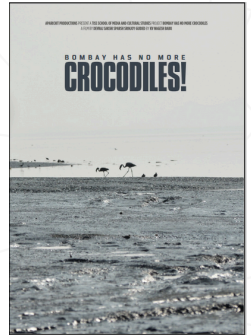
Friday, March 14, 12:55 PM



A film by: the Aparichit Collective (Devraj, Sakshi, Sparsh, Srinjoy)
2024. India. 38 minutes.
Country/Region Featured: Mumbai, India

The film is an anthology which explores the idiosyncratic development of urban Bombay, and its symptomatic relationship with the ecological. It looks at different ways how people have and continue to access the city. It looks into the issues of housing, livelihood, and the ecosystem that powers this city and how it is being depleted by elements of capitalism.

Self-distributed by: the filmmaker (Aparichit Collective)
 Contact: aparichitcollective@gmail.com



Also available for virtual on-demand viewing.
 Register at Film Expo desk.

Rice Barn

Friday, March 14, 1:35 PM



A film by: Lysokun MON
2024. Cambodia. 15 minutes.
Country/Region Featured: Cambodia

OENG Sony from Kampong Thom Province is 63 years old. She sells vegetables everyday. As a widow she alone has to take care of her son, who he has a mental illness that cannot be treated.

Distributed by: Bophana center | Bophana.org
 Contact: Sopheap CHEA, sopheap.chea@bophana.org
<https://bophana.org/luce/>



Also available for virtual on-demand viewing.
 Register at Film Expo desk.

Life on Tonle Sap

Friday, March 14, 1:50 PM



A film by: Thy RATH, Lysokun MON, and Lis LANN
2024. Cambodia. 15 minutes.
Country/Region Featured: Cambodia

Located on the banks of Tonle Sap Lake, Kampong Prahok village is confronting the impacts of climate change, including wildfires, changing water levels, and fish shortages. Chin Narom, a 47-year-old community leader, is at the forefront of addressing these challenges. The community is responding by constructing fish barriers and replanting flooded forests to mitigate the effects and preserve their way of life. As they implement these changes, they are forced to consider the sustainability of their actions and the future of their village.

Distributed by: Bophana center | Bophana.org
Contact: Sopheap CHEA, sopheap.chea@bophana.org
<https://bophana.org/luce/>



Also available for virtual on-demand viewing.
Register at Film Expo desk.

Turning the Bhumi: The Uprising of Peasants in the Northern Thai, 1974-1976

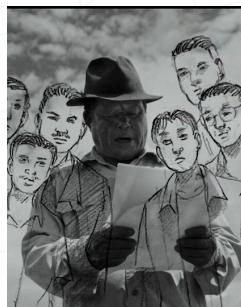
Friday, March 14, 2:10 PM



Directed and Produced by: Sorayut Aiem-UeaYut.
2024. Thailand. 53 minutes.
Country/Region Featured: Thailand
In-person Q&A Scholar/Filmmaker Sorayut Aiem-UeaYut (Chiang Mai University)

Turning the Bhumi: The Uprising of Peasants in Northern Thailand, 1974-1976 tells the poignant story of the struggles, losses, and experiences of farmers in northern Thailand between 1974 and 1976. Through the lens of these nameless representatives of ordinary farmers, the film examines the changing conditions of their "life world" and highlights the vital role of students during this tumultuous period.

Distributed by: Sorayut Aiem-UeaYut and DOC Q SCENE FILM
Contact: Sorayut Aiem-UeaYut, sorayut27@gmail.com



Shadowing 섀도잉

Friday, March 14, 3:20 PM



A film by: Okyoung Noh

2024. United States. 8 minutes.

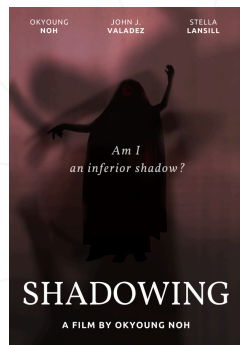
Country/Region Featured: United States / Korea

A Korean woman who recently moved to the United States found her White "shadowing" (learning English by imitating a native English speaker) strange. She tries to understand the history and power dynamics around this shadowing practice.

Self-distributed by the filmmaker.

Contact: Okyoung Noh, okyoungnoh@gmail.com

<https://oknoh.com/Shadowing>



Echoes of Home

Friday, March 14, 3:30 PM



Directed and Produced by: Mirshad Ghalip

2024. USA. 43 minutes.

Country/Region Featured: USA and Canada

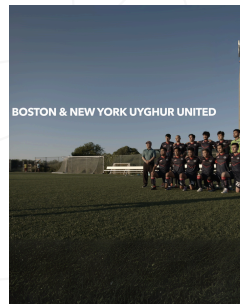
In-person Q&A with Scholars/Filmmakers Mirshad Ghalip and David Tobin

This documentary explores the Uyghur American Cup, the largest event for Uyghur diaspora communities across the U.S. and Canada. The tournament uses soccer as a medium to foster community engagement and promote language maintenance. It also serves as a vital space for younger members of the diaspora, born or raised in North America, to connect with their heritage.

Distributed by: Public Domain | <https://youtu.be/dBRNzHfCT2E>

Contact: Mirshad Ghalip, mirshad.ghalip@gmail.com

<https://youtu.be/dBRNzHfCT2E>



Also available for virtual on-demand viewing. Register at Film Expo desk.

Hug Me Tight: A Robot Story

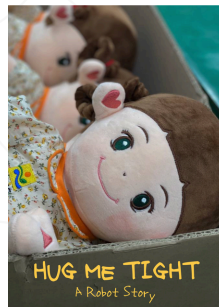
Friday, March 14, 4:30 PM



Directed and Produced by: Heesun Shin, Chihyung Jeon
2024. South Korea. 61 minutes.
Country/Region Featured: South Korea

Following the journey of Hyodol, a South Korean robot with sensors and communication modules, *Hug Me Tight: A Robot Story* explores how the meaning of care is evolving in the age of robots. Featuring the robot's developers, caregivers, and older adults who interact with it daily, it raises essential questions: Can robots take care of older adults, and can older adults take care of the robot? How should we take care of each other?

Self-distributed by the filmmaker
Contact: Chihyung Jeon, cjeon@kaist.ac.kr



Also available for virtual on-demand viewing.
Register at Film Expo desk.

SATURDAY, MARCH 15, 2025

Carving the Divine: Buddhist Sculptors of Japan

Saturday, March 15, 8:30 AM



Directed and Produced by: Yujiro Seki
2023. Japan. 98 minutes.
Country/Region Featured: Japan

Carving the Divine is a documentary film that offers a rare look into the 1400-year-old Buddhist woodcarving tradition and the practitioners struggling to preserve its legacy in a rapidly changing Japan. The film provides profound insight into the Japanese psyche as well as the nature of human perseverance through suffering.

Distributed by: Carving the Divine LLC. <https://www.carvingthedivine.com/>
Contact: Yujiro Seki, info@carvingthedivine.com
carvingthedivine@gmail.com



Also available for virtual on-demand viewing.
Register at Film Expo desk.

Epiphany

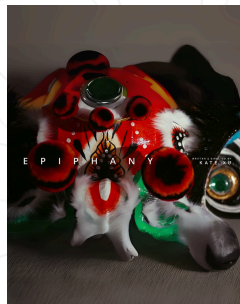
Saturday, March 15, 10:05 AM



Directed and Produced by: Kate Mai Man Xu
2024. China. 11 minutes.
Country/Region Featured: Foshan, Guangdong, China
In-person Q&A with director Kate Mai Man Xu

The film *EPIPHANY* documents the endangered cultural heritage of the art of making Lion Dance Heads across generations and celebrates the legacy of female craftsmanship. Through the mother and daughter of the Li family - Master Li and Master Zhou, it tells a story of passing down family legacies and unwavering commitment to reviving cultural traditions, fostering a renewed appreciation and dedication to preserving cultural heritage.

Self-distributed by the filmmaker.
Contact: Mai Man Xu, kate.xu1109@gmail.com



Also available for virtual on-demand viewing.
Register at Film Expo desk.

We Have a Show

Saturday, March 15, 10:30 AM



Directed and Produced by: Xudong Liu/ Menglian Tang
2024. United States. 27 minutes.
Country/Region Featured: United States

Revealing the lost world of shadow puppetry through the eyes of a passionate couple as they put the finishing touches on the biggest show of their lives, in a narrative that blends the artistry of their craft, with the enduring innocence of a cross-cultural love story.

Distributed by: Xudong Liu
Contact: Xudong Liu, theodoreliu24@gmail.com



Also available for virtual on-demand viewing.
Register at Film Expo desk.

Nizhal Yaathrikan

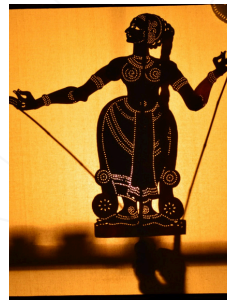
Saturday, March 15, 11:00 AM



Directed and Produced by: Rahul Koonathara
2024. India. 28 minutes.
Country/Region Featured: India

Nizhal Yathrikan (The Shadow Wanderer) is a biographical documentary that chronicles the life and legacy of Padmashri Ramachandra Pulavar, a renowned shadow puppeteer from Kerala, India. As a master of Tholpavakoothu, a traditional shadow puppetry art form, Ramachandra Pulavar has played a pivotal role in preserving and promoting this ancient performance practice, which is deeply rooted in Kerala's cultural and spiritual traditions. The documentary traces Pulavar's journey as he carries forward the lineage of 11 generations of puppeteers, dedicating his life to the craft of Tholpavakoothu.

Distributed by: Rahul Koonathara | www.tholpavakoothu.in
Contact: Rahul Koonathara, rahul.koonathara@uconn.edu
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGGqyCUUj0s>



Also available for virtual
on-demand viewing.
Register at Film Expo desk.

My Sarangi, Your Sarangi

Saturday, March 15, 11:45 AM



Directed and Produced by: Bhokraji Gurung
2016. Nepal. 32 minutes.
Country/Region Featured: Nepal

The film draws on some of the complexities surrounding caste, social position, and cultural practice amongst the music-making Gandharba caste – a community that has historically been (and continues to be) marginalized as Dalits or people of lower caste in Nepal. A focus on the relationship between Gandharbas and the Sarangi (a musical instrument) enables one to grasp an articulation of social imaginaries that emanate from an awareness of social and cultural history and economic opportunity among Gandharbas. As such, the film attempts to elucidate intricate ways through which individuals or societies are realized and cognized, negotiated or enforced, manifested or obscured, reproduced or altered, through the realm of objects.

Self-distributed by the filmmaker. Contact: Bhokraji Gurung | bhokraji23@gmail.com



Also available for virtual
on-demand viewing.
Register at Film Expo desk.

Limits of History

Saturday, March 15, 12:20 PM



Directed and Produced by: Dharitri Bhattacharjee
2024. USA. 41 minutes.
Country/Region Featured: USA, India, Europe
In-person Q&A with Scholar/Filmmaker Dharitri Bhattacharjee
(Western Washington University)

In Fall quarter (2019), a student refuses to do a reading for a college history class because she has already read about the topic in her temple/religious school. The teacher is confronted with the question, "What are the limits of academic history—of history as a discipline?" Limits of History traces the walls built around the discipline of history from the outside, by non-academics; and from the inside, by historians themselves. Returning 5 years later, the student decides if she will do the reading she once refused.

Self-distributed by the filmmaker.

Contact: Dharitri Bhattacharjee | bhattad@wwu.edu | <https://tinyurl.com/loh2024>



Also available for virtual on-demand viewing.
 Register at Film Expo desk.

1923 Kanto Massacre

Saturday, March 15, 1:15 PM



Directed and Produced by: Tae-yeong Kim, Gyuseog Choi, Jinhee Lee
2024. Korea. 116 minutes.
Country/Region Featured: Japan and Korea
In-person Q&A with Scholar/Creative Producer Jinhee Lee
(Eastern Illinois University)

The 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake in the Tokyo-Yokohama area brought forth not only material destruction but also the rumors and violence against Koreans in the Japanese metropole. After a century, this first Korea-produced film on the topic reconstructs the course of the post-quake mayhem against the colonized and traces the ways in which the history of this genocidal violence has been concealed, haunting those whose lives were never the same after encountering the forbidden truth.

Distributed by: Indecom | <http://indecocommedia.com>

Contact: Jinhee Lee, jlee@eiu.edu

https://thekeep.eiu.edu/all_faculty_pubs/3/



How to Have an American Baby

Saturday, March 15, 3:30 PM



Directed by: Leslie Tai
2023. United States. 114 minutes.
Country/Region Featured: China and America
In-person Q&A with Director Leslie Tai

How to Have an American Baby is a kaleidoscopic voyage into the booming shadow economy that caters to Chinese tourists who travel to the U.S. on “birthing vacations”—in order to obtain U.S. citizenship for their babies. Inside bedrooms, delivery rooms, and family meetings, the story of a hidden global economy emerges—depicting the aspirations and anxieties, fortunes and tragedies that befall the ordinary people caught in the web of its influence.

Distributed by: Grasshopper Film | <https://store.grasshopperfilm.com>
Contact: Lily Spitz, lily@grasshopperfilm.com
<https://www.americanbabyfilm.com>



Also available for virtual on-demand viewing.
Register at Film Expo desk.

Suzzanna: The Queen of Black Magic

Saturday, March 15, 5:40 PM



Directed and Produced by: David Gregory/ Ekky Imanjaya
2024. Indonesia. 87 minutes.
Country/Region Featured: Indonesia

She starred in 42 classic movies, was hailed as ‘The Queen of Indonesian Horror’ and crowned ‘Asia’s Most Popular Actress’. But who was Suzzanna Martha Frederika van Osch, long-beloved by the Asian world as Suzzanna yet virtually unknown outside it? Through exclusive interviews with family, colleagues, filmmakers, and historians, as well as clips from her classic films, director David Gregory (ENTER THE CLONES OF BRUCE) unearths the legacy of the Scream Queen who has begun to emerge as one of the most compelling icons in cinema history.

Distributed by: Severin Films | www.severinfilms.com
Contact: Nicole Mikuzis, nicole@severin-films.com
<https://filmfreeway.com/projects/3216134>



Screenings are located in the Columbus Convention Center, Rooms A216 & A226

The **CENTER FOR EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC STUDIES (CEAPS) AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN** is the steward of campus-wide teaching, research, programming, and outreach on East Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific. Since 2011, CEAPS has sponsored the curation of the Association for Asian Studies Film Expo, first as part of the Asian Educational Media Service (AEMS) program and now directly through the Center. CEAPS also runs the AsiaLENS film series at the University of Illinois, which began in 2008.

www.ceaps.illinois.edu

The **ASSOCIATION FOR ASIAN STUDIES (AAS)** is a non-profit dedicated to the advancement of the field of Asian Studies through international exchange, networking, publications, research support, and career development. With over 6,500 members worldwide, representing all regions and countries of Asia and all academic disciplines, the AAS is the largest organization of its kind. Through its publications, online resources, regional conferences, and annual conference, the AAS provides its members with a unique and invaluable professional network.

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Association for Asian Studies

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